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Sex Offenders Rehabilitation within the Prisons

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I. Introduction

Sex offenders or sex abusers ⁵are individuals who have committed a sex crime and have been found guilty in a particular legal jurisdiction. A majority of individuals that have been convicted as ²sex offenders have convictions of crimes that have a sexual nature. However, there is a small portion of sexual offenders who have been convicted for violating a law that has been put under a sexual category. Sexual offenders are usually registered and classified under different jurisdictions and depending on the classification of a sexual offenders and various rehabilitation programs are implemented to help address the issues. In the recent past, cases of sexual assault have been on the rise and many people are being registered as sexual offenders and getting imprisoned. Prison-based correctional rehabilitation programs that have been developed are offered to moderate risk to high risk offenders in a bid to reduce the cases of violent and sexual offences as well as understanding the general cause of the sexual assaults in the society (Bosma, Kunst, Reef, Dirkzwager & Nieuwbeerta, 2016).

Even though there have been efforts dedicated towards rehabilitating the sexual offenders that have been convicted, cases of sexual abuse and violence have been on the rise. In some cases, the offences are committed by individuals who have been convicted. To address this issue which has caused concern to authorities and members of the society, an understanding on the causes of the sexual offences need to be developed. This study will focus on the implications of the sexual offenders 'rehabilitation programs implemented in the correctional facilities. Through the study, it will be easier to understand the reasons why cases of sexual abuse have been on the increase and the different measures which can be implemented to address this social issue.

To conclusively cover all the aspects of this study, the following research questions will be addressed:

- i. Why cases of sexual abuse are on the increase yet sexual rehabilitation programs are being implemented in correctional facilities?
- ii. Can psychological approaches be used in rehabilitation programs to help understand the motivations which lead to the sexual offences and help address the issue?
- iii. How has the issue of sexual assaults in the society impacted the society?

II. Literature Review

For an extended period, the obligation to visit convicts in correctional facilities and conduct social service and counseling has been implemented. The primary reason why visiting the convicts was an obligation is to offer the individuals consolation and showing them that the society had not detached from them, especially the convicts who had been put on a death row. However, the prison authorities considered the visiting social and religious workers to be a hindrance to the operations of the prisons and the goal of reforming the convicted felons, the working conditions for the social and religious workers were poor. However, a lot has changed, now a majority of the correctional facilities promote such visits and they have even developed rehabilitation programs for inmates. According to Geiger & Fischer (2018), a program which has been designed for rehabilitation uses different scientific techniques to modify the attitudes of individuals so that a desired trait can be acquired.

Hill (2018), asserts that the rehabilitation programs are forms of psychological or social interventions which are intentionally used to help minimize the probability of engaging in further criminal activities. The objective of having rehabilitation programs within the prison facilities is to assist in modifying the characters of the convicted sexual offenders so that they cannot engage

in sexually abusive or violent behaviors once they complete their sentences. Changing the behaviors of the convicted sexual offenders is also a positive step which is used to help make the society a safer place. The different sexual offenders' rehabilitation programs which have been established in prisons provide a chance for the convicts to be admonished in a friendly manner that promotes self-respect and promotes the development of a professional relationship between the inmates and members of the society. However, it has not been established significantly how these aspects work and the way that they help in modifying the behavior of the inmates. Gallant, Sherry & Nicholson (2015), further established that social service providers are faced with significant challenges in trying to define and identify the most appropriate techniques which should be used in rehabilitation programs within the prison services. Measuring the effectiveness of these techniques is also another challenge.

The main aim of imprisonment is not to subject the convicts into rehabilitation programs, legitimately, the convicts are sentenced as a form of punishing the offenders and in some cases removing the high-risk offenders from the society so that the community can be a secure place. However, it should be noted that a majority of the sexual offenders usually complete serving their time in jail and they are integrated back into the society. Through the rehabilitation programs which are implemented in the prison systems, the sex offenders are able to change their characters and once they complete serving their time in prison, the probability of them committing similar sexual offenses will be less. ¹ There are different types of rehabilitation programs which are used in various jurisdictions to help reform the behavior of the sex offenders.

According to the study by Kerr, Tully & Völlm(2018), psychological rehabilitation is the most common form of rehabilitation that is used by many correctional facilities to reform the

convicts. This form of rehabilitation uses psychotherapy and behavioral therapy approaches to help change the behavior of the convicts and reduce their chances of engaging in criminal activities once they are released from the prisons. The education is also another form of rehabilitation that is used to help transform the lives of the convicts. People who have been convicted as sexual offenders can be enrolled in general types of education within the prison services so that they can acquire skills which will help them improve their lives once they are set free. Getting enrolled in educational programs, convicted sexual offenders can get general diplomas or even go through adult learning systems so that when they are set free, they can use the educational skills that they have gained to improve their lives, with the educational qualifications, the convicted sexual offenders can focus on other things other than committing criminal offences (Shoham et al., 2018).

Similarly, the convicted sexual offenders can be equipped with vocational skills, these are skills which will allow them get jobs or create employment opportunities for themselves. With professional skills, the sexual offenders will have industrial and farm skills which will enable them to focus on different things other than thinking about engaging in criminal activities. According to Blagden & Wilson (2019), some correctional prefer using recreational programs which are aimed at making the convicts more relaxed and reduces the tensions which in most cases accompany the act of being imprisoned. The recreational activities are not developed to act as independent forms of rehabilitation in the prison system, they are designed in such a way that they can help in making the rehabilitation process efficient. Convicted sexual offenders who are relaxed and who do not have tension are more likely to reform as compared to inmates who are under pressure.

Determining the individuals who will offer the counseling and therapy services in the rehabilitation centers which have been established for convicted sexual offenders is a contentious issue. In most cases, the services are offered by religious counselors, caseworkers, psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, through this study, we will be able to determine the most appropriate professionals who will offer the services to the convicted sexual offenders, and the time when the services will be more appropriate. The counseling and therapy services can be provided to a group or to individuals. Studies have shown that most penal facilities prefer using group counseling and therapy services as it is more economical as compared to the individual counseling and it usually takes less time when handling the convicts as compared to the individual advice.

However, to achieve the best out of these services, there is need for the convicted sexual offenders to be grouped in such a way that inmates who are from similar backgrounds or those who have related issues are put together. For instance, group counseling can be an excellent technique for convicted sexual offenders who tend to be manipulative, defensive and those that deny the problems that they have in many occasions. Group counseling in this case will allow the offenders to relate with others ⁴ who have similar issues, share their experiences and help the professionals offering counseling services to find the most appropriate ways of handling their issues.

According to studies that have been conducted, other forms of therapy that are efficient when applied in prison rehabilitation programs are milieu therapy and crisis intervention. The milieu therapy allows considered a variant of the group therapy which involves the living environments of the sex offenders. With the involvement of the existing environment, it will be easier to determine different ways through which the sexual offenders can be continually encouraged to

change their negative behavior positively. Through the crisis intervention method, the counselor puts effort to help address a particular issue which is affecting an inmate, the efforts applied in this case are also aimed at calming the inmate. This form of therapy can be used to help the inmate relax and calm down so that other types of treatment or counseling can be used to modify the behavior of the sex offender.

From the reviewed literature, it can be seen that there are still research gaps in the way the prison facilities offer rehabilitation programs to the sex offenders to reduce the risk of the offenders committing similar crimes in the future. Further research needs to be conducted to help in determining the best techniques which can be used to assist in modifying the behavior of the convicted ³ sex offenders and reduce the chances of them engaging in similar criminal activities. In this case, it is not enough to conclude that the convicted sex offenders who have been through rehabilitation programs in prisons will not commit similar offenses or have completely changed their behavior (Hasisi et al., 2016). This is because the best techniques that can be used in the prison rehabilitation programs have not been established. There is also no evidence showing that the convicts who have been through the rehabilitation programs have completely modified their negative behavior.

From the literature review conducted, the theoretical statement that can be deduced for this study is: With proper and efficient prison rehabilitation techniques established, sexual offenders can be able to reform, and the risk of engaging in sexually abusive and violent crimes will significantly drop making the society a safer place. The hypotheses that have been generated for this study include;

- i. Hypothesis #1, Prison rehabilitation systems can be used to help in positively modifying the behavior of sexual offenders to reduce the risk of engaging in criminal activities.
- ii. Hypothesis #2, Finding the best techniques for the rehabilitation programs in prisons will reduce the risk of sexual crimes making the society safer.
- iii. Hypothesis #3, Promoting affirmative rehabilitation programs for group counseling and therapy in correctional facilities will help in positively changing the behavior of convicted sexual offenders.

III.Method

Participants for this study were selected from ex-convicted sex offenders, convicted sex offenders, social work service providers and prison authorities. A total of 50 participants were interviewed. The interviews were conducted through an online survey, the survey was created and electronically sent to the participants. Each participant was required to answer the questions which were contained in the questionnaire and send the data for analysis. The different concepts of the study were measured in using the descriptive data that had been collected from the participants.

The different ideas which were found in the questionnaire were measured in different ways. The questionnaire items were developed in such a way that they could be used to understand the influence which the prison rehabilitation programs had on the modification of the behavior of the sexual offenders, the way the social workers and prison authorities handled the various programs that had been developed to help transform the behavior of the convicts. Participants from different categories provided the data that was used in this study. The social workers had specific

questions, prisoners, prison authorities and the ex-convicts. Participants were provided with a scale, from strongly agreeing with the concept being promoted to strongly disagreeing with the idea. Some questions also required participants to select from a range on the way that they felt about a particular idea.

The frequency of the different variables obtained from the collected data was calculated to help in determining the findings for the study as well as determining the recommendations and conclusions for the research. The percentage for different variables which were collected from the questionnaire is presented to help in understanding the findings from the data collected. From the collected data, descriptive studies are also conducted to help find the relationship that exists between the variables that are used in the research paper.

IV. Expected Results

The main aim of the study is to establish the best techniques which can be used in prison rehabilitation programs to help the prisoners reform their behavior. The sample selected contained 40% female and 60% were male, ex-convicts and convicted sexual offenders were 60%, prison officials 10% and social workers 30%. From the study, the expected results will show that the prison rehabilitation programs play a significant role in promoting positive behavioral change in convicted sexual offenders. Through the plans, the sexual offenders are able to understand the way that they can change their behavior and get involved in the different aspects of developing the community. Through the rehabilitation programs, they are also able to understand the ways that they can promote safe environments for all individuals in the society.

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