

Sri Lankan Prison System: Conflict with Human Rights Standards

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Crime is a social and economic phenomenon and it is old as human society. Criminal justice system of a country can act against crime in different ways and punishment is also considered as one form of reaction to crime. Punishment can vary from crime to crime and imprisonment is considered as one of the famous modes of punishment. The main objectives of imprisonment are incapacitation, deterrence and rehabilitation. However, imprisonment is not a form of making a person inhuman or it should not be a place where people are deprived of their certain recognized rights. The international community has developed many standards for recognition of special rights relating to prisoners. Although Sri Lanka has ratified and recognized most of these standards, practice of prison system reveals a different picture. Overcrowded prisons is a major problem in Sri Lanka. It is not only a problem of space, but also a problem of not having enough water, toilet facilities, and essential items such as bedding, plates, mugs, towels and clothing. Apart from these, there are many other rights that are deprived for prisoners of Sri Lanka and these factors also will be discussed in this paper. This research is mainly based on literature review and academic and judicial opinion will be used for analysis, along with the data collected by prison authorities. The main objectives of this research is the identification of effectiveness of imprisonment as a mode of punishment, identification of human rights standards which are entitled for prisoners, comparing the Sri Lankan prison system with international recognized standards and suggestions for better prison system and better criminal justice system.

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