AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUVENILE CRIMES AND THE ENVIROMENT: A CASE STUDY OF KIRIGITI REHABILITATION SCHOOL.

By

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Abstract

Juvenile crime is an issue that is affecting Kenyan people from all walks of life. The rights of child offenders and mode of rehabilitation pose a challenge to juvenile justice system in the country. Being in conflict with law as a child and eventual contact with criminal justice system is considered to affect physical, social emotional and spiritual development. The theoretical study shows that child offenders are a problem both to the developing and less developing world. The study employed a descriptive survey design and involved forty eight inmates from a population of one hundred and sixty inmates selected using purposive sampling technique. The sampling method was used because of the existence of large number of inmates in the rehabilitation who are in conflict with the law. The study used focused group discussions, questionnaires and interviews for data collection. Qualitative data were organized into various themes and the findings by use of descriptive narratives. Qualitative data were organized into frequencies, percentages and tables. The results of the findings reveal that, children not schooling, those residing with aged caregivers and those residing in lower and middle class estates are more prone to engage in criminal activities. A key strategy employed in the study area for reducing juvenile crimes includes involvement in rehabilitation programs. These have been fairly effective as results indicate that the programmes have largely positively changed respondents' attitudes and thoughts. The study area however lacks effective strategies with respect to specialized programs for children abusing drugs and substances, for children who have committed sexual offences; and for those children with special needs. Other effective strategies explored include, Sex education, physiotherapy, spiritual nourishment and counseling can be a factor in reducing juvenile crimes. A variety of stakeholders were identified in the study as playing various roles in addressing juvenile delinquency. Parents/guardians were found to be the major stakeholders, but have rather inadequately played their roles, with a majority of them only contacting their children through letters once or twice in the last six months. The police also play their role rather inadequately, with a majority of children respondents indicating having stayed at the police station for over three days. Legal representation is also inadequate with an overwhelming majority of respondents indicating having not had any legal representation in court. Another important section of stakeholders, children, have negative attitudes towards authority, making it a major challenge in addressing children delinquency.

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