

A criminological study on the factors of property related criminal offences in Sri Lanka

(With special reference to Galle district)

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Population growth has created many social problems. Though the increase number of consumers struggle to share limited resources, existing natural resources do not increase. Land is one of them. According to global estimations the world's population is around 7,500,000,000 and Earth's total area (including land and water) is 510,000,000 km² (197,000,000 sq. mi.) Therefore, the worldwide human population density is around 13.7 per km². Because of limited resources, a competition has been created for the ownership of the land property. As a result of this competition “Property related offences” have increased. Moreover there is a significant increase of crimes against people related to property. The main objective of the study was to find out factors affecting property related criminal offences in Sri Lanka with special reference to Galle District. 50 people who had a relationship with the victims of property related crimes were selected using purposive sampling method via police records during the period from 2010 to 2015. Data was collected through in-depth interviews conducted from 31st January to 31st of May 2017 and analyzed using MS office package. The study revealed that homicides, intimidations, assaults and burglaries have occurred due to land related problems. These mainly occurred regarding, houses, breezeways, servitude, paddy field and tea fields. Almost all the victims and criminals had close family relationships and had controversial situations regarding the division of their own properties. 25% of the sample pointed out forgeries regarding property divisions. 64% of the cases were reported way from the uptown area. 51% of the sample were having trial more than 10 years. Weaknesses of the traditional land divisions, cultural attitudes, unawareness of the law, tantrum, lawsuits dragging on for a long time were recognized as factors affecting property related criminal offences. Legal reinforcement, establishing new mediation institute and making people aware of these problems were recommended as controlling methods of this property related issues.

Key words: *Crime against person, Crimes against property, Criminal offences, Limited resources, Social problems*