

**UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF INCARCERATION ON PRISONERS' FAMILIES  
IN KENYA: CASE OF BUSIA COUNTY**

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## ABSTRACT

Prison punishment is the most comprehensive social control, regulation, and crime prevention mechanism. The purpose of this study was to examine the unintended socio economic impacts of incarceration on prisoners' families and look at the prospects of it causing criminal replacement and finally propose possible remedies. This was achieved through four objectives: to evaluate the social impacts of incarceration on prisoner's families; to evaluate the economic impacts of incarceration on prisoner's families; to establish whether there is a relationship between these socio-economic impacts of incarceration and adaptation to criminal life by family members of the incarcerated; and finally to propose policy measures to be put in place to address these challenges. This study employed a mix of quasi experimental design and non experimental design. The approach adopted by the study was both qualitative and quantitative. The study targeted a population of 500 inmates currently held at Busia GoK Prison and their family members. A sample of 50 inmates was used in the study. Additionally, the study had five focus group discussions of prisoner's family members with each focus group discussion consisting of seven to ten members. This study established that stigma was the most reported social impact (42, 84.0%) followed by hostility from community members (36, 72%), children being bullied at school (34, 68.0%), isolation (30, 60.0%) and loneliness (15, 30.0%). The negative economic effects of incarceration on families included financial challenges (48, 98.0%), loss of jobs (37, 75.5%), loss of family properties (29, 59.2%), reduced family income (41, 83.7%) among others. Overall, the survey recorded a family criminal replacement among 24 respondents, thus a prevalence of 48.0%. This study established that socio economic impacts of incarceration that had a significantly higher proportion of family criminal replacement among respondents included stigma ( $p=0.028$ ), Isolation of families ( $p<0.001$ ), children being bullied at school ( $p = 0.026$ ), disruption of the lives of families ( $p=0.024$ ), hostility from community members ( $p=0.003$ ) loss of jobs ( $p=0.037$  and lowered the earnings ( $p= 0.028$ ). Based on these findings this study recommended that the Kenya Prison Services, nongovernmental organisations and the Ministry of Education should establish civic education programmes to demystify imprisonment to prevent stigmatisation and unfair treatment of the family members of the incarcerated by the community. The study further recommends that the government through the Ministry of Home Affairs should offer financial support that can meet the basic needs of food, water and shelter to families of the incarcerated.