Children and Detention Camps

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**Introduction**

A detention camp is a specific compound where individuals are held captive on a provisional basis. These individuals are detained temporarily due to the commitment of some particular crimes. These crimes can include any offense or illegal entry in the country. The history of detention camps in Australia goes back to the 19th century. It is noteworthy to consider the fact that many young convicts were received in the colonies of New South Wales between 1833 and 1838. In the beginning, there were no appropriate arrangements and special treatments for these young convicts. However, the first alternative method was considered by New South Wales in 1803. The concept of apprenticeship was introduced for these convicts in which boys were compelled to acquire skills for trade, while young girls were compelled to work as local servants. For these young convicts, separate accommodations were established at Carters Barracks in Sydney. Recently, there is a number of detention camps in Australia in which men, women, and children are detained for their offenses. However, convicts are facing serious issues regarding accommodation, sanitation, and basic facilities in these detention camps.

**Discussion**

Children in the detention centres of Australia are experiencing mental and physical health issues due to the environment of these detention centres. Mostly, children are suffering from psychological health issues such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Exacerbate mental health issues can be created due to detention experience, which might result in some instances psychotic symptoms (Briskman, Zion, & Loff, 2010). It is highly important to evaluate conditions and services in these detention camps in order to get a better idea about their credibility. Researchers have found that children who are detained in the detention centres are forced to sleep in cold cells. The conditions of these cells are highly critical due to the unavailability of proper clothing and adequate food. Sadly, children are not provided with appropriate food items in these detention camps. These detention camps’ experiences are the source of detachment from community, enforced separation from the world, and hopelessness to experience life as expected for these children (Fazel, Karunakara, & Newnham, 2014). These conditions are highly traumatising for children as they are not able to completely understand these new circumstances. In the majority of detention camps, children are forced to live and stay in highly unsanitary places. These places do not have proper cleaning and accommodation facilities. These unsanitary places invite many viruses and germs to infect these vulnerable children (Silverman & Nethery, 2015). Furthermore, the length of detentions is closely linked with the development and psychological issues that are confronted by these children. It is notable to consider the fact that longer detention time makes a child more vulnerable to traumatic events. Regardless of these detrimental impacts on mental health, there are no proper health care and counselling services for these children in the detention camps. Detention determines the ability of children to perform any task effectively.

In addition, children in detention centres are experiencing a lack of basic needs such as food and water. Poor and unsafe conditions are also contributing to the poor health of these children in the detention camps. The environment of detention camps itself presents prison-like feelings. A critical examination of the environment of these detention camps reveals that these conditions are inhabitable for almost children that are detained there. If enforcement agencies are willing to hold children in the detention camps, then they should probably reorganize the environment of these detention camps (Newman, Proctor, & Dudley, 2013). Currently, these detention camps demonstrate a prison-like environment with constant control and surveillance and lack of freedom. These conditions are highly intimidating and confusing for children to sustain there.

Another problematic factor in the detention camps includes the treatment of these children by officials. Children’s development and mental wellbeing are highly associated with the attitude and behaviour of officials with children (Saul, 2013). In detention camps, the majority of children experience disrespectful treatment, which is highly catastrophic for their physical and psychological wellbeing. These disrespectful attitudes and behaviours of officials in the detention camps can endorse feelings of disgrace and disrespect. One must need to understand the fact that feelings of poor self-image and humiliation can have a detrimental impact on an individual. Due to these conditions and circumstances, it is obvious that detention camps serve as unfair and unjust facilities, especially for children. In addition to this, many children report that they are unable to get adequate food in these detention camps. Food provided to these children in the detention centres is usually frozen or spoiled. Detained children have no option but to eat that spoiled food in order to fill their belly.

**Conclusion**

To conclude the above discussion, detention camp is not an appropriate place, especially for children. The conditions of these detentions camps are not suitable for children. Children in the detention camps are more likely to get traumatised due to the prison-like environment. These detention camps promote a sense of detachment and isolation from the world. The worst treatment of detention officers also contributes to the poor psychological wellbeing of these children in the detention camps. The feeling of humiliation due to poor treatment can contribute to the impaired cognitive development of these children. Therefore, it is highly recommended that these children should not be placed in a detention camp. Government officials should need to make adequate arrangements for young convicts in Australia. It can be done by providing proper facilities such as adequate accommodation, sanitary facilities, and appropriate food for these children.

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