Research paper

PERCEPTION OF ICED'S STAFF ON PARENTHOOD IN ALBANIAN PRISON

Social Science

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Abstract

Staffs of prison have played an important role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. At a time when the prison population is changing and human rights approach also is include in all the aspects of our lives, the roles and challenges of prison's staff should reflect these changes also. Parenting is one of them. This article presented the perception of 10 prison's staff with psycho-social profile in 5 ICED Albania on parenting in prisons. The main issues addressed include the challenges faced by parents in prisons, relationships with children / relatives and programs they offer as professionals. Was used qualitative study and as instrument was a semi-structured interview. Parenthood in Albanian prisons seems to represent an entirely new issue. Gender norms seem to favor staff discussions only with mothers imprisoned. Lack of proper parenting programs and gender direction proves that it should be done more in this direction.

1. Introduction

Today in the world the number of prisoners is about 10,142,256. More than twice are detainees (ICPS, 2012). Many of them live in inadequate living conditions, malnutrition, lack of drinking water, violence, corruption, disease and lack of activities to keep the body and mind in functioning manner. Today their number anywhere in the world is experiencing a significant increase. In Albania, according to ICPS, in early 2011, there were 4750 prisoners, while according to updated data from the General Directorate of Prisons in Albania showed that until April 2012 this number was increased, on 4813. Incarcerated in Albania are located in institution of penal execution of decisions (IPED) in these districts: Kavaja, Tirana, Durres, Peqin, Rrogozhinë, Burrel, Kukes, Fier, Kruja, Fushe Kruja, Korca and Lezha.

In Albania, the reform of social services and IPEDs has been and continues to be a very important aspect of democratization during the post-communist period. Until the beginning of the 90s of XX century, Albania, like many Eastern European countries, had a social and penitentiary system based on the dominant ideology, communism, while the treatment of prisoners and their families were almost inhuman. The prisoners and their families, including children, suffer from insufficient food, lack of medical supplies, forced labor and systematic violence.

Reforming the justice system and the transferring of prisons and detention centers under the Ministry of Justice from Ministry of Interior it was founded one of the most important steps. A new democratic system resulted in the creation and development for the first time in Albania the social work profession. Despite the difficulties to be recognized and perceived, the profession since 2001 is part of the organogram of each IPED. Their role, among others, included the mediation to establish relationships between children and incarcerated parents. However, reforms in the justice system, to establish the institution's social environments, should go hand in hand

with other reforms in social services in the manner that prisoner's children parenthood in prison to receive appropriate attention and maximum services.

The purpose of this research is the presentation of professionals' perception working with incarcerated parent on IPED aiming not only to identify the needs of parents and their children but also the routes to be followed to tackle these social policies for this category.

In accordance with the purpose of the study and based on the existing literature, fundamental research questions in this study were:

1. What are the challenges faced by incarcerated parents in Albania to develop their relationship with the child / s perceived by prison's staff?

2. In what way social services providers, social workers and administrators address the relationship between children and incarcerated parents?

2. Methodology

This is a qualitative study based on depths interviews with prison's staff.

2.1 Sampling

It would be ideal to study accomplished all incarcerated parents, their children and staff working with them. But in a real situation it is almost impossible. For this, the Grinnell and Williams (1990) have proposed sampling, which is the process of selection of individuals who will participate in the study. Sampling involves trying to understand the target population, rather than describing it in itself, but seen as a representation of the basic characteristics of the population (Strydom and Venter, 2002).

However, the problem how it should be the number of participants in a qualitative study continues to be part of the discussions between professionals in the field of research. Their conclusions consider the time of study, the difficulties of the target population and their transcripts (Adler and Adler, 2011). Researchers in qualitative research based on interviews suggest purposeful sampling, without probability. The sample selected not fully represent the general population, it simply represents himself (Cohen and Knafl, 1993). This study aims to describe and explore the perception of prison's staff about parenthood in prison. The sampling without probability adequately accomplishes the aim of this study. The results cannot be generalized to a wider population.

This study included 10 interviews with psycho- social sector in 5 main prisons in Albania, IPED in Tirana, Lezha, Kruja, F.Kruja and Korca. Staffs interviewed in the study were selected based on their position in the 5 IPED where the study was conducted. Were interviewed:

1. "Ali Demi" - 3 employees;
2. Fushe - Kruja - 1 employee;

3. Kruja - 2 employees;
4. Lezha - 2 employees;
5. Korca - 2 employees.

2.2 Design and Development of the Interview

The design of instruments is done by relying on the work of Holsteinit and Gubriumit (1997). It was used "semi-structured interviews" which focus on active techniques and not fully structured questions.

Participants were interviewed only once for about 60 minutes. Interviews with them are registered with the recorder. The place for conducting interviews with them has served their offices. Respondents were assured that their data will be saved and will be used only for study purposes and that their privacy will not be violated. Notes held by their transcription are deleted. All audio recordings are stored in a locked place. After each transcription, tape is destroyed.

2.3 Data Analysis

The interviews with respondents were highlights into narrative. Narratives are described by Gubriumi and Holsteini (1997) as "accounts that offer some schemes, implicitly or explicitly, for organizing and understanding the relationships between objects and events described". Narratives help us in the coding process. This study used open coding process.

The methodological procedures were developed in these four phases:
1) The creation and organization of data
2) Coding data
3) Development of topics based on data, and
4) Connection and interpretation of themes.

3. Results and Discussion
3.1 Background of the participants

In terms of gender, five participants of the study were female and five were male. The majority of employees in this sector have had teaching experiences. Just recently the social worker has managed to become part of this sector in particular and the prison system in general. .

3.2. Organization of psycho-social service in prison (P-SS)

Today is discussed for the strategy of rehabilitation programs in prisons. For this purpose, in any P-SP are set up and developed programs that aimed to create a safe environment and hopefully for the prisoners and their families.

P-PS has as employees' social workers, psychologists and educators. They stayed into the regime of prison from 9:00 to 13:00 Work in this sector is organized in some aspects:

• Psychological assistance, which relates to individual and group counseling every day of the week.

• Assists in continuous and regular contact with families.

• Assistance in education and reading room.

• Improve sports activities.

• Improve computer courses and foreign language courses.

3.3 Problems of parents in prison

In general, the staff of P-SP who is caring for prisoners is faced with their difficulties. It seems that the employees feel the inability to solve all the prisoners' problems. The most problems mentions from them are related with roommate, change of the room, with requests for additional meetings or phone calls etc.

Another problem is the distance from the family residence is very crucial for the relation between mother/father in prison and their family/children. It is noted that when their homes are near the prison institutions intensity of their meetings is increase. This immediately reflected in psychological and economic stability of families and prisoners.

"Location of the prison compare to the residence of the families reflects their relationship."

1, Korca, prison

The main problems that participants mentioned for the parents in prison related to their families were linked with:

• Relationships and social problems with the family;

• Abuse with alcohol or various drugs;

• Stigma from the communities when their relatives live.

3.3.1 Motherhood in prison

Women are perceived as one of the most vulnerable categories of the prisons. Female prisoners face with many problems as economics, violence, and lack of children or other stress.

Mothers in prison under the old rules of the prison had the right to meet twice in 24 hours with their children from half an hour for each meeting and during the day they were under the care of teachers and other staff designated for this purpose. While the new rules women can stay and take care of their babies 24 hours a day. Once the child goes three years old he deals sent to orphanage institutions, under the care of the state until they become of age or under guardianship legally taken from their mothers when they finish the sentence pronounced by justice.

The participants' perception is that mothers are the only support for the children. In this context they establish parenthood programs only in the sectors of the prison that have women. One of them is the kindergarten in the only sector for the women in Albania. Kindergarten in prisons include educational programs and support groups for mothers, so that they learn about child growth and development and will be able to be mothers. These educational hours doomed encourage mothers to develop reflective capacities, thinking about the needs of children and helping them grow up as citizens.

"In this context, the prison represents an opportunity to improve their self and to serve as a productive member of the family and community after the release.

1, Tirana prison

3.4 Action plans for parents in prison

When a prisoner come for the first time in prison, in five days a staff of P-SP make the assessment of him/her. All the collected information is put it in personal folder when is defined and if the prisoner is a parent or not. With all the prisoners that are parents, staff of P-SP developed social programs that include:

• Establish contacts with children when they are interrupted;

• Distance parenting programs.

These programs aim to reduce the negative and risky factors that isolation passes in the life of the parent and child / children through psychological and social support.

"We take this information once when the inmate comes to the institution. Then arrange a meeting with him and on the basis of information that share with us we begin to develop individual work plans with him/her"

2, F.Kruja Prison

In the meantime, when we asked about their effectiveness, participants can only allude or give us an arbitrary answer. It is never realized any evaluation of these programs, either by the General Directorate of Prisons, either by various NGOs nationals or internationals one.

4. Conclusions

The difficulties of the parent population in prison related families and especially their children are increase year by year. In Albania, according this study, the women population of prison feels pain mostly than other target-groups of prison's population. They testify higher levels of abandonment by the family and their children than fathers in prison. This result affect gender roles and stereotypes, where women faced with blaming, abandoned and ignore while for men it seems that their punishment reinforce their dominant roles in families and communities. Another illustrative factor is the fact that women mostly are convincing for killing their husbands. This

accuse according to the professionals, isolates them immediately from any contact with their children and other members of the family. Parents during the period of the prison risk losing their role in children's lives because of limitations of communication, the lack of physical contact , the non-existence of parenting programs or as a result of possible guardianship or adoption of their children. In our country the policies to support this category are in sporadic forms.

5. References

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