

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INCARCERATION ON CHILDREN'S WELLBEING

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe's economic terrain has always moved towards downwards negative index since the last three decades. This involve a significant period of economic turmoil and this have several effects on community livelihoods and general quality of life and this culminated in increasing numbers of criminal behaviours in the country. Criminal behaviours are attributed to pushy factors like poverty, climate change, corruption, social inequality and poor governance. The objective of the research was therefore to identify the psycho-social effects of parental incarceration on children, to determine the physiological effect of parental imprisonment on children, to establish the social support systems that can be made available to children of incarcerated parents. To address research objectives a qualitative methodology was chosen as a priority, with in-depth interviews adhered to as a data collection method. Using snowballing and institutional referral sampling method, data was collected from participants of Mbare high density suburb a community popularly known for being poor, and having the national highest percentage of people community crime. Fifteen families were chosen to take part in this research and important ethics for children and adult participation were all comprehensively observed. The correctional services seem to be less effective in bringing about a sustainable society because it ignored the wish of the children who are left behind in the vicious circle of poverty, social vulnerability and criminal tendencies. The lack of proper and supportive parents has been identified as the mainstay for various maladaptive behavioural challenges facing children with incarcerated parents. The data have identified various psychosocial problems experienced by children due to absence of parents who was taken off by the correctional department. The parental absence seem to have created problems of the children who seem to have acquired antisocial personality disorders, as others have acquired criminal tendencies in a bid to fight for their own survival. The problems are spearheaded by lack of governmental involvements in protecting children, and the scarcity of donor community. Although there are some identifiable positives driven from research, but to a greater extent, the prison system requires systematic reengineering to suit the rehabilitation standards of the society.

KEYWORDS:

Incarceration, Psychological Effects, Prison Service, Zimbabwean Situation, Crime

1.0 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The economic growth of Zimbabwe has been characterised by a downwards trends that has seen the country domestic growth dropping per capita and also the general gross domestic product. This is attributed to numerous factors that involve the devastating climate, poor governance, sanctions imposed on the country, climate change amongst other numerous factors (Nsingo, 2010). All these factors do play a significant role in the increasing number of crimes recorded in the country per year, as crime is increasing becoming one the adaptive strategies of the majority poor Zimbabwe. In general, the number of children with parents in prison has been increasing in many developed and developing countries. Consequently, the plight of children of incarcerated parents has been of profound interest to researchers, criminologists, psychologists and community workers (Transparency International, 2005). This is because the growing prison population has also increased the number of children who are growing up with at least a parent in prison. Children's rights and protection is one of the high profile discussion of various international conventions like UNICEF, where various players do come up with global strategies make sure that every child's rights is protected. Children In prison are also on the agenda to protect both girl and boy child's personal rights (UNICEF, 2014)

According to the Bowlby there is an emotional tie between children and their parents where a true emotional bond develops over time. Thus, disruption of the attachment process because of parental imprisonment has negative consequences on the development of these children (Pattiol et al, 1996). As noted by Miller (2006), children of incarcerated parents are more likely to have poorer emotional behaviour and psychological development than children whose parents have not been incarcerated. Humanism on the other hand is a school thought that adhere to the values that with equal resources and support human beings are generally good, loving, empathetic, obedient and change agent (Eysenck, 2009). Humans are perceived in the positive dimension, and also in the context of needs requirements. The failure to have a conducive atmosphere for human survival, love, and community support is the bases for human abnormality and developmental problems. Considering the prison atmosphere and the overall environment, it is very difficult for children to realize their highest potential in life.

Eelier researches have demonstrated a correlation between inequalities in income level to the positive increase in crime (Soares, 2002). This is attributed to the greater concentration people would have in the hands of the few, and those few becomes easier targets for the poor of the society. On the other hand Beck (1967), have also found that the decreases in opportunities in society is directly linked to increase in crime rate in the modern society. The economic crisis since the last three decades have plunged Zimbabwe into a social decline and the general rise in poverty, as social delivery was highly compromised by the government as a result of poor remuneration, financial crisis, social inequality, poor governance and rise in unemployment levels. These economic conditions are basically the social architects of the deterioration of Zimbabwean's living conditions and the general quality of life, which culminated high crime index in the country (Nsingo, 2010).

The deteriorating economic environment in the country has been a push factor that detrimental affected the livelihoods of the urban population especially, the low high density suburb. Agriculture is a traditionally the backbone of national livelihoods, however due to the effects of climate change, Zimbabwe has been receiving infrequent precipitation which generally compromised the national agricultural output. This resulted in food products becoming too expensive for the ordinary Zimbabwe, and agricultural industrial organisations were compromised in performance due to poor harvest and cumulative years of droughts (Gukurume, 2014). On the other hand, the country has been struggling to attract investments due to the controversial indigenisation and mechanisation program that gives shareholder ownership to the Zimbabwean citizens. As a result, there country is

being starved of the much need from fund injection through direct foreign investments. It is due to this economic background that poor community of Mbare's high density has been ranked the most crime prone society in the Harare and Zimbabwe in general (Zim Stats, 2012).

In Zimbabwe in general and Mbare high density suburbs in particular, there has been increasing number of children with parents in prison. This is mainly because it is community with people who are living in actual abject poverty. Tyners (2015) have noted that the number of people incarcerated has been dramatically rising in high density suburbs such as Mbare suburbs. As noted by the Daily News of 20 June 2014, nearly 87% of women prisoners and 65% of male prisoners have children. In tandem with the above, the Herald of September 2014 also estimates that about 5% of the children under the age of 18 in the Mbare suburbs have a parent in prison. Globally, the prison system has made it difficult for parents to maintain ties with their children and the Zimbabwean Prison service is not an exception. Such children are likely to have encountered emotional difficulties including depression, low self-esteem, bedwetting, nightmares, shame, anxiety and attachment problems (Murray and Farrington, 2014). In line with the above information, children of incarcerated parents have become victims of circumstances in a society that have poor social service institutions and in urban centres there is poor family institutions for vulnerable children, which expose children to higher levels of social, economic, and psychological vulnerability (Nsingo, 2010)

Furthermore, there is limited literature on the psychological effects of parental imprisonment on children's wellbeing in Zimbabwe. Most of the literature is based on cases from developed countries which describes a wide range of psychological effects for the children of prisoners. As such, the study would offer an integrated conceptual and empirical analysis on the psychological effects of parental imprisonment on children's wellbeing. It is also the intention of the study to stimulate further discussions and debate on the subject of parental incarceration. Zimbabwe seems to have her own circumstances which are distinct to her own situation and this can provide the bases for a comprehensive unique case study. The safety of Children is incorporated in the millennium development goals, and as result there is need to explore the economic circumstances around vulnerable children of the incarcerated parents. The vulnerability of children requires research attention to avoid the vicious cycle of helplessness in such communities, as importance of parental guidance cannot be underestimated in the developmental journey of any child.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the psycho-social effects of parental incarceration on children.
2. To determine the physiological effect of parental imprisonment on children.
3. To mobilise the social support systems that can be made available to children of incarcerated parents.
4. To examine behavioural trends of children with parents who are incarcerated

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methodology has been chosen as the main methodological priority compared to other research methods, and the bases for this is the strengths carried by the methodology in exploring topics of this nature which provides inside, rich geo-cultural insight in-depth information about children circumstances. The researcher was given authority by Prison Service Authority to explore this social phenomenon using a qualitative methodology. In ethical terms, the institutional consent was acquired, and the privacy and anonymity of participants was assured to both institutions and participants. Informed consent was very vital for harnessing commitment of both research stakeholders. In situations where children were below 16 years, a guardian or a responsible adult would be the one giving responses during data collection method, to avoid traumatising of

children. Through referrals and networks of the institution (prison services), 15 families were identified for the research, and the participant was able to collect vital data for research of this nature, and the sample size was mainly influenced by the difficulties in finding participants because there are not easily identifiable. Thematic qualitative methodological analysis was used to explore the meaning of data in this research

3.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

3.1 Modelling and Parenting

The research has found that, one's parents is explained as the primary agent of socialisation. It seems children with parents in prison do demonstrate some behavioural characteristics as those of their parents. One guardian of the child who have incarcerated parents reported that the child have been community service for several times for fraud related crimes as that of parents who are still in prison. She explained that, *"my brother's son, is a dealer like his parents, he is more likely to join them soon....."* This therefore reflects the great importance of social learning in the establishment of human behaviour. Unfortunately in this case the behaviour is not working in favour of children, as the children seem to learn antisocial behaviour from parents who are in prison. The antisocial behavioural characteristics are increasingly becoming normalised in the child's immediate environment, and this makes the child socially misfit.

3.2 Lack of Attachment

The children with incarcerated parents seem to suffer poor quality relationships. The incarceration of parents seem to create a new home arrangements for children which is difficult for children to adjust thereby leaving long effects marks in the minds of the children. This situation is being attributed to lack of attachment and love amongst children and the parents. The main driver for such an arrangement is spearheaded by the Zimbabwean prison service system that seems to frustrate relationships between families when parents are in prison. The Zimbabwean prison system is accused for treating visitors as prisoners. This can be reflected from the report from one of the children participant who explained that, *"I was treated harshly with prison officers as if I am an offender and because of that I do not want to go back to see them..."* This theme demonstrated that prison visit is characterised by physical and emotional exhaustion and therefore very few children would love to go and visit their imprisoned parents. The tenseness emanates from risk forms of searches, surveillances, and lack of privacy, belittlement and humiliation of visitors of the imprisoned parents. These factors therefore work in coalition to facilitate lack of communication between parents and children. The parents in prison's touching of their children is often limited to a hug at the beginning and end of the visit, but at times one might see a visitor through a fence which makes the meeting less intimate. The Zimbabwean correctional services are basically located outside town, where transport connection is poor, and this discourages frequent children parental visits. This therefore seems to be another important factor that kills the attachment level between children and their parents. These children have reported to have lacked love, and prone to depression, and various mental disorders compared to others.

"He does not look like he is in love with anyone and sometimes he seems to pay little attention to detail in communication....."

The children themselves have reported numerous physical diseases, which care givers attribute this to stress and depressions. This involves headaches, ulcers, and various stomach aches. All these bodily diseases are directly connected to the children's mental state especially for those who have direct responsibility. They seem to suffer more compared to those who have one parent or an extended family guardian, as a manifestation of stress effects. Furthermore, the data also

demonstrated that imprisonment of parents increases chances of divorce as the remaining parent cannot wait for the partner in prison. The step parent normally comes with his or her own siblings, and love in the house is rarely given equally within the family tree. This was identified as the main reason of such children's lack of connection to school, community, friends, siblings and extended family. All these circumstances seem to work in collaboration to create difficult life styles for children, who more often suffer from emotional, and general mental trauma.

"I had to marry again, because I can wait for someone in prison, as a human being my life has to continue"

The Zimbabwean prison service seems to be ignoring cultural and social realities. Prison policies that restrict visitation privileges to biological relatives do not reflect some families' cultural and social realities. These policies can seriously disrupt parent-child contact during incarceration. In a situation where the child's guardian is not a biological relative of a prisoner, it is therefore difficult for the guardian to organise the meeting of the child with his or her parents, thereby destroying the important attachment that is required between the parents and children.

3.3 Economic and Psychological Challenges

Parental incarceration has financial implications for the family. The Children of parents in prison have reported strain economically, as the guardian or the remaining parent is usually not able to provide for the family. Parents usually are the children's bread winners and because of that incarceration children tend to be deprived of basic needs. This includes health, descent shelter, clothes, and food. This kind of life style is the driver of stress, depression, suicidal and also the main cause of inferiority amongst children.

"I cannot get any dollar to buy..... Food is a problem..... Why should I live in this world...."

Furthermore, the research reflected gender difference regarding how children respond to these economic conditions. Men have explained that they use various cheap drugs to deal with economic stressor that are available cheaply on the market. However, they also seem to suffer from extra stress when they start to consider their drug dependency and also when they consider the fact that they cannot afford to buy more drugs.

"I can't live without drugs..... But I can't always get money for drugs.... I also think it is slowly killing me"

The other reported case explained that women do not use drugs like their male counter parts; however, women seem to engage in early sexual behaviour.

"Many young girls engage in prostitution to get some funds to survive"

The combination of prostitution and drugs abuse seem to have detrimental effects on the children with parents in prison. This is mainly because the behaviour itself seem to compromise one's sense of identity, where one's positive self can be jeopardised by negative self-concept. This therefore can spearhead depression, stress, self-neglect, mental problems and suicidal thoughts as reported in the data discussion process. The economic challenges were further explained as the main cause of school dropout as the guardians or remaining parent usually struggle to sustain children's education. This create a platform of generational poverty as failure to acquire education do have a direct effects on the children's social mobility in the societal ladder. Lack of education prohibits one's life chances and potential for growth. This ends affect children's confidence level, self-pride and one's self efficacy. This situation has been attributed to be the cause of depression, and stress related problems amongst children with parents in prison.

3.4 Stigma and Children`s Identity

Crime coupled with the subsequent incarceration of the parent seem to create a room for stigma in the community, and this will simultaneously lead to the children of incarcerated parents to experience the same stigma second hand. In some instances, the stigma do leads to peer hostility, social hostility and the general isolation. Parental incarceration can also cause people to generally make unwarranted assumptions about children on the bases of actions of their parents.

“When something is stolen in this community, they all suspect me at initial point. Some do not want to see me with their children as they see a picture of my parents in me.....”

The stigma therefore do seem to take away children`s freedom of association, the right to determine their destiny and also it robs them of individual pride. The stigma seems to spread its wing to institutional levels, as one participant explained, *“I was booted out of many community projects like youth projects, housing in children`s home, church clubs and many.....”* The life chances of such an individual are very limited considering societal and institutional stigmatisations. The data therefore stakeholders` attention to the challenges faced by children of the prisoners in the absence of their parents.

3.5 Government Role and Children`s Welfare

The research has also revealed interesting ideas regarding governmental position in relation to child protection policies. The government is not doing enough to protect the families of the incarcerated parents. In actual fact the government with its arms seem to be the greatest facilitator of institutional discrimination and stigmatisation.

“When I could not pay my fees, BEAM paid for me, but my headmaster removed me, because my father is not dead but he is in prison.....”

This therefore reflects the opinion that government is not doing enough to help vulnerable children who have their parents behind the bars. The social welfare programs seem to be also the architect of institutional discrimination, because their priority is towards orphans more than they deal with children with incarcerated parents. The government support centres seem not to care about children in this situation and as result there is the sense of loss, and hopelessness when breadwinner parent is taken off through incarceration. In other words lack of government position towards helping these vulnerable children makes their life difficulty and hopeless. This is why they will at times resort to antisocial ways of survival, as the guardian may not be able to provide for the remaining children. The custodians may not necessarily have the capacity to take care of the remaining children

3.6 Physiological Effect of Parental Imprisonment

There are some physical problems that have been observed in the data collected for this research. Some physical problems were based on reports from the participants who confessed their physical situation. Physical wounds and injury marks could be observed in the body of some of the participants. This could be attributed to community fights, or injuries after committing crimes. One guardian did shed light on this topic where she said, *“I am scared for these children, community members want kill them...”* Malnutrition and physical frailness was another observable testimony of children`s physical challenges. Some even reported physiological problems like headaches, stomach aches and inconsistent menstruation monthly bleeding for girls. The physiological problems seem to pose psychological stress which also adds pressure to the psychological trauma these children are experiencing. Basing on this point, Children are suffering from both ends, and they require public attention towards their situation.

3.7 Positive Results of Incarceration to Children

It is not all doom and gloomy as the incarceration processes is also characterised by some positive outcomes in some isolated events and cases. Regardless of the fact that numerous themes have explored the negative sides' effects of parental imprisonment towards the life of children, research data also demonstrated surprising findings. In the case of an abusive family relationship, children seem to develop a sense of relief when an abusive parent is taken off the family by judicial authorities through imprisonment. The fathers were identified as the ones who actually pose real threat to children by exposing children to incidence of domestic violence. As a result, when the father is taken off, it is a source of joy, as one women reported, "...my children are now happy because the father was a family monster... He did not know that he has a responsibility to take care of the family and he has been abusive..."

The sense of loss is not felt in the family mainly because the parent is not the sole provider of the family. Besides, some children have reported that after losing parents to the correctional authorities. They developed positive survival skills as some reported the beginning of their entrepreneurial skills journey to overcome economic gap that was left by their parents.

"I had to go to Mozambique with others regardless of my age, and now I have my nice car....."

This reflects the opinion that parental incarceration in some instances it can work as a blessing in disguise as it seems to tap the best within an individual. In other words, the difficulties posed by the separation from the family are the form of negative reinforcement, where the best behaviour from an individual can be inspired by current challenges

3.9 Data Analysis and Discussion

Lack of societal support is the greatest concern for children with incarcerated parents. The government's main social responsibility is the welfare of the societies without discrimination or favouritism and unfortunately it is one of the missing factor in this research (Dozier & Bick, 2007). The government should be able to provide basic human rights requirement for children while complementing high profile organisations like UNICEF in eradicating poverty and improving the welfare of every child in the planet (Arditti, 2003). In actual fact the situation seem to fuel the culture of child labour (entrepreneurships) which makes children's life chances very limited. The government seem not to do enough towards that agenda, and this may be due to priority issues or capacity issues as well. The government needs to engage the private stakeholders and also international organisation to come with programs that address the welfare of the vulnerable children left with incarcerated parents. This will curb the potential of these children to engage in criminal behaviours as a way of survival. It is unfortunate that, in recent years the Zimbabwean government has been hostile to the nongovernmental organisation, a traditional support community for such vulnerable children.

Humanistic theorists like Abraham Maslow and Carl Rodgers have proposed that human beings have fundamental basic rights that they need to grow and to reach their fullest potential. These rights do involve the right to basic needs protection, the right to love and unconditional support from one's community (Allard et al, 2006). Maslow's hierarchy of needs proposed the so called basic needs in pyramid forms. The first hierarchy is the basic needs which involves food, shelter, clothes amongst others, then followed by safety needs, social needs, ego needs and self-actualisation (Allard et al, 2006). Reflecting on the above discussion children with incarcerated parents seem to be deprived of these basic rights. In other words, incarceration of parents seem to be a processes of dehumanising children, as they are deprived of their basic needs and other secondary requirements. Majority of them do not have proper shelter, clothes, and even safe water. They do not have financial, psychological and social security, thus these children are left exposed. Their

social relationships are very much compromised considering the stigma associated with the children's families. This also compromised the children's esteem needs, and destroy any hope of self-actualisation. In Maslow's terms a normal human development should follow this discussed pattern, and failure to do so would then lead to the formation of abnormal behaviour and difficult personalities (Arditti et al 2005). Therefore all traces of crime, violence and personality disorders reported amongst the children of the parents in prisons they have a direct connection to their quality of life in relation to human needs. It is from the above background that it is of paramount importance that correctional service needs to consider children's welfare when they pose justice on offenders (Babbie et al, 2003).

Furthermore an area of concern deduced from the able data collected is the level of psychological problems associated with incarceration. This mainly attributed to the system's correction strategy that seem to underestimate the important of attachment amongst children of the parents in prison. There is a plethora of literature that demonstrates that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to have poorer emotional behaviour and psychological developmental issues than children whose parents have not been incarcerated (Bernstein, 2005). The problems such as social withdrawal, criminal involvement, concentration, depression and aggressive behaviours amongst many, are all linked to the level attachment experienced by the child from early in his or her developmental path (Houck & Booker Loer, 2002). Attachment is defined as the strong emotional bond one feels for special individuals in one's life, that lead them to have a sense of pleasure and joy when they interact with them, that is they are comforted by their nearness. Bowlby's attachment theory is the most widely accepted view of the infant's emotional tie to the caregiver (Miller, 2006). He suggests, that by the time an infant is one year of age the child will have developed some form of attachment to familiar people who have cared for the infant and responded to his or her needs for survival (emotional care and physical needs). This demonstrate the importance of parenting style in relation to child's overall development which is undermined by the incarceration process. The incarceration process seems to deprive children of secure form of attachment where a child develops a sensitive and responsive relationship with the care giver. This is mainly because the guardian or the care giver usually do have other responsibility besides looking after the child of absent parent, or because the guardian do not feel obligated to take full responsibility for the children's welfare (Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002). They further explained that majority of the care givers do pose the blame on the incarcerated parents; thereby divert poor parenting skills to the absent member of the family. This is likely to create an insecure form of attachment. In terms of parenting styles it seems the system of Zimbabwe do leave the children with to live in a Permissive kind of parenting, where the caretaker or guardian parent may make few demands letting children do pretty much as they please. Some guardian seems to minimize time they spend with the children and their emotional involvement with them, doing little more than providing for basic needs. This creates a platform for acquisition and learning of antisocial behaviors. Probably this is why majority of children from incarcerated families seem to have behavioral and emotional problems. They seem to have been deprived of the important life concept known as parenting. Therefore, incarceration should be done in context of child interest because child protect measures are more compromised by the correctional system of the day, hence the result of psycho-social development problems.

Besides, the stigma pursuing children with incarcerated parents seem to have detrimental effects on the child's confidence. This situation calls for coaching and counseling's services targeting communities. According to Albert Bandura children learning is difficult when they do not have what is known as self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as one's belief that one can perform in one's life (Eysenck, 2009). The children's belief that they can change their life situation has could be destroyed by social labels and stigmatization. This could be the bases for some inferiority feelings

haunting these children. Alfred Adler's theory have posed that human being have an innate desire to overcome inferiority with superiority (Banyard et al, 2010). The failure of environmental circumstances to support an individual to pursue superiority can lead to self-defeating attitudes pronounced as inferiority complex. There are numerous factors that can lead to the sense of inferiority amongst the children which includes the lack of family support, stigmatization, discrimination, lack of government support, lack of government support, amongst many. Lack of these factors does frustrate opportunities for human growth, confidence, self-worth, personal pride. This seems to concur with theorist like Carl Rodgers who has mentioned the importance of the 'self' in shaping human behavior. The 'self' refers to the self-concept which is defined as the knowledge one have about him or herself. The Children with incarcerated parents tend to have a negative perception of them due to stigma, as they are reduced to societal laughingstock. They do not perceive themselves reaching what Rodgers called ought self. Carl Rodgers has mentioned that that when human beings cannot connect their relative self with ideal self, they tend to develop abnormal behaviors (Fernald & Fernald 2007). A deduction from this discussion demonstrates that, children with parents in prison there are more vulnerable as their social identity is under threat, and there are likely to develop criminal behavior and other socially unwanted behaviors.

Trauma has been mentioned another important factor associated with children with parents in prison. This is likely creating various phobias among these children, like the fear of being with the public which is known as agoraphobia. Majority of these children prefer to be in isolated world thus they avoid public interactions, that's this research reflect the formation of Avoidant Personality Disorder. Karen Horney has even mentioned that, human personality is formed in respond to their anxieties (Simmons, 2000). The anxieties involve social anxieties, economic anxieties, and psychological anxieties (Banyard, 2010). Although the anxieties can cause normal development where some individuals may be creative and be hard workers from their social anxieties, however, the data above have demonstrated that more often social anxieties do not work in favor of normal development for children. As demonstrated by the data criminal tendencies, abnormal personality disorders, negative personal imagers, lack of self-confidence, these amongst many are some of the way in which children response to social anxieties posed by the absence of their parents who are incarcerated. Therefore, there is need for a comprehensive strategy through participation of psychologist to come up with child protection program that protect children left by incarcerated parents.

Moreover, there is a close connection between the findings of literature and that of this research. There is also an important difference between the developing world countries and the developing countries' correctional service strategy. In the developing world people in prison are allowed to have time with their families and the imprisonment process seems to be a rehabilitation process than retribution as the Zimbabwean situation. In other words, the Zimbabwean correctional services seem to create child trauma due to conditions that their parents are living in and children are very much aware of those conditions, and that creates mental trauma. Besides, the developing world have a comprehensive social service programs that seem to incorporate the interest of the child, that is, they have child protection measures that are very efficiency than the Zimbabwean situation which means incarceration does less harm for the children in first world countries (Wright & Seymour, 2002). There is strong national budget that is meant to address vulnerable children especially those with incarcerated parents, and this budget caters for the children's education, health, food and other important children needs. Therefore one can observe the contrast between the developing world and developing world in terms of how they address the concerns of Children with incarcerated parents. The correctional service should not make the situation of the children very much precarious as

founded in this research, but correctional method should have a positive effect for the parents, families and the bigger community (Wright & Seymour, 2002).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Zimbabwe's economic terrain is following the downward index and it is creating an atmosphere that is not sustainable for human survival. Poverty, political instability, unemployment, cash shortages, corruption, amongst other factors has collaborating in shaping the economic juncture of the modern day Zimbabwe. This background has created a significant number of crime offenders, and the number of people in Zimbabwe has been increasing since the instability of the year 2008. This situation has created a vacuum in the society, where children are left with a guardian, who at times might be a member of the extended family, remaining partner or a mere friend. This exposes children to various economic, social, political and psychological problems. The parental absence have created problems of the children whom majority of them have acquired antisocial personality disorders, and other have acquired criminal tendencies in a bid to fight for their own survival. The children with parents in Prison seem to be deprived of basic economic needs and this has created developmental problems for children with incarcerated parents. The problems is spearheaded by lack of governmental involvements in protecting children, the scarcity of donor community, and also lack of parental audit, that is exploring children's situation on who is taking care of the child. The lack of external support creates a state of helplessness for children who in return may develop self-defeating attitudes, inferiority complex, low index of self-efficacy, and criminal behavioural tendencies. Therefore, there is need for various societal stakeholders like religious communities, correctional service department, arms of government to come up with a comprehensive strategy that is meant to make sure the correctional services is creating sustainable future rather than cycling a bunch of criminals through creation of generational poverty. All these stakeholders have a role to play in improving the children's wellbeing, specifically these children who have parents staying in prison.

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