

## **THE BENEFITS OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENTS IN KENYA.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper looks at the benefits of the rehabilitation programmes for the juvenile delinquents in Kenya. A sample of 138 respondents consisting of 99 juveniles, 18 staffs and 21 parents of the ex-rehabilitees was selected. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires while qualitative data was collected from the key informants.

The study found out that the existing rehabilitation programmes for juvenile delinquents were; academics, vocational training, life skills, counseling and scouts. Counseling was not well implemented; it was done by the welfare officers who did not have background training on counseling. Individual and group counseling were common while family counseling/ therapy was not practiced in any of the institutions. Follow ups and after care services were not provided to the juveniles after release from the rehabilitation schools. The juveniles however gained some skills they would use in earning an income while others were able to access education. The study recommended for review of the rehabilitation programmes since they did not address the ever emerging rehabilitation needs of juvenile delinquents. The number of teachers and staff handling juvenile delinquents should be increased and trained on how to handle the juvenile delinquents more effectively. The institutions need to implement the aftercare/ follow up guidelines after releasing the juveniles from the rehabilitation schools as this would help in reducing cases of recidivism.

**Key Words:** Juvenile, delinquency, rehabilitation, recidivism, reintegration

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the present day, crime has become an aspect of life that is being committed more often and frequently by the juveniles, since the number of children in conflict with the law is increasing at a worrying and an alarming rate in the country and the world at large. Juvenile delinquency has been on the rise and as delinquency rises; cases of juvenile delinquents that go to correctional facilities to serve time for the crimes they have committed also rises (Darbouze, 2008). According to the Department of Children's Services database, 2010 the number of child offenders rose from 483 in 2006 to 927 in 2010. Cases of school unrests were on the rise in 2016 during the second term whereby several schools were torched by the students (Daily Nation News Paper, 2016). This is an

indication of a serious social problem with the juvenile delinquents in the country and it therefore calls for rehabilitation and reintegration of juvenile delinquents through juvenile rehabilitation programmes.

The rehabilitation schools offer programmes that are intended to assist in the behavior modification of the juvenile delinquents. Rehabilitation therefore must tackle the causes behind behaviors of a child crime, and also to focus on creating a difference by supporting the child while living with his/her family and the community; and also equipping them with knowledge and skills so as to make a difference and better choices (OPPAGA Report, 2007). An assessment of the juvenile delinquents rehabilitation programmes with the intent of strengthening them could result to a significant decline in criminality in the future. The purpose of this paper therefore was to assess the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programmes offered in the juvenile delinquents rehabilitation schools.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- 1) To find out the existing rehabilitation programmes for the juvenile delinquents at the rehabilitation schools.
- 2) To establish the benefits of the rehabilitation programmes to the juvenile delinquents, families and community.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Existing Rehabilitation Programmes**

Research indicates that programs that are effective have three facets: Effective programs address key risk factors, established through decades of co-relational, longitudinal and experimental research. They focus on ensuring the family functions, disconnecting the juveniles from criminal networks and improving their performance in schools. Those policies and programmes that are not effective do not regard the role of networks and families; instead they worsened those networks by incarcerating the juveniles for extended period of time (Scott & Schoenwald, 2011). Effective programs are rehabilitative and use behavior modification interventions while the youth is within their natural environment. Finally, effective programs are precise and comprise of exhaustive support to the juvenile delinquents. Kathungu, (2010) noted that the rehabilitation programmes in Kenya do not undergo frequent evaluation to assess the efficacy of the programmes they employ. This therefore calls for the frequent assessment of the existing rehabilitation programmes for the

juvenile delinquents so as to ensure that; they are relevant in the modern day, they are effective in reducing cases of recidivism and behavior modification, to prevent future career criminals and in ensuring that they become productive citizens.

Wakanyua (2005), in his findings noted that rehabilitation should include provision of other things like finances and follow-up/ after care services after the reintegration of the juveniles with the community, they did not exist in the rehabilitation school as he noted in his study. Stephens & Arnette, (2000) suggested that for the effective transition from the rehabilitation school life to normal family life after rehabilitation, there were three components that should be zealously implemented and they included: team based planning, interagency collaboration and monitoring.

### **Benefits of Rehabilitation**

Studies indicate that rehabilitation programmes played an essential role in reduction of recidivism (Mincey et al, 2008). Other studies revealed that juvenile delinquents' who received proper rehabilitation was important since it lessened the likelihood of juvenile delinquents would relapse and have to re-enter the Juvenile Justice System. Child delinquents were expensive not only to the taxpayers but also to the society (Loeber, et al, 2003). Effective intervention methods played an essential part in any plan that was designed to lessen the rates of delinquency among the juveniles (Lipsey, et al, 2000). Rehabilitation therefore is a very crucial resource that was provided to the juvenile delinquents so as to ease the process of reintegration to the society. Effective rehabilitation is important since it helped to eradicate the ferocious cycle of recidivism and effective rehabilitation could lead to juvenile delinquent abandoning adult crime (Lipsey, et al, 2000).

Wandoyi, 2007 noted that the most effective and most organized responses to crimes by the juvenile were through interventions that focused on the functioning of the family, programs that treated behavior, community reintegration programmes and those that focused on interpersonal skills. Siegal, (2002) observed that, if successful rehabilitation was not the definitive goal of juvenile rehabilitation, then the use of residential facilities was a very expensive affair that would not be productive and this therefore called for every effort to be put together so as to make rehabilitation for the juvenile delinquents an effective process.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study has used differential association theory and control theory. In Differential Association Theory, Sutherland, (1947) uses differential association to address the issue of how people learn deviance. According to his theory, the environment plays a major role in deciding which norms people learn to violate. He further states that, people within a particular reference group provide norms of conformity and deviance and thus influence the way other people look at the world including how they react. Furthermore, people learn their norms from various socializing agents like parents, teachers, ministers, family, friends, co-workers and the media. This means that people learn criminal behaviors just like any other behaviors from their interactions with others especially in the intimate groups e.g. juvenile gangs provides an environment in which adolescents learn to become criminals.

This theory therefore states that criminal behavior among juveniles is learnt just like any other behavior and the same way it is learnt, it can be unlearned through rehabilitation. The staff training and competence levels and the rehabilitation programmes in place are very important in helping the juvenile delinquents unlearn the unpleasant behavior they have already learnt through socialization. It also states the role the environment plays in the socialization of the juvenile delinquents including the peers they associate with and the staff involved in the rehabilitation process and consequently their role in the rehabilitation process.

In control theory, Gottfredson & Hirschi, (1990) hypothesized that whether an individual engages in deviance can be explained by low levels of self-control. They further stated that an individual's level of self-control influences the level of deviance in which he or she engages in. Lack of effective parenting influences whether an individual will engage in deviant behaviors due to low self-control and low self-control mediates the relation between parenting and deviance. These associations exist regardless of sex and cultural background. Furthermore, individuals with low self-control are likely to engage in a variety of deviant behaviors from crime-analogous behaviors e.g. alcohol or drug use, smoking, aggression to more serious forms of deviance e.g. theft, property or violent offenses. Parenting therefore is associated with the development of self control and this suggests that those children who have been parented effectively tend to develop high levels of self control while those who receive ineffective parenting tend to develop low levels of self control.

This theory is relevant in this study as it notes that self-control is learnt through effective parenting and supervision by a responsible adult. The juveniles require some close attachment with the adults who teach them what is right and wrong and how to avoid doing the wrong things. They need to be taught to make the right decisions independently through effective rehabilitation programmes. Rehabilitations therefore helps the juveniles to learn self-control, respect for others, to do the right things even when no one is closely monitoring them. Effective rehabilitation programmes also should help the families learn to practice effective parenting skills through family counseling and therapies.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Site Selection and Description**

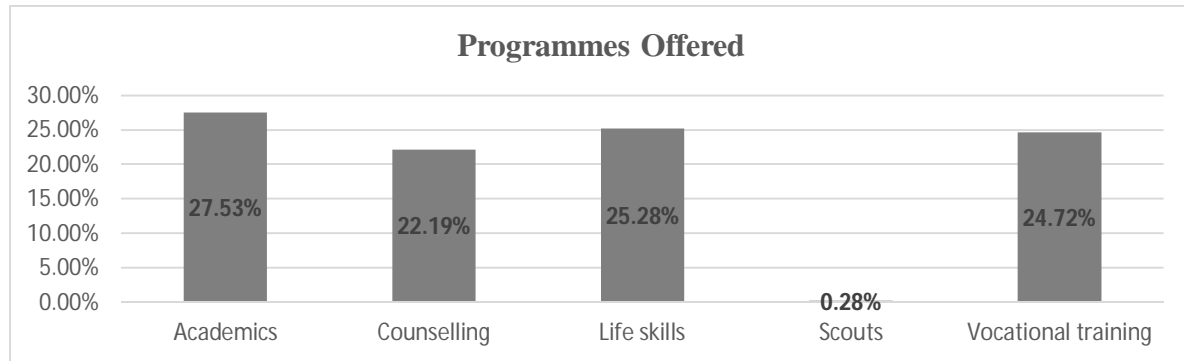
The study was carried out in two institutions in Kabete and Kirigiti Rehabilitation Schools located in Nairobi and Kiambu counties respectively. Kabete Rehabilitation School is a boy's institution classified as medium risk level while Kirigiti is a girl's institution classified as high/ medium risk level. The two institutions were selected to allow for comparisons of both genders on the behaviors' of the juvenile delinquents.

#### **Sample Size and Research Design**

This study applied descriptive research design and it adopted both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Purposive sampling was used to sample two institutions; Kabete and Kirigiti situated in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties respectively. A sample of 99 juveniles from the two institutions: 47 boys from Kabete and 52 girls from Kirigiti Rehabilitation schools 18 staff members who comprised of welfare officers, teachers and vocational instructors' were purposively selected. The juveniles sampled had stayed in the institution for at least one year. Systematic sampling was used to sample 21 parents of ex-rehabilitees. A structured questionnaire with both open ended and close ended questions covering all aspects of the research problem was administered so as to generate both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was collected using the key informants' interview guides, observation and use of field notes while secondary data was collected through review of the juvenile delinquents individual files.

#### 4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

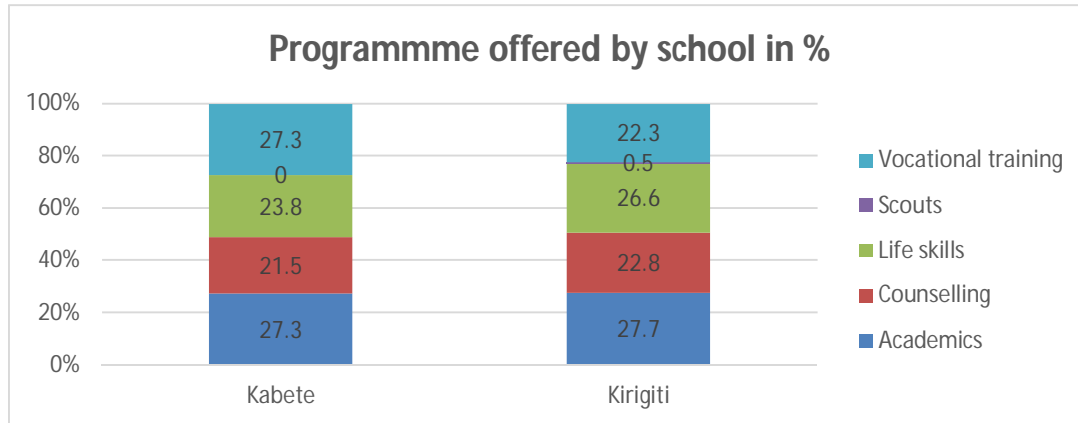
##### Existing Rehabilitation Programmes



The respondents indicated that the following rehabilitation programmes existed: academics, counseling, life skills training, vocational trainings and scouts. Some were involved in all the programmes while others participated in some. Academics which was compulsory for all juveniles had the highest rate of participation at 27.5%, followed by life skills training at 25.3%, vocational training at 24.7%, counseling at 22.2% while scouts had the lowest rate at 0.3%. The subjects studied under academics included: English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Religious Education and Social Studies. The classes however started from class 5 up to class 8 and there were only 3 teachers in each institution; meaning one class missed a teacher during every lesson. The courses studied under vocational training included; bakery, carpentry, electrical and wiring, masonry, mechanics and tailoring and dress making. Tailoring and dressmaking was the most popular among the girls followed by bakery while masonry was the most popular among the boys followed by electrical and wiring, mechanics and carpentry.

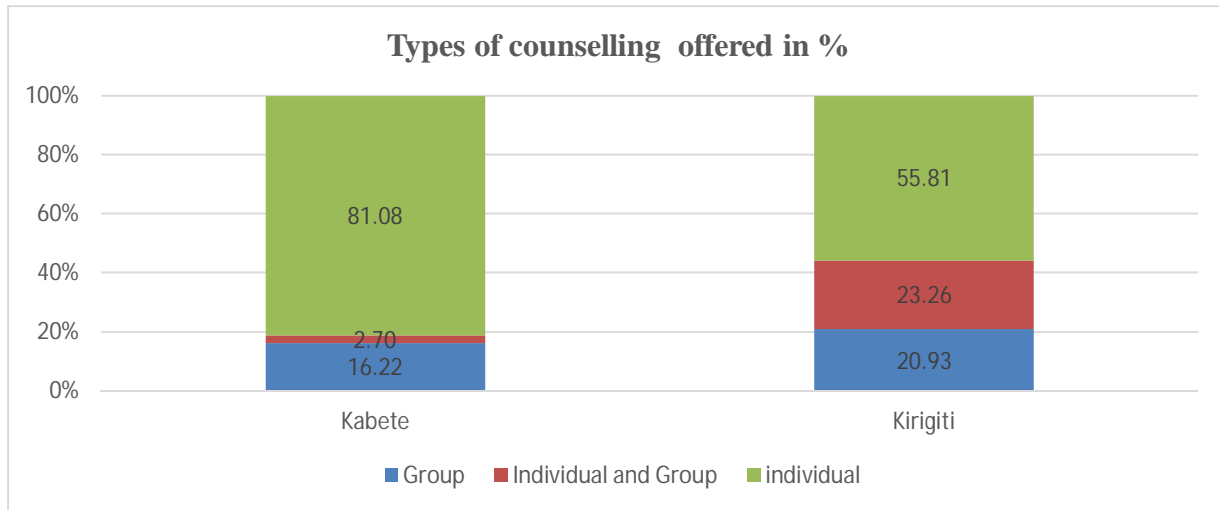
In life skills training, the courses offered included: agriculture, barber, beadwork, fashion and design, saloon and soap making. Beadwork and soap making were the most popular courses across both genders while agriculture was popular among the boys.

**Participation in the Rehabilitation Programme by Gender**



Academics had the highest rate participation at 27.3% and 27.7% for boys and girls respectively. More boys were involved in vocational trainings at 27.3% compared to girls whose participation rate was 22.3%. More girls were involved in life skills training at the rate of 26.6% compared to boys whose participation rate was 23.8%. Girls stated that life skills was not examined and it was simple since one just chose a skill that they were good at. Girls at the rate of 22.8% participated in counseling while 21.5% of the boys participated on the same. Other rehabilitation programmes that only girls participated in were scouts at the rate of 0.5%.

## Types of Counseling Offered to the Juvenile Delinquents

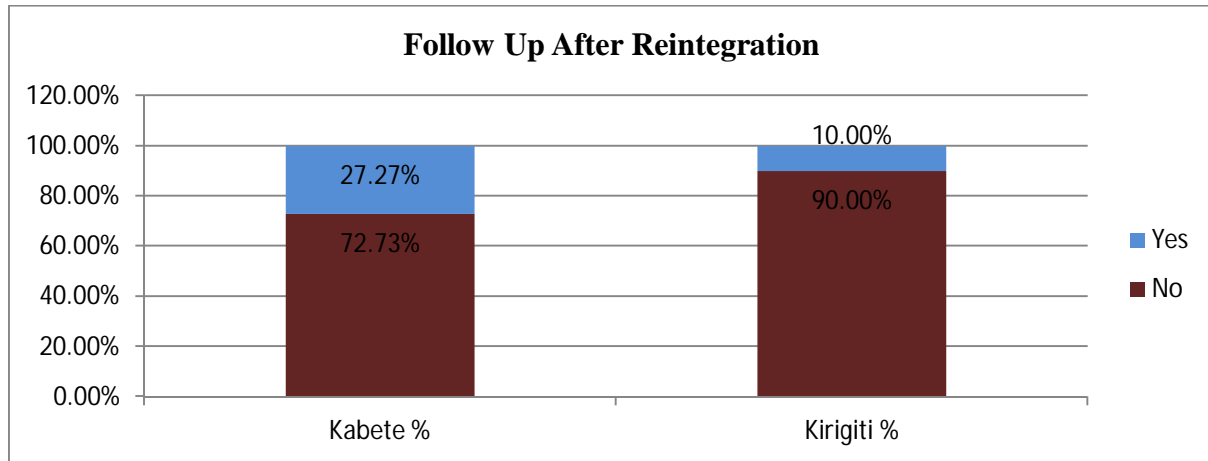


The most common forms of counseling practiced at the rehabilitation schools were individual and group counseling, family therapy was not practiced in any of the rehabilitation schools and its practice was at zero percent. Individual counseling was the most popular at the rate of 81.1% for the boys and 55.8% for the girls; group counseling was second at the rates of 20.9% for the girls and 16.2% for the boys. There were few juveniles who participated in both individual and group counseling at 23.3% for the girls and 2.7% for the boys. Individual counseling was the most common across all the institutions followed by group counseling. Family counseling/ therapy was not practiced in any of the institutions.

Counseling programme was poorly implemented since counseling was done by the welfare officers most of whom did not have background training in counseling. The institutions mainly relied on volunteers and students on internships to do counseling as well as the church leaders.

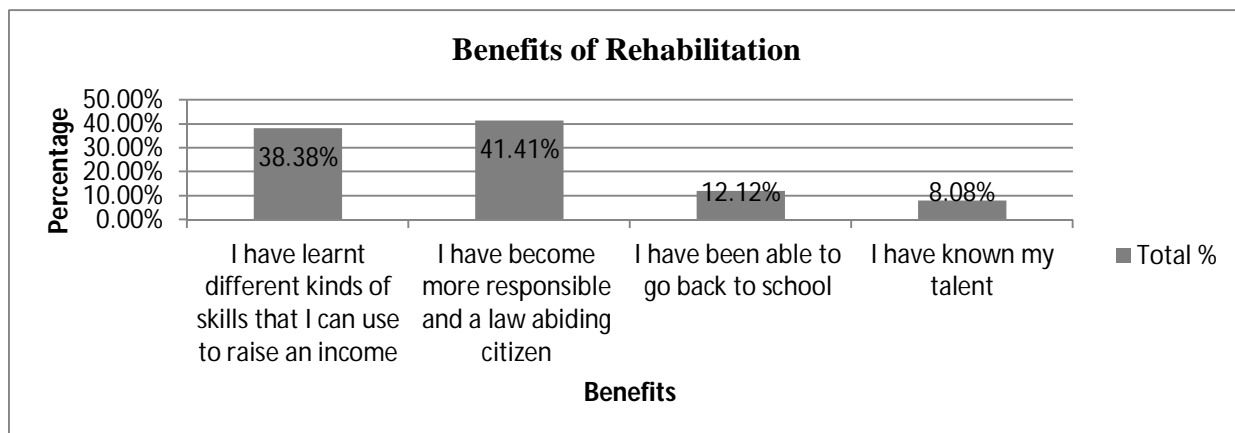


**Follow up After Release**



Most of the parents whose children had been released from Kirigiti indicated that follow ups were not done at the rate of 90% while 72.7% from Kabete stated the same. Only 10% and 27.3% of the parents from Kirigiti and Kabete consecutively stated that follow up was done after reintegration. Most of the parents who stated that their children were followed up by the schools after release stated that they had received some kind of support from the like sponsorship to join secondary schools for those who had passed well. Others had received toolkits from the vocational courses they had done and the institution followed them up for a short period to ensure that the toolkits were used for the intended purpose while others had been sponsored to continue with vocational training in polytechnics.

**Benefits of the Rehabilitation Programmes**



Juveniles had benefitted in different ways from the rehabilitation programmes, 41.4% stated that they had become more responsible and law abiding citizens. A boy who had been at the institution for 3 years stated:

*“I was easily influenced negatively by my friends, they used to send me to steal from our home and neighborhood and that’s how I found myself in crime. Rehabilitation and more so counseling has helped me to rediscover myself and to become more responsible, I am now a law abiding citizen who cannot be easily influenced negatively by my peers.”*

Juveniles at the rate of 38.4% had learnt different kinds of skills that they would use to earn an income. Others were able to go back to school while some were able to discover their talents at the rates of 12.1% and 8.1% respectively. Another boy who had also been at the institution for 3 years and had reformed stated:

*“I have been able to go back to school and have learnt different skills like baking, wiring, bead work, soap making and agriculture; all these for free. If I was not brought here maybe I would have been killed a long time ago due to stealing. At least when I am released I will be able to start a job and even support my family. Rehabilitation has been good for me have gained a lot, but on the other hand it separates us from our families for a period of three years.”*

#### **Response by Parents on How Family Benefits from Juveniles Activities after Release**

How Family Benefits From Childs Activities after Release	Kabete		Kirigiti		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Uses skills gained to earn an income	4	36.36	5	50	9	42.86
Gone back to stealing and drug abuse	3	27.27	1	10	4	19.05
Does motivational speaking targeting the youths	2	18.18	2	20	4	19.05
S/he is responsible	1	9.09	2	20	3	14.29
Nothing	1	9.09	0	0	1	4.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Gender wise, more girls at the rate of 50% were able to use the skills they had gained to earn an income compared to 36.4% of the boys. More girls at the rate of 20% had become responsible and the same number were doing motivational speaking targeting the youths compared to boys at 9.1% and 18.2% respectively. More boys had relapsed and gone back to stealing and drug abuse at the rate of 27.3% compared to the girls at the rate of 10% while 9% of the boys were not doing anything after release from the rehabilitation school. Generally, girls had benefitted from the rehabilitation programmes more than boys. A mother of a boy who had been released from a rehabilitation school stated:

*“Huyukijanasikuhiziamejijuaalifundushwanaulimwengu (This boy nowadays has rediscovered himself he was taught by the world), he is now very responsible and sometimes I leave him at home with his siblings, something which I could not do before he was arrested.”*

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the existing rehabilitation programmes for the juveniles in the rehabilitation schools in Kenya included: academics, vocational training, skills training, counseling and scouts. These programmes were guided by a timetable that was displayed in the notice boards. Academics were compulsory for all the juveniles admitted in the rehabilitation schools. Tailoring and dressmaking and bakery were the most popular vocational training courses among the girls while masonry, electrical and wiring, mechanics and carpentry were the most popular courses among the boys. Beadwork and soap making were the most popular life skills courses across both genders while agriculture was popular among the boys. Counseling was poorly implemented; it was done by the welfare officers since the institutions did not employ qualified counselors, they mainly relied on volunteers and students to do the counseling. Individual and group counseling were popular in the institutions; family counseling was not practiced in any of the institutions. The institutions were not keen on follow ups of the juveniles after release from the rehabilitation schools.

On the benefits of the rehabilitation programmes the study established that vocational and life skills were the most relevant courses. They provided skills that juveniles would use to earn an income that would support them and their families. They also learnt values like being responsible, respectful, obedient, disciplined and self-control. They were also able to know their talents and use them for their own benefits while others were able to access education. Girls benefited from the rehabilitation programmes more compared to the boys.

## **Recommendations**

This study makes the following recommendations in order to make the rehabilitation programmes more effective and beneficial to the juveniles delinquents in Kenya:

1. There should be a complete review of the rehabilitation programmes carried out in all the rehabilitation schools in Kenya;
2. There is need to introduce rehabilitation programmes that will address the emerging issues that could result to delinquency;
3. Classes, workshops and the play grounds should be improved, upgraded and equipped with modern equipment so as to produce well skilled and marketable juveniles;
4. Activities that allow juveniles to reintegrate with the community should be encouraged as opposed to the current confining of the juveniles into the rehabilitation schools;
5. The government should employ qualified counselors to provide counseling to the juvenile delinquents and their families;
6. More teachers should be employed and the government should consider employing the ex-rehabilitees who have attained the required qualifications.

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