Prison Architecture and its Attention to the Re-Socialization Process of Inmates

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Abstract

- *Terminology:* **Hyper-carcerative-** Prison conditions that are worse than normal
  De-carcerative- Prison conditions that mirror normal life

The penal system has been a reflection of society's changing attitudes toward crime and its consequences (Fikfak, et al., 2015) over centuries. The prison is the 19th Century a result of this. Solutions to dealing with the increasing crime rates have evolved significantly, from methods such as public execution and torture to spatial confinement (prisons) and discipline to rehabilitation and reintegration. But why are prisons still crowding and why does crime still prevail?

The historical evolution of punishment methods and the sociological theories on causes, influencing factors and social perception of crimes discussed in this paper help contextualize the theoretical framework of this study which addresses the 21st century approach to creating a crime free society, through architectural and spatial design of prisons that can enhance effective re-socialization of inmates.

It establishes the purpose of a de-carcerative prison, which is the ability of such an institution to create a space that mirrors the socio-cultural environment in which the prison is established, in terms of functionality and architecture, without compromising the purpose of the institution itself, which is to deprive freedom as punishment. Such prisons help inmates ease into adapting to a lifestyle that is regimented in terms of time, space and movement (Foucault, 1975) but provides the inmate access to humane spaces that positively reinforce his/her psychological and emotional stability.

The primary benefit of this study is to determine if Sri Lankan prisons are moving in the right direction while giving insight to how prisons in other regions could help us develop our approach to re-socialization. Using examples of maximum security prisons from the local context and developed nations in Europe, this study discusses the socio-cultural, functional and architectural aspects that can enhance re-socialization effectively. The analysis is derived through literature, visual surveys, observation studies, and interviews. The findings of this research indicates that Sri Lankan prisons have attempted to evolve functionally, but are however slightly hyper-carcerative in terms of socio-cultural and spatial aspects in comparison to those in Europe, known for its progressive systems of punishment.

Keywords: Re-socialization, hyper-carcerative, de-carcerative