Prison reforms- Policy report

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With every passing day, the level of imprisonment is increasing. The capacity of prisons, compared to the rising levels of crime is limited. There are people detained for nominal crimes, who can otherwise be made a healthy part of the society by employing them to rehabilitation centers. This can serve many purposes of the criminal justice system in America. In addition to reducing the prison population, it is mandatory to address the socio-economic, political, and societal attributes of the prison reform system. There is a wealth of literature about prison reforms which talks about the deplorable conditions in prisons. The analysis of the available data also reflects some astonishing figures. In order to create a literary debate about prison reforms, this policy report will include the summaries of some peer-reviewed journal articles and books. The books and the article referred to in the report include debates about the prison reforms in the United States.

The article titled Inmate Society in the Era of Mass Incarceration talks about the worst human conditions, prisoners face in the United States. The authors have attempted to draw the attention towards the prison population residing in a designated facility and the actual number of prisons which it can hold. They argue that it is not in some specific states in America that the criminal justice system has become obsolete, rather it should be addressed on a national basis. According to them, since prisoners are facing serious health concerns, therefore their health concerns must be addressed at the first priority (Kreager & Kruttschnitt, 2018). The arguments put forward by the authors are based on quantitative facts which suggest that a uniform pattern exists in the evolution of problems inside any prison across the United States. Carrying on with their arguments, the authors have suggested incorporating some sustainable policy reforms which are aimed at addressing every concern of the inmates (Kreager & Kruttschnitt, 2018). Their recommendations for reforms mainly include addressing the health concerns, the concerns related to criminal law reforms and about addressing the conditions of the heavily populated prison.

Duwe in his article also talks about the prison reforms, but he has limited his debate to constitutional constraints in the way of reforms. His paper Rethinking Prisons: A Strategy for Evidence-Based reform is about the political reservations about the prison reforms. The author has targeted the political hurdles in the wake of the reforms in the prison system of the United States. He argues that since the political elites use their votes to justify their interests, therefore a politically oriented reform agenda might take some time to evolve. There is a bipartisan consensus for immediate application of reforms, resultantly the prison system has become obsolete (Duwe, 2017). He argues that it is not just in the case of adult prisoners, rather the juvenile offenders often face the same kind of the environment. The important aspect of this paper is that it draws a comparison analysis of prison reforms. The data included in the paper is evidence-based, which shows that the author has avoided using analytical perspective, which otherwise cannot be much efficient. The author concludes by presenting a three-pronged plan for prison reforms which is increasing the efficiency of the correctional programs, reducing the prison population and generalizing the use of risk assessment instruments (Duwe, 2017).

There is a different kind of reform plans suggested from time to time to address the concerns of the criminal justice system. There are no two opinions in the fact that each reform plan is targeted to address the deplorable conditions, the prisoners in the US are living in, but the problem lies in generally accepting a single reform plan. Beckett has also targeted the same notion of criminal reforms in the US. They write that the reforms agenda should be based on quantitative pieces of evidence from different facets of society. The authors argue that behind every crime, there is a social reason. The practitioners and the policy reformists must address such underlying reasons to lower the burden from the prison system. They call this path dependence to effectively target the reform areas in the criminal justice and prison system in the US. If a moderate response to minor crime is adopted as a practice, it can serve the purpose of general reforms (Beckett, Beach, Knaphus, & Reosti, 2018). They have also compared the existing scholarship about the prison reform agenda with that to the quantitative studies of criminal reporting. It seems that there is no coherence between what exactly should be the end product and the underlying reasons for this need.

In addition to some articles, there are several books written on the reforms plans for prisons. Generally, a book provides a thorough analysis of any subject. About the reform plans in the prisons, Elliott Currie's book is an absolute study about this subject. Different to the articles, Currie has based his findings on the primary sources. In his five chapters of the book, the author has completed an extensive study about reform plans. In the first chapter of the book, the author has analyzed the prison conditions (Currie, 2013). He argues that the internal conditions of the prisons are much different from what generally scholar thinks about. In his second chapter, his study explores the myths attached to the prison system. Again he writes that the myths are right in their sense. At some point in his observations, he opines that conditions are much worse and worse to what one thinks. The third, fourth and fifth chapters systematically talk about the reform plans (Currie, 2013). Compared to many other studies on the prison reforms in the United States, this book is an excellent read to understand the issues of the prison system and reform plans for the criminal justice system.

Mallicoat and Gardiner have presented their findings titled Criminal Justice Policy. Although the critical analysis of this policy paper suggests that its base is very narrow, but it provides an excellent understanding of the criminal reform agendas. The authors have explored each area of the criminal justice policy. They have started their findings from exploring political narratives about crime and the policy-making process. They write that politics which surround this area is hurting the progress of reforms (Mallicoat & Gardiner, 2013). Taking forward this perspective, they then explore the influence of the research and the policy formulation process in criminal reforms. According to them, the reform agenda is always set too narrow, which resultantly destroys the overall aim of the criminal reform plans. They have targeted the Bureaucratic hurdles which act as stepping blocs in this complete process. The second section of the book is a complete guide about what the actual price of the reform infrastructure is and what the expected end product is. In this section, they have analyzed existing and any possible offense in the future which might be a hurdle in the policy-making process (Mallicoat & Gardiner, 2013). The final section of this book is about the future directions which the state authorities can adapt to regularize the reform plans. The findings of this book are suggestive. Although the writers have targeted many areas, still the book provides a narrow scope for the policy-making process.

This policy report suggests that criminal reforms have been a topic of wide literary research. There are different perspectives, normally the authors explore. Different to their understanding of the subject, there are some institutional hurdles which need attention. For example, the article and the books summarized above are about different subjects, this is why the final findings of each book are contrary to the other.

# References:

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