

Corrections in the Criminal Justice System

Name

Institution



Part I: Correctional Agency in California

In the United States, lawsuits involving adult offenders are processed through the criminal justice system. Contrary to what most people believe, the criminal justice system does not only rely on the courts but also other two ancillary entities including law enforcement and correctional agencies. Each ancillary entity plays its specific roles to assist the legal system in carrying out justice. Although punishments and sentences are ruled in courts, reinforcement of these punishments is conducted by the correctional agencies, which usually include correctional officers, probation officers, and parole officers. These officers ensure that sentences imposed on each offender are carried out as ordered by the court.

In California, several correctional agencies provide correction services in the criminal justice system. One of these correctional agencies is the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, which is situated in Sacramento (“Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation,” n.d.). In particular, this correctional agency comprises of the state correctional officers, criminal investigators, peace officers, special agents, and state parole officers. The major responsibility for this correctional agency is ensuring that offenders complete their sentences and punishments in accordance with the courts’ ruling. By so doing, this correctional agency helps the legal system in ensuring that the offender and the victim have acquired justice. Victims feel that justice has been exercised when their offenders are punished and sentenced for their offences. Likewise, offenders acquire justice when sentences and punishments are fair depending on offences committed. Although punishment alleviates guilt among most offenders, these offenders also need to re-unite with society after their sentences, which is one of this agency’s responsibilities.

The roles of this correctional agency are two-fold; incarcerating juveniles and adult offenders who have been imprisoned and also offering various services during incarceration to assist inmates in successfully reuniting with society (“Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation,” n.d.). In particular, this correctional agency provides rehabilitation services such as psychological health care, drug abuse treatment, vocational training, and formal education including college and high school education. The agency works under an immense pressure to capitalize on rehabilitation role in efforts to tremendously reduce the rising recidivism in California.

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has several departments that play different roles. Firstly, adult parole ensures that parole agents have assisted parolees in reintegrating into society. Secondly, the adult program offers evidence-based programs to offenders and establish a solid partnership with communities and society to which these offenders return. The agency also performs parole hearings including parole rescission, revocation, and consideration hearings. Moreover, there is standards authority within this correctional agency, which consists of an advisory board that is responsible for coordinating state and local detention issues (“Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation,” n.d.).

Part II: Controversies of Restorative Justice

Restorative justice refers to a system within the criminal justice that emphasizes on rehabilitating offenders through effective reconciliation with their victims and also the society at large (Gideon & Sung, 2011). Conversely, incarceration focuses on confining offenders in prison for breaking the law. The nature of punishments between these two systems has been a source of controversies among people including lawmakers. However, restorative justice seems to be advantageous over incarceration as well as other types of punishments. The following section

explains the merits of restorative justice over imprisonment as argued by the proponents of restorative justice to convince communities.

Firstly, proponents of restorative justice contend that restorative justice is cheaper than incarceration. Sherman and Strang (2007) argue that the cost of incarceration is higher than the cost of restorative justice. Inmates who have been imprisoned spend the government's resources while in prison without contributing to economic growth. However, restorative justice allows offenders to re-unite with the community whereby they also contribute to the growth of the economy.

Secondly, supporters of restorative justice argue that restorative justice reduces recidivism more effectively than incarceration. As such, offenders that go through restorative justice are less likely to repeat offending compared to those that are incarcerated (Sherman & Strang, 2007). Restorative justice addresses the source of an offence committed by a particular offender to determine the appropriate correction services deserved by that specific offender. By so doing, most offenders benefit from the correction services that help them to reduce repeat offending.

Thirdly, supporters of restorative justice argue that offenders that go through the restorative system suffer less post-traumatic stress after breaking the law as opposed to incarceration (Sherman & Strang, 2007). One source of stress among offenders is stigma from the community. Offenders are always worried about how the community would treat them after being processed through the criminal justice system. Fortunately, restorative justice emphasizes on reconciling offenders with their communities so worries about stigma are reduced. However, incarceration does not necessarily initiate reconciliation between the offenders and their

communities. For that reason, offenders suffer stress because they wonder how their communities would receive them when they return home.

Additionally, restorative justice decreases the desire of the crime victims to pursue aggressive revenge against the perpetrators (Sherman & Strang, 2007). In most cases, restorative criminal justice engages victims in the reconciliation process with their offenders. During the reconciliation process, victims receive advice that helps them to disregard revenge for offences committed against them. Conversely, incarceration does not engage the victims and offenders in reconciliation. In most cases, victims await their offenders to finish their sentences so that they can revenge. As a result, the victims eventually become offenders.

In conclusion, I believe that the community model is the best model of correction because it supports restorative justice. Specifically, the goal of the community model is to reintegrate offenders into their communities (Cole & Smith, 2008). In this model, political and social values influence correctional goals. This model does not support incarceration because its proponents perceive prisons as institutions designed to hinder offenders from enjoying a crime-free lifestyle. I suppose that the community model is the best correctional model because Cole and Smith (2008) argue that it focuses on offering psychological treatment to offenders and increasing opportunities for them to succeed their lives as citizens. Furthermore, the community model allows offenders to maintain a connection with their communities and families. Community model supports probation to allow offenders to seek vocational training and education that would help them in their lives. Also, the community model requires offenders to be released on parole after serving imprisonment sentence for a short time.

References

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