

Condition of Women Prisoners in Model Jail, Chandigarh: A Communication Study

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Abstract

A study on women prisoners is a special subject of research. A prison is an isolated social system and analyzed easier in terms of the social system than other cases, especially society as a whole is a too complex system to research it directly. This research study throws light upon the conditions of women prisoners in Model Jail, Chandigarh, and such conditions, which are currently burning problems. Women prisoners have to face several problems in prisons which can be described as cultural, communication, social, economic, physiological, environmental, psychological, etc. The researcher used primary and secondary source of data collection. The primary data by using a self-made structured interview schedule, observation method, and secondary data were collected by magazines, books, journals, newspapers, government records, and various published and unpublished works, etc.

Keywords: Women Prison, Model Jail, Chandigarh, Social system, Communication

Introduction: -

Traditionally women had been the beam of the family but with the occurrence of modernization, industrialization, urbanization (the processes of change) in the society, the structure of the whole system has changed socially, culturally and economically. Now women are participating job professional along with the men. Indian society is patriarchal society; women are subordinated and violated by the men in the arena of work and in families.

Everywhere she is treated as lower than men. Because of the industrialization and modernization, social stability is removed from the society and due to which several new problems are emerging in the society as family disorganization, marital discords, higher level of frustration, failure in adjustment with the environment that force women to involve in the criminal activities and to

become offender. Because of committing crime women have to go in prison to face punishment. The prison system functions as a welfare agency for the reformation of women prisoners. Crime is the violation of the law and it is also called an offence or criminal offence. Crime is harmful not only for the individual but also to the community, society, and state. Crime is the sinful activity which is committed sometimes intentionally and sometimes accidentally.

Social definition of crime is that crime is the behavior of violation of social norms and social codes of a particular community. Crime is an anti-social act (Mowrer) and crime is rejected by the society. The person who commits crime is known as the criminal or offender. The state is the social control agency and it has the power to give punishment to those persons who commit crime or break the law. For Durkheim, Crime is a social fact, which is inevitable for the society because in accordance with him, not all the members of society equally shared values, ethics and cultural sentiments of the society. He defines crime, an act which scandalizes strong and definite state of collective conscience.

Merton sees criminality caused by pressure or tension. Female criminality is also caused by extreme level of pressure, tension and torture. The source of this tension is aspirations to achieve certain goals, which are coupled by the barriers of the society to achieve their ends of life. Merton used the term Anomie but for him anomie is not the state of normlessness which resulted anti-social behavior but it is a condition experienced by the individuals who want to achieve their goals but denied to access. Women also commit crime mostly when they are frustrated, tortured and are not able to achieve their goals due to have several barriers in our Indian social system.

Women Prisoners

Women Prisoners are those women who commit crime and confine in the prison for the welfare and reformation in their criminal behavior. It is the responsibility of prison authority to provide all facilities for the women prisoners according to their needs and welfare and to create favorable environment that their criminal behavior can be reform in social behavior or the behavior which is necessary as per the norms of society. Women prisoners are kept under the eye of prison authority or 4 under the supervision of prison staffs. With male, women staffs are also appointed in the prison for the safety and security of women prisoners.

Generally women prisoners are of two types- convicted women prisoners and under trial women prisoners. Convicted women prisoners are those women who confine in the prison and are found guilty of a crime whereas under trial women are those who are in custody of judicial authority and confine in the prison during investigation. Women prisoners are in half number of total prisoners but then also there is not sufficient number of prisons established for women prisoners.

There are only 15 prisons in India exclusively for women prisoners, 3 in Tamil Nadu, 3 in Kerala, and 2 in Rajasthan and 1 each in Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, Telangana, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh according to a survey conducted in 2015. Because of the shortage of prisons exclusively for women, women prisoners have to confine in general prisons which are for both men as well as women.

History of Model Jail, Chandigarh

The Chandigarh Jail was initially set up as a sub Jail in 1972 which was upgraded as District Jail in 1975. It was elevated in status as a Model Jail equivalent to a Central Jail in January, 1990. The Model Jail, Chandigarh is the only jail in the Union Territory which caters to the needs of three States in the event of agitations, namely States of Punjab, Haryana and U.T., Chandigarh. There is no problem of congestion of prisoners being faced by Chandigarh Jail inmates as the prison population ranging between 900-950 falls short of jail capacity of 1120 (1000 Males + 120 Females).

The affairs of the Prison are regulated by the provisions of Punjab Jail Manual which became applicable here in terms of Section 87 of the Punjab Regularization Act, 1966. The Punjab Government has since revised the Punjab Jail Manual in 1996 and while undertaking the revision of the Manual they have taken into consideration the recommendations/suggestions of All India Committee on Jail Reforms headed by Hon'ble Jr. Justice A.N. Mullah and suggestions given by the different Committees and the law laid down by High Court and the Supreme Court of India. As no problem of over-crowding is being faced, the jail is well managed and kept very neat and clean proving true to its status of being a Model Jail. The prisoners are very well looked after and food, clothing and also other facilities are provided as per scales mentioned in the Punjab Jail Manual.

Legal Acts of the women prisoners:

Article 21- No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.

Article 5 - of the universal declaration of human rights (UDHR) – No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 142 - The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.

Article 39 A - Equal Justice and free Legal aid.

Section 428 - of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) – Set off the periods of detention of an accused as an under trial prisoner against the term of imprisonment imposed on him on his conviction.

Special Rights to women prisoners:-

Honorable Supreme court of India held some rights especially to women prisoners which are as follows:-

1. Rights to female guards for female security.
2. Rights to pregnant women prisoners.
3. Rights to mother prisoners.
4. Rights to child of women prisoners.

Research questions

1. What is the socio-economic condition of women prisoners?
2. What communication channels and tools are used by women prisoners?
3. What are the facilities and infrastructure provided by the prison department for the women prisoners?
4. What are the various activities conducted by the prison department?

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic condition of women prisoners.
2. To identify the communications channels used by women prisoners.
3. To examine the new initiatives used by the prison department for women prisoners.
4. To identify the different creative activities for women prisoners.

Literature Review

The researcher has collected several reviews related to her research problem which are as follows:-

Pachauri (1999) states that in India and also in other countries, women prisoners constitute a very small part of population, because of that their problems and necessities are ignored in prisons which need special attention. He explains the recommendations of different committees which are not fulfilled yet and identified several problems of women prisoners that they are violated and exploited by the male guards, officers, and male prisoners.

He highlighted that incarcerated women are illiterate and come from the very poor and backward section of the society. He found that the condition of prison is worse for the residing purpose. He state that women prisoners have been living in unhealthy environment for very long duration and there is no facility for the rehabilitation. He state that because of the life imprisonment of women, their family members break relationship from them, because of that they suffer from depression and mental illness.

Penal Reform and Justice Association (2002) conducted a study of Hyderabad's prison and focused on the mental health and care of women prisoners and their dependent children. The objective of the study is to find out the problems faced by the women prisoners as human not to study the lacking of existing situation for the welfare of women. The study reveals that the women prisoners faced several problems in prisons but they mainly worried about the future of their dependent children which reside with them in prison. Study identified that children, with their mothers, also had to face problems as they didn't like food and there were lacking of medical facilities. They also had no contact to family.

Cho and LaLonde (2005) identified the impact of imprisonment on the employment of women. They found that imprisonment does not affect adversely on the employment level of women but have positive impact. The employment rate of women in pre - imprisoned period or during the confinement was low but in post-imprisoned period these rates become higher in comparison to previous one. They also analyzed that the rate of employment was affected by the numbers of children. Employment rates become very high of the women with 4 or more than 4 children after the Prison.

Halder and Jaishankar (2007) analyzed the rights of women prisoners in India and identified the six types of rights for prisoners under article 21 and 22 which are 1- Convict's rights, 2- Prisoner's rights, 3- Rights against inhuman torture and custodial deaths, 4- Detention in civil prison, 5- Rights against solitary confinement, 6- Rights against arbitrary arrest and detention. They made a glimpse on the situation of women prisoners and found that women prisoners and also their children are in worst condition in prison environment. They also gave suggestions to improve the condition of women prisoners as- separate court for women , special policies and programs, new amendments should be made etc. for the betterment of women prisoners.

Saxena et.al. (2007) had done a cross sectional study of dental care seeking behavior of 177 females jail inmates of Bhopal. Finding shows that the highest number of women prisoners never received any dental care and women under the age group of 25-30 years, have negative attitude towards the importance and utility of dental care because of lacking awareness and literacy. They explain that women prisoners are from poor socio-environmental condition, so, they have poor oral hygiene and are not conscious about the utilization of dental care. They also recommended well structured oral health educational programs, regular interval screening programs, awareness

of women prisoners toward health, suitable toothbrushes and fluoride toothpaste, etc. for the improvement of dental care behavior of women prisoners.

Kazhoyan (2013) studied the cause and effect relationship between the committed crime and various socio-economic variables. His study reveals that the dominant age of committing crime was 46 - 55 years. He identified that mostly women were involved in fraud and murder and were from poor socioeconomic background in childhood. His finding shows that economic dependency, unemployment, unhealthy family background, conflict relation in family, use of drugs, and violent by the partner was the causes that compel women to commit crime.

Barlow (2014) had done a qualitative study. She explained theories to understand the women criminality. She states that women have different need from men but the resources provided by the government were only in concerned to men. It is suggested that gender specific awareness must be applied to every reformative institutions, which helps to reduce recidivism in the females and government should provide such tools and assessments which are applicable according to the needs of the women to reintegrate in the society.

Research Methodology:

The research design of the present study was descriptive and exploratory. The current study area was women prisoners of Model Jail, Chandigarh. The interview schedule was prepared to collect information and data from a sample of women prisoners of Model Jail, Chandigarh. There were 120 women prisoners who were imprisoned for various crimes like murder, attempt to murder, theft, smuggling, prostitution, etc. But only 60 prisoners co-operated with the researcher. The interview schedules were administered among the prisoners of Chandigarh jail with prior permission obtained from the officials. It was ensured that the response given in the interview schedule was voluntary and intended to know the real outcome of the analysis.

The researcher collected primary data by interview, and secondary data was collected by books, journals, newspapers, magazines, government records, various published and unpublished works, etc. There were personal observations, interviews, and group discussions. The socio-economic variables like age of women, education, religion, marital status, etc., and the dependent variables of the present study were based on reason, information, and impact. The researcher used statistical techniques as tabulation, percentage average, etc., on the basis of data collection.

Findings:

Table: 1 Age wise distribution of the respondents

Age wise classification	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than 25	2	3.33

25-35	22	36.66
35-40	16	26.66
40-45	12	20.00
45-50	6	10.00
50-55	2	3.33
Total	60	100

Table 1 It is clear that the highest number of women prisoners belong to the age group of 25–35, ranging to 36.66 percent. It is really a point of concern that the majority of the women prisoners are young and in an impressionable age group. The age-wise distribution of the women prisoners ranges between 3.33 percent and 36.66 percent. The least has been recorded with the age group of less than 25 years and 50 to 55 years.

Educational status of the respondents

Educational Status	No. of respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	22	36.66
Primary	8	13.33
Middle	4	6.66
Secondary	6	10.00
Graduate and above	20	33.33
Total	60	100

Table 2 presents the educational status of the women prisoners. The table represents that the least percentage (4) of women prisoners belong to the Middle level. It also depicts that the illiteracy level is 36.66 percent which is the highest among the women prisoners. It is understood from the table that the second-highest is graduate and above, which is 33.33 percent. It means more educated women are involved in the crimes.

Table 3 Religion of Respondents

Religion	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Hindu	48	80
Muslims	9	15
Christian	3	05
Others	0	00
Total	60	100

Table 3 represents the religion of the respondents. The maximum number of women prisoners belongs to the Hindu religion with 80 percent. The respondents belonging to Muslim and Christian religion are about 15 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

Table 4 Marital status of the respondents

Marital status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Married	28	46.66
Unmarried	6	10.00
Widow	8	13.33
Divorcee	18	30.00
Total	60	100

The marital status of the respondents is given in **table 4**. It shows that 46.66 percent of the respondents are married. Only 10.00 percent of the respondents are unmarried, 13.33 percent of them are widows, 30.00 percent are divorced.

Table 5 Communication Channels (Print Media) used by Women Prisoner

Newspaper read by Women Prisoner

Newspapers	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Dainik Bhaskar	28	46.66
Dainik Jagran	12	20.00
Amar Ujala	7	11.66
Times of India	7	11.66
Hindustan Times	6	10.00
Total	60	100

Table 5 it is clear that the highest number of women prisoners read Dainik Bhaskar newspaper with 46.66 percent, followed by Dainik Jagran, which is 20.00 percent, and Amar Ujala with 11.66 percent and women least preferred English newspaper i.e., Times of India and Hindustan Times. It is clear that the women preferred mostly Hindi newspaper Dainik Bhaskar which is the largest read and circulated daily newspaper of India.

Table 6 Magazine Read by Women Prisoners

Magazine	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Aha Zindagi	31	51.66
Jagran Sakhi	18	30.00
Amar Ujala Udan	11	18.33
Total	60	100

Table 6 indicates that women prisoners read Aha Zindagi magazine with 51.66 percent, which is on the first spot, followed by Jagran Sakhi, which is 30.00 percent, and Amar Ujala Udan spots in the third position with 18.33 percent. It is clear that the women preferred Aha Zindagi magazine, which is a favorite among women and women prisoners. Aha Zindagi is a Hindi-language family magazine published monthly by the Dainik Bhaskar group.

New initiatives used by Prison Department

1. **Drug De-addiction Centre** which is named as “Rupantran Kendra” has been set up in the Model Jail, Chandigarh. Sh. V.P. Singh Badnore, Hon’ble Governor, Punjab & Administrator, UT, Chandigarh inaugurated the Rupantran Kendra in the Model Jail, Chandigarh on 12.02.2020 at 11.30 AM. Sh. Manoj Parida, IAS, Adviser to the Administrator, UT, Chandigarh, Sh. Arun Kumar, IAS, Principal Secretary Home, Sh. Sanjay Beniwal, IPS, DGP Chandigarh, Sh. Omvir Singh, IPS, I.G. Prisons, Chandigarh, Sh. Mandeep Brar, IAS, DC UT Chandigarh, Mrs. Nilambari Jagadale, IPS, SSP UT Chandigarh and Sh. Virat, HCS, Joint I.G. Prisons were present on this occasion.

2. **Artistic Work** has been done in Rupantran Kendra by the inmates of the jail with the help of expertise of Home Science College, Sec-10, Chandigarh. The walls of the Rupantra Kendra have been painted with soothing Colours. We have also planned to paint other walls of the jail with soothing colours.

3. Different Varieties of ornamental/Flowers/Medicinal plants have been planted in the jail. The Jail premises and complex has been kept neat and clean under a special campaign " Clean Jail Green Jail".

4. **National Sports Day, 2019** was celebrated in the Model Jail, Chandigarh 29th August, 2019. Both the Undertrial and Convicts took part in different games i.e Kabaddi, Tug of War, Badminton, Carom Board, Chess, Volleyball and Table Tennis. Sh. Mandip Brar, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, UT, Chandigarh was the Chief Guest on this occasion. Sh. Virat, HCS, Joint Inspector General of Prisons, UT, Chandigarh welcomed the Chief Guest. Dr. Neena Chaudhary, Senior Medical Officer Jail and Sh. Amandeep Singh, DSP Jail and other staff was also present on this occasion. The sports meet was organized on the birthday of Major Sh. Dhian Chand

5. The Social Welfare Department in association with Burail Jail, Chandigarh started "**SARTHI**" a Canteen to be run by Divyangjans of Asha Kiran, Sector-46, Chandigarh. The Sarthi Kiosk was inaugurated by Mrs. Kirron Kher, Hon’ble Member of Parliament, UT, Chandigarh on 27.09.2017. The products of Burail Jail, Chandigarh would be sold by the Divyangjans at Saarthi Kiosk. The Saarthi Canteen has been launched with the aim of giving focused attention to different policy issued and keeping a meaningful trust on the activities aimed for welfare and empowerment of the persons with disabilities. Furthermore, by selling the jail products, the skills of the jail inmates will also be encouraged.

Creative activities for Women Prisoners

1. Recreational Activities

Yoga Sessions are held in the jail daily. The inmates take part in yoga activities daily. International Yoga Day is celebrated every year in the Jail in the presence of higher dignitaries. The inmates are provided sports activities (Indoor and outdoor) such as Volleyball, Kabaddi, Table Tennis, Badminton, Luddo, Chess and Carrom Board etc. so as to relieve them from the mental stress. Annual Sports Meet is also organized in the jail every year.

Gym Facility for inmates was inaugurated by His Excellency Governor Punjab and Administrator, UT, Chandigarh Sh. V. P. Singh Badnore. It has a Multi-station, A Commercial Treadmill, Cycles, Abs-trainer, Inclinor, Exercise Balls, twisters etc. It is very beneficial in keeping inmate healthy, staying away from negativity and negative activities. It also helps in reducing expenditure on medicines.

2. Educational Activities

IGNOU Study Centre

The inmates are provided free education in the jail. IGNOU study Centre offers higher education like Graduation, Post Graduation, Degree & Diploma Programs. National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) offers Matriculation & 10+2 Course. Adult Education Centre is being run in collaboration with Adult Education Department, UT Chandigarh to provide reading & writing skills to illiterates.

To provide extra study material to the inmates enrolled in various educational programs, different books on different academic faculties are available in the library. Various Novels, Autobiography, Biography & Story Books in different local languages are available in the library. Religious Books like Ramayan, Gita, Guru Granth Sahib, Quran, Bible are also available in the library. Proper sitting arrangement is provided to the inmates in scheduled manner.

3. Social Activity

Festivals like Diwali, Holi, Id, Christmas, Teej, Raksha Bandhan, Guru purab etc. are celebrated by the inmates & the staff of the Jail. Senior Officers also participates in various social activities on many occasions. Special Food "Bada Khana" like Halwa, Kheer & special vegetable dishes are provided to the inmates on all important Indian Festivals. Special interview time is provided to the inmates on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan & Karwa Chauth.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the maximum number of women prisoners were from the Hindu community and had a low socio-economic profile in the society, which compels women to commit a crime. It has seemed that women were incarcerated for the murder of enmity, dowry,

extramarital affairs, theft, and drug-related crime committed by them. The maximum numbers of women prisoners were married and graduated which committed the crime. Women preferred to read the Dainik Bhaskar newspaper, which is the largest read and circulated newspaper in India. The jail department introduced some new initiatives and creative activities in the jail time to time for the women prisoners, and they actively participated in it.

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