

Private prisons



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

ASSIGNMENT PRIVATE PRISONS The U. S. holds 25 % of the world's prison population but only 5 % of the world's population. This huge number of prison population stretches the state run facilities and has given birth to the private prison industry. From just about 5 private facilities in 1987, the number of private prisons has soared to over 264 facilities housing over 99, 000 inmates. (2) There are three major profit making corporations running the facilities, housing about 7 % of total prison population, which can be called 'private'. As the profit trend of these companies grow it is likely that over the next two or three decades the proportion of inmates would grow significantly larger compared to its current 7 %. This is because with lesser and lesser Federal and State budgets for social expenditure, profit making organisations such as these are likely to generate extra money for the government through outsourcing instead of being net expenditures.

2. In the American correction system the role of jails is to confine people under lawful detention, compared to prisons where only convicted people are housed. A large proportion of the jail population is pre-trial (estimated 60 %) (3), and in this group neither punishment nor rehabilitation is the motive, it is simply detaining possible, but unproven offenders for reducing the risk to society. The rest of the jail population consists of those who have received very short sentences often for minor offences like drunken driving and petty theft. In an average 1000-bed jail, it has been estimated that the turnover rate is 36 - i. e. 36, 000 pass through the system in a year.

Thus jail administrators face very different issues than the prison population. Firstly the background and health issues facing this population is largely unknown, and they must be hyper vigilant that anyone in their custody do not suddenly turn violent or develop sudden illness. While physical safety of

staff is a major concern, serious addiction is another major problem, with high risks of withdrawal symptoms. On the correctional side of things, the very brief stay of inmates limit such potential considerably, more so in case of repeat offenders. However an important issue is the corrective facilities for first time offenders who are often extremely negative about their whole jail experience. Tactfully dealing with them can lead to true corrective influence in the future.

3. Over the last decade, criminal convictions and rate of imprisonment has risen have both risen dramatically in the U. S. In 2001 for example, it was estimated that estimated 2. 7% of all adults in the U. S. had served time in prison, which was up from 1. 8% in 1991 and 1. 3% in 1974. (4) The trend has continued, and it is estimated that 1 out of every 15 persons (6. 6 %) will end up in jail over their lifetimes. The changing demographics of the prison population reveal the reason behind this. 57 % percent of inmates were under 35, and between 1996 and 2002 drug offenses were up by 37 %. On the other hand violent offenders contributed to 53% of the growth in inmates in State prisons between 1990 to 2000, and drug offenders were responsible for 59% of the growth in those held at Federal prisons.(4) Clearly, drugs and violence are up in society and has resulted in the sharp but striking rise in this relationship. One of the most worrying trends however has been the sharp rise in certain minority communities of people going to prison, as a sign of socio-economic segregation which is also a responsible factor. Altogether these trends are gradually on the rise within certain underprivileged sections of the population.

References

1 <http://www.granma.cu/ingles/2005/octubre/juev13/42carceles.html>
<https://assignbuster.com/private-prisons/>

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_prison

3 http://www.urban.org/ReentryRoundtable/cji_jails_draft.pdf

4 <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/crimoff.htm>