

Correctional philosophy

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Stiffer Sentences and Drug Use America has been on war against drugs since the time of President Nixon who declared war on drugs in 1971. Since then, the nation adopted various strategies and introduced various policies from time to time. According to reports, the nation spends nearly \$ 50 billion a year to eradicate drugs but ends up capturing less than 10 percent of the illicit drugs. However, the period witnessed a ten- fold increase in drug convictions. It rose from 15 persons per 100, 000 adults in 1980 to 148 prisoners in 1996. That means at present, more than half of the jail inmates reached there on drug convictions (Zakaria). Clearly, the war on drugs has dramatically increased the influx of inmates to the correctional system. Admittedly, stiffer sentences for drug offenders are not an effective way to deal with the problem. Had it been so, the picture would have been different by now. In addition, it is quite expensive to detain all the drug offenders. At present 59% of the jail inmates are drug offenders. Despite all these efforts and expenditure, the amount of drug captured is just 10%, and most of the people arrested on drug charges are just drug users, not drug dealers. That means the dealers and the real culprits manage to evade punishment even now, and government spends lots of money on keeping the drug users in jails. Thus, it is clear that stiffer sentences will not deter drug use in any way. Instead, what is more useful is to focus on education programs through schools and health services. As far as people feel to use drugs, they will find them at any cost and as far as people want them, drug dealers will continue their supply, and no closing up of border will help. So, the best way out is to catch people young through schools and other awareness programs, which are less expensive and more effective.

Works Cited

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