

**Perceptions of female inmates of their opportunities to access education and training
curriculum in Bizzah Makhate Management Area**

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the nature of access to Further Education and Training by incarcerated offenders in selected Correctional Services centres in the Bizzah Makhate Management Area (BMMA). Secondly, the perceptions of incarcerated female inmates' offenders' access to education and achieve their education goals while in correctional centres as offenders are not transformed for the purpose of educational attainments. A qualitative research was used and a convenience sample of indicate how many female inmates. Data was gathered through structured open-ended questionnaires. A thematic data analysis was used using open codes. The findings of the study revealed that female inmates it was difficult for female inmates to access education while incarcerated.

Keywords: Access; Further Education and Training; offenders; correctional centres; human rights

INTRODUCTION

The history of correctional services system in South Africa shows that correctional facilities were regarded as dumping sites for the South African citizens. However, the recent changes have ensured that the correctional services systems are no longer characterised by severe punishment directed at offenders, such as hard labour and torture, which are in fact a violation of human rights. This means that the issue of human rights did not exist during apartheid dispensation at correctional services centres in the Bizzah Makhate Management Area (BMMA). However, with the inception of the new democracy in South Africa in the 1990s, changes have started to take place and the penalty system that was used under the Department of Justice was discarded during the establishment of Department of Correctional Services (DCS) in the democratic dispensation. Morodi (2004) asserts that the Constitution of the country which was passed in 1996 is “founded on the values of human dignity, realisation of justice, and the promotion and advancement of human rights”. Offender rights are enshrined in the Bill of Rights along with the other South African citizens (Rozani, 2010).

The changes that had occurred include demilitarising of the DCS, placing the rehabilitation of offenders at the forefront of all departmental activities and introducing the community-based sentences. Rozani (2010) further emphasises that from the law of enforcement, courts and correctional services, it should be ensured that the sentenced offenders incarcerated in correctional centres have their human rights and dignity are respected at all times as it indicated in the “Bill of Rights”. As the focus of correctional services is currently on the rehabilitation of the offenders, the implementation of the education rehabilitation programmes must never violate the human rights of the offenders particularly in BMMA.

Bhengu (2005) asserts that the number of offenders going through the correctional centre system each year is twice to three times the size of its daily population. This statement gives rise to the question whether rehabilitation together with offender’s rights is doing more harm than good for society. Even though the rehabilitation of offenders is the key policy of the correctional system in the DCS (DCS) centres, and various problems in the way of executing the rehabilitation programmes of the education in our country.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research study was underpinned by the work of Michel Foucault (1977) and theory of space and time. In his book titled, *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison or correctional centre*, Foucault describes in detail that intention of correctional centres as solely to deny the inmates freedom and to severely punish the offenders (Pollock, 2005; Shapiro, 2002). Furthermore, Stenberg (2005) pointed out that the birth of prisons and punishment of offenders heralds the exercise of absolute power by Kings in ancient times. For punishment to be effective, the event punishing the offender had to be a spectacle for everyone to witness. This view is in line with the retributive rationale that a wrong must be balanced through punishment. This school of thought is informed by the ideas of Hobbes (2005) that an individual in society willingly enters into a social contract to forfeit some of his or her freedom when she or he erred.

The opposite of retributive punishment is the utilitarian rationale, which seeks to justify punishment of the individual if it is in the interest of the society. The idea of imprisonments is related to the notion of doing time in correctional centres structured around the allocation of space and time. For an example, Stenberg (2005) shows that the physical structure of correctional centres is characterised by, among others, high thick walls, barbed wire, sharing of overcrowded cells and 24-hour security. This illustrates that offenders' use of physical space in a correctional centre limits their movements. Lastly, the study used the idea of doing time in prison. For instance, the freedom of offenders is further regulated by how their time is used as they have no time made and time is made for them. Based on Foucault' theory, it is clear that access to education and opportunities for female offenders inmates is not easy.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A research problem refers to some difficulty that the researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation to which he or she wants to obtain a solution (Welman & Kruger & Mitchell, 2010). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) view the research problem as the axis around which the whole research effort revolves. Kumar (2005) explains that the formulation of a research problem is the most critical part of the research journey and the quality of the entire project depends on it. Against the backdrop of the literature review, the theoretical framework and legislative framework, the problem statement of the research study was based on how to investigate the overall current challenges facing student offenders for the correct implementation of education and training curricula in correctional services centres in Bizzah Makhate management area (BMMA) as the main centre of education. The research further outlined focus group female (FGF) strategies that can assist in improving the implementation of education and training curricula in correctional services to ensure better outcomes as the rehabilitation tool. Secondly, the over-arching aim of the study was to propose a legislative framework and Foucault's theory that would assist offenders to incorporate with the implementation of education and training curricula programme in DCS centres.

AIM OF THE RESEARCH AND OBJECTIVES

According to Bak (2004), similar to the destination of a journey, research must also have an aim. Bak (2004) also distinguishes between two different types of aim, namely, the academic and strategic ones. The academic aim is central to the research and it explains to the reader what it is that you want to achieve whereas strategic aim entails understanding of properties and relationships and the confirmation of findings by other researchers. The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of female inmates' offenders on the implementation of education and training curricula programmes in the correctional service centres in BMMA to upgrade their education and training curricula programmes as the rehabilitation tool.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research study worked towards answering the research question,

How effective is the implementation of education and training curricula at correctional services centres in the BMMA with regard incarcerated female inmates?

Research approach

As the research study is qualitative, it focused on the phenomena that occur in natural settings, which is the real world, and involves refers to correctional services focus group female of those phenomena in all their complexity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). To meet these requirements, researchers used focused groups to the female inmates' offenders at the different sections at DCS to obtain a real understanding of how offenders they access education and training curricula programmes.

Research context, population and sample

This research study was conducted in the Department of Correctional Services in the Bizzah Makhate centres in the BMMA such as Kroonstad, Henneman, Odendaalsrus, Virginia, and Hoopstad. As a result, the findings of this research study are limited, and context based on the information provided for by the female offenders to access FET band educational programmes. The population in this research study was female. A convenience sample of 9 female offenders was participated in this research study.

DATA COLLECTION

According to Maree (2016), researchers need to consider which data collection method is the most appropriate for the population in the research question. In this research, the research used one-on-one interviews. The researchers used the form of a conversation with the intention to intention to explore the participants 'views, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes about how female inmates' access to education and opportunities while incarcerated are availed to them.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Welman and Kruger (2010), research ethics are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. The researchers obtained permissions to conduct the research both from the University Faculty of Humanities and the Research Directorate of the DCS and Department of Education (BMMA). It was noted that correctional centres are highly controlled facilities for safety and security reasons; hence ethical issues were taken very seriously for this study. One can only reach confidentiality, anonymity, the right to participate and withdraw between research participants and the researcher in a normal free world. Contrarily, in correctional facilities, such principles are highly controlled, compromised and affected by various factors. While offenders have rights and such rights are protected and enshrined within the Constitution and the Bill of Rights (1996), there are certain limitations to those rights (Luyt, Jonker & Bruyns, 2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Emanating from the data collected from the BMMA, the following themes emerged, and they are discussed.

Theme1: Resources

The offenders expressed frustrations with having to study with limited access to computers and the internet, and without textbooks in the BMMA. They were grateful to have computers, but it was noted that computers both at the male and female centres were locked up and could only be accessed with permission from the security authorities, for a limited time as part of the rehabilitation tool. Computers were used under strict security controls and regulations. At the female centre, some offenders said they had to ask permission and queued to be the first ones to access the computers because of the shortages and viruses of the computers. At the male centre, there were enough computers owing to low numbers of users during the study. This gave them a problem of old versions and viruses as it is like there were no computers at the centre as supported by the statements from their educationists.

According to Vacca (2004), the point that problems caused by inadequate funding, equipment and learning materials put more serious constraint on the correctional schoolteachers/educationists on achieving intended educational processes and goals. Whenever they needed to use computers for their assignments, administrative online tasks or for research purposes, they had to ask female librarian as female educationist or warder, if she/he is in bad mood the students suffered with funding the student offenders.

Weeks (2012) observed that the role players in the funding of education settings that exhibit a poor or even a dysfunctional culture of educational curricula programmes of learning can actively contribute to establishing a caring content which is conducive to the nurturing of a culture of teaching and learning. This may result in an improvement in academic funds in the correctional centres.

In total, 95% of offenders' struggles with their educational programmes did not have access to competent and even there is no laptop for them to use. According to the FFG1 at the female centre, preference would be given to those who were studying towards tertiary qualifications as they needed to submit their assignments, research projects and portfolios. In female centre, all those interviewed expressed frustrations and struggling with limited internet connectivity and usage, as they needed these facilities for their studies. This is understandable as it is a known that offenders continue their criminal activities by using internet, where they re-offend while serving their sentences. Since it is known that criminals in the jails operated syndicates, and through networks, they can continue with criminal acts, using computers and the internet.

Theme2: Educational Environment

Majority of female student offenders indicated that they do not get motivation from the staff and management official of the correctional centre. It has been noted from the participants' point of view

that male and female student offenders lack the appropriate motivation and support from the lecturers and management of BMMA in the DCS. During the interview, the researcher expected structure of educational rehabilitation programme falling with adult education. The research study suggested that inside the centre there is no discipline and female student offenders have no choice when they have to do their studies and study only if there is order in the cells. The student offenders struggle because of self-study and complaining with the environment that is not conducive. All staff participants are the Area Coordinator Development and Care, Management and Training Official, two technical subject teachers and nine AET and ABET curriculum as indicated that the education and training curricula programme of the correctional centre and skills programmes lacked the national unified standard. This means that the education system and skills programmes offered at BMMA may not be similar to the programmes that suit the environment. The choices of the programmes depended on the skills that are on demand in the area, for example, skills programmes required by different departments, companies and others. This factor impacts negatively to offenders who are transferred because the new centre which they transferred to may not offer a similar programme in which the offender was participating.

The primary responsibility of planning, managing and overseeing the curriculum policy implementation process is to assigned teachers and management official in the correctional centres in BMMA. The responsibility of the teachers and management official is that of access of the implementation in the education and training curricula programme as process taking into consideration the school human and physical resources, quality of learning and teaching (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). The DCS Area Correctional centre education management official must provide an environment within the parameters of the available resources in which student offenders could grow individually and be equipped with requisite skills that could be used when reintegrated in the society.

According to the policy, post-grade twelve and other technical qualifications cannot be funded by the DCS, but the DCS can only plan and facilitate the progress of studying. Ex-offenders are not allowed to continue with the studies using the facilities of the DCS. Ex-offenders are only allowed to come and write examinations if released before writing examinations. The lack of effective and efficient educational and training for rehabilitation programmes is affecting all offenders in the Correctional centre because they leave centres without acquiring the knowledge and skills that will enable them to improve their lives.

Theme3: Organization and management of educational activities

The way BMMA operates in terms of educational system is like an examination centre. During the year, no effective teaching and learning like in mainstream schools takes place regularly as lecturers are appointed for the purpose of teaching and learning in the centre. Participants are provided with books to study on their own with the assistance of the tutors and in other subjects like Mathematics, Physical Sciences. On the contrary, others have no textbooks and students have no access to the

internet as reported by the male and female offenders as lack of strategies to train vocational rehabilitation programmes and subjects mentioned as also a serious challenge (Chapter 3, section 3.8 and section 3.9).

According to White Paper on Corrections, (RSA 2005), Section 8)(2)(1) on the right to education (Chapter 3, section 3.6.6) is not curtailed by incarceration as literacy, schooling and basic adult education are priorities between the DBE and DCS i.e. student offenders and School Management Team (SMT). The Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996c) 27 of 1996 Section 4(c) – (d) stipulates the right to equitable education opportunities, redress of past inequality and that no person must be denied educational opportunity to the maximum of his/her ability. Education is offered according to approved education bands, namely, GET and ABET, FET and HET. Moreover, the White Paper on Corrections (RSA, 2005), Section (9) (9)(2) outlined that education in the correctional environment must be in line with the education system of the general society.

The DBE (2012) and Dhlamini (2009) stressed that the needs of teachers in these current findings in the health and education strategic area maintained that the purpose of Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) should identify specific needs of teachers. In addition, they should have correctional centres and management for support and development; to provide support for continued growth; to promote accountability; and to monitor correctional centre school's overall effectiveness. Moreover, they should evaluate a teacher's performance with a view to the determining areas of strengths and weaknesses, and to draw up the educational and training curricula programme for individual developmental support.

The female focus group participants feeling that management of the correctional centre do not give student offenders support in their education for them to be easily rehabilitated and reintegrated when they go back to the communities by explaining that:

“I’ve got something to add. As an educator, in the beginning of the year you get your syllabus and she’s also an educator. Then we’ve got syllabus for the year, for this term because of the problem that we had often that they didn’t fetch us, that they didn’t get us. We couldn’t work through our syllabus and then suddenly just like that you have to do your exam paper. Then tomorrow we are being informed, tomorrow your class is writing Mathematics then you motivate your students tomorrow you are writing Mathematics, you are doing your rehearsals and everything and then comes tomorrow, no Mathematics. Then next week Thursday there were no classes, there was no rehearsing you didn’t do because every day the student says when are we writing? The suddenly out of the blue you have to go write the exams. Then the students aren’t prepared but when you were prepared the class didn’t happen” [FFG 2].

Theme4: Quality teaching and learning

According to the policy only qualified specialised lecturers or teachers are expected to carry out teaching and learning activities. Only tutors whose skills and knowledge has been approved by the management of the DCS may be allowed to deliver teaching and learning in the centre like in the mainstream schools outside. The policy stated that only correctional officers can escort all the offenders from their respective cells to their classrooms and educational staff not allowed to escort offenders to the classrooms. Short-sentence male and female offenders are not allowed to technical programmes and only allowed to participate only in the skill's developmental programmes. According to the evidence provided by the tutors does not have proper lessons preparations for subjects and technical study for student offender in the Correctional centre. There is indication that this happens because tutors that are appointed to help others do not have necessary knowledge regarding teaching and learning since they are not trained for the job.

The educators in the correctional centres are appointed in terms of the DCS Act, Act 111 (1998), Section 41 Regulations 2(c). Part 1.3 states the qualified academic or technical and must render educational services. Educational and training programmes rendered should be in line with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as outlined in the education Correctional Services Act, Act 111 of 1998. It is therefore imperative for education management in the education correctional centres in BMMA to avert criminal behaviour by managing the curriculum effectively and efficiently in order to relieve socio-economic hardships that the offenders might experience. A major shortcoming that was outlined by all participants was the lack of qualified teachers to assist them in their various fields of studies. It emerged that offenders who held formal qualifications and who were well-experienced would be utilized to teach some subjects as being appointed by the DCS. These offenders are referred to as 'subject leading teachers' or 'offender tutors'. The lack of suitably qualified teachers results in offenders having to resort to other means and self-study to assist them.

The following quote from female 4 of the focus group explain up the general feeling that:

"Here we are having anyone in the level, level one and two and level four and then at the end Business Management that we are all doing and the Human Resource Management. Then it's from N4 to N6, and even the Grade 12's are here, those who are doing Grade 12. The way they can manage it...they do manage it but not to extent of us being asked our side as offenders. As offenders we struggle with lack of educators for the offenders who do their matric and only two educators who help us in the centre and some of their duties are done by the offenders for themselves and most do self-study. Then some offenders are appointed as the

study leaders or tutors who get the gratuity that varies as from R70, 00 to R126, 00 per month it only depends [FGF 4].

One such student offender who was appointed as a study leader had a mere positive opinion:

“I was appointed as a study leader or tutor and I got monthly gratuity. This is because is a working Correctional centre. Some people are working in textile, some are working in the library and some in the snoop. So all of us has to have job here because this is a Correctional centre with R126,00 per month that is our small gratuity [FGF 1]”, “So my job is the study leader and some of the offenders who are doing Business Management and Human Resource [FGF 3 and supported by FGF 1]”.

According to several studies conducted nationally and internationally researchers have established that education and training in all offenders’ correctional centres is essential (Garcia, 2013). These authors (Muntingh & Ballard, 2012) found that Correctional education and training curricula programme are perceived as and may offer benefits and opportunities to individual offenders. They maintain that education and training curricula in the correctional centres that has been consistently linked with reduced recidivism rates (Muntingh & Ballard, 2012).

Theme 5: Criminal records

The student offenders suggest that those whose sentences are shorter than six months and less than a year incarcerated must be given opportunity to register for correctional skills programmes and only be released when they are incorporated into learnerships and internships where they can obtain skills to prepare them for employment. Jobs can be a deterrent on student offenders to be incarcerated for the same mistake as keeping the offenders’ doors revolving for them to come in and out as the career criminals with criminal records from the correctional centres and not being rehabilitated and reintegrated. The rehabilitative environment covers and impacting all aspects of the implementation of the education and training curricula in the decision of being life disturbed by the criminal records of correctional environment for the offenders’ students motivation to register for the courses and how to learn in the present generic manner, including regimes, education and training curricula, skills programmes and correctional centre culture.

The female focus group respondent 2 explain that:

Myself, I am six and a half years being incarcerated. I was sent on the 21st January 2012 for the welding skills programme and I’ve to be released on the 30th November 2018 and I’m also in the welding course. I’m 47 years old but not doing any qualification subjects, then I have the secondary school education that can assist me to become an entrepreneur. I’ve learnt a lot..., even with all or struggle and because I know I won’t be able to go and find a formal job as it is because of my criminal record. I’ve already got plans in place to start my own business, to use the skills that I’ve got with the secondary education and with welding so already you can use your welding and you can start your own business so I ‘m sure there’s a

place for me to come back to the community as using the procedure of Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) for the student offenders [FGF 2].

The explanation of respondent 2 also supported by respondent 1 who stated that:

Meaning like if we are here, sometimes we are here because of mistake of maybe you were defending yourself or something and you end up inside prison. One, you were not bad person inside prison, you are still a good person inside but just because of you having a criminal record around you, around your life so you can't do any job or you can't have any qualification. You always think first of all, if I do this qualification I have the ability to do any qualification that I want to do but because of having this criminal record am I going to be able to have any job that I want with that qualifications [FGF 2].

The respondent 1 also echoes the statement of respondent 2 by stating that:

Like me, before I came to prison, I was doing Psychology from outside, so you can imagine that I'm thinking of if I can go and continue and finish it am I going to get into a job or what. Now I'm having this mind again of okay the skills that I have done inside prison I must use them because that one I don't have the guarantee that they will take me somewhere. The people outside they will just know that one was from prison then let's just leave it like that. So, the way Itumeleng is saying in her statement that's why we can't do the same procedure of Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) officials that they can come and sit with us and see how much rehabilitation has worked inside us as individuals for all of us so that we can have a chance of clearing that. As from prison we are criminals and that goes with us, it doesn't go with what kind of individual you are because we are not the same [FGF 1].

Theme6: Value of Education

The student offenders reported that the value of education and training curricula in the correctional centre are hampered and disturbed by the shortages of educationists. Shortage of resources to operate in the educational programmes as part of rehabilitation and reintegration system in BMMA by the one who is driven needs to maintain correctional centre control and motivate as to contain costs. According to Lawrence et al. (2009), focusing on improving the motivation of the offenders may be the most effective strategy for enhancing and motivating their positive interest in participating in the educational and training programmes. As a result, to motivate and enhance the long-term employment prospects, qualifications obtained in DCS are intended to reduce recidivism rate and quality life for the offenders in the correctional centre. Taken together, focus group, questionnaires and interviews of qualitative findings, it seems that majority of respondents obtained their qualifications within the DCS

whereas student offenders are not re-directed for their future to utilise it because of poor management and administration.

Subsequently, these findings are supported by some of the respondent 3 of female focus group negatively.

Respondent 3 views that:

There is no support system for me. I'm my own support system because whatever we discuss with them. It's only for that time but for myself, I have to keep myself, motivating myself, coming to the library to take books and reading, studying the way I said I was studying to keep myself busy out of them, every time even if they're in the open outside then I'm keeping myself busy inside the cell to go and study or do something so that I can just, but that relationship or that friendship between me and them, it's not even taking me anywhere [FGF3].

"With education I can get myself a career and what makes me different is the fact that I want to change" [FGF4].

With the increasing number of the offenders being released into the communities and getting re-incarcerated again is the issue of management and educationists who are not providing the educational and training curricula that has a critical policy in the value of education in correctional centres. The challenge is that some of the female student offenders are released in the middle of the academic year. The research study perceived that offenders learning new skills advance student offenders' academic wellness such as gaining knowledge on how to start or create own business when they are released and avoid re-offending.

CONCLUSION

The issue of improving education and training curricula programme as part of rehabilitation and reintegration at BMMA lies with all relevant stakeholders to address their critical education rehabilitation training problems. The availability of human resources such as qualified teachers and infrastructure at BMMA determine whether the implementation of education succeeds. The success of the education and training curricula programme depends on the good quality and sufficiency of the physical resources and human resources such as specialist teachers. Effective teaching combined with proper motivation and support to all offenders may yield good results in the implementation of education and training curricula programme as a tool of rehabilitation and reintegration in the BMMA.

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