

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON INMATES ATTITUDES TOWARDS WATAREKA PRISON WORK CAMP AND CLOSED PRISON AT WELIKADA

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In Sri Lanka, the widely used punishment for offenders is imprisonment. During the last 2-3 decades, in many countries in the World, the prison population has increased rapidly. In Sri Lanka, imprisonment per 100,000 was 50 in 1989, but it was increased up to 150.1 in 2013. This was due to the fact that both grave crime offenders and minor offenders were punished with imprisonment. This research reviewed the attitudes of prison inmates towards the work camp at Watareka and closed prison at Welikada. The research problem of this study was articulated with reference to the functioning of the prison institutions with different programs and the response of inmates to those correctional programs. The Sri Lankan prison system has been struggling with a problem of overcrowding due to the increasing rate of incarceration. The total system should reconsider all the programs from a criminological perspective and need to revise the programs so that they may solve the problem to a considerable extent. If this is done, the prison system can address the problem of increasing prison population and perform the functions of prison system properly. The objective of this study is to understand the practical importance of work camps conducted by the prison system and the programs of closed prisons. In particular, inmates attitudes towards correctional programs of those institutions were explored and explained. During the month of April in 2015, the data were gathered by interviewing a randomly selected sample of 30 prisoners from 183 inmates who had been placed in Watareka work camp in Homagama, Sri Lanka. 84.4% of prisoners appreciated the environment of the work camp, resource availability, rehabilitating activities and prison officials' friendliness compared to the closed prisons. About 15.6% of prisoners valued the closed prisons as they have less work and accesses to narcotic drugs. The study came to the conclusion that 84.4% of inmates of the work camp were satisfied with their rehabilitation at their facility and the freedom that they enjoy at the work camp than being in Closed prisons.

Keywords: *closed prisons, freedom prison work camps, rehabilitation, reintegration*