

BOTSWANA PRISONS SERVICE

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on**

**Effective Crime Prevention:
Keeping pace with new developments**

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will attempt to discuss effective crime prevention and the need to keep pace with new developments within the criminal justice system. It will also attempt to relate the situation in Botswana to its theme: **EFFECTIVE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND KEEPING PACE WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS.**

The paper will start off by looking at crime and its characterisation. This position is intended to assist easy understanding of the general discussion in the paper.

CRIME

Crime is generally understood to refer to proscribed behaviour or conduct. Such behaviour and conduct will always be stated in criminal laws of different jurisdictions. Crime is both legally and morally blame worthy.

However, some behaviour and conduct may not be classified as criminal but remain morally unacceptable all the same. Such behaviour or conduct constitutes deviance from societal norms. But unlike those proscribed, there is no prescribed punishment for social deviance.

Social deviance must be addressed and prevented to the extent possible. For, social deviance leads to crime, or put the other way round, crime is a natural consequence of social deviance.

The need to proscribe certain behaviour and conduct is an unanswerable one. And, so is the need for societal norms. Both are aimed at social, political and economic stability and, more importantly, social welfarism. Without criminal codes and social norms defining some kinds of behaviour as appropriate in given contexts, and others as inappropriate, human activities would collapse into chaos (Giddens 1993 Page 15).

EFFECTIVE CRIME PREVENTION

It has already been stated that criminalising certain behaviour and conduct aims at achieving a stable and welfare society. Put simply, crime is an evil that all societies of the world should join hands to root out. There is no doubt that societies have been and continue to work towards the prevention of crime.

Crime prevention is in many forms. These forms range from certainty of arrest and punishment, rehabilitation and individualised treatment of offenders. Some of these forms are as old as crime itself.

Arrest and punishment of offenders is the most ancient form of crime prevention. The fact that people know that they will be arrested and punished accordingly if they committed crime carry some degree of deterrence towards potential offenders. The deterrence which, translates into fear to engage in crime, is in itself preventative. This form is based on the principle of retribution whereby an offender has to atone for his behaviour or conduct by being made to suffer to the extent that wronged society.

With passage of time, other means of preventing crime were developed. Among such means is the principle of rehabilitation of offenders so that they might not engage in crime after release from prison. This appears to be based on the theory that:

Crime must primarily be seen as an expression of individual characteristics. Resulting either from special wickedness To be controlled by effective punishment, Or from individual pathology to be Controlled by effective diagnosis and Individualised treatment (Roshier 1989 P. 126)

On the basis of that theory, offenders are to be transformed into law-abiding citizens through disciplinary training. Training to be offered to offenders should be such that they will gain skills which will assist them in either formal employment or informal employment opportunities after release from prison.

Or in deserving cases, offenders should be given individualised treatment to address the inadequacies found in them (offenders).

KEEPING PACE WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS

New socio-economic and political changes affecting many societies of the world have had a negative impact on the organisation of governments and societies. They have brought about unhealthy cross-cultural dilutions as the changes have caused the problem of migration.

Migration and cross-cultural dilutions have presented new challenges to the world. For, new dimensions of crime have emerged despite the existence of legal instruments on crime prevention.

Many issues arose from migration. Among such issues are transnational criminal syndicates, prostitution and human rights abuses. Much more seriously, there emerged xenophobia and racial hatred due to cultural differences.

In order to keep pace with new developments and the attendant issues, governments should cooperate closely on the area of criminal justice. They need to support their arms of criminal justice, and individual national arms should be able to reach one another and interact.

Another way of dealing with or keeping pace with new developments is to enhance the policy of crime prevention. The way to do that would be by incorporating prevention of crime in national policies. One major policy would be to include prevention of crime in schools curricula.

BOTSWANA CASE

Botswana has long acknowledged that incidences of crime threaten the socio-economic development of any nation. In this connection, the country has developed strategies for the prevention of crime. The strategies are driven by the Police, Judiciary and Prisons.

The Police Service has a Unit coordinating crime prevention activities. The unit works closely with Police stations to involve communities in crime prevention. Thus, crime prevention is a core policy of the Police Service.

The Judiciary is as well involved. It does that by awarding extra mural labour sentences. Extra mural labour sentences are community service oriented. They save less hardened criminals, or offenders convicted of minor offences from honing their skills with hardened criminals in prison.

And finally the Prisons Service. The Prisons service is the custodian of offenders. It offers varied training to offenders so that offenders could learn life-earning skills. Training is offered mainly in carpentry, building, upholstery, tailoring, welding, pottery, agriculture and general education.

The Prisons also release prisoners on extra mural labour and parole. Release on extra mural labour or parole takes into account the character of the prisoner as well as his or her response to training in prison. So, the schemes motivate offenders to shed criminal tendencies in order to earn an early release.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CONGRESS

In order for nations to succeed in the effective prevention of crime and keep pace with new developments, it is recommended that nations should:

- (a) adopt prevention of crime into major national policies;
- (b) involve communities in all activities for the prevention of crime. Community involvement should be the general rule and not the exception;
- (c) promote prevention of crime as a cultural value;
- (d) develop electronic finger printing especially in view of the problem of migration;
- (e) promote intercultural tolerance to prevent xenophobia and
- (f) adopt an international protocol on the prevention of crime.

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