

Women Prisoners in Odisha: A Socio-Cultural Study

A Dissertation

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Submitted by

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Seema Das has carried out the research embodied in the present dissertation entitled “**Women Prisoners in Odisha: A Socio-cultural Study**” under my supervision for the award of the master degree in Development Studies of the National Institute of Technology, Rourkela. This dissertation is an independent work and does not constitute part of any material submitted for any research degree or diploma here or elsewhere.

(DR. NIHAR RANJAN MISHRA)

Research Supervisor

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Abstract

The study was designed to understand the reasons behind the rising criminal behaviour among women and also to learn about their life during imprisonment. Female crime is a crucial factor that disrupts family life and stability of the society. The nature of crime committed by them has changed from softer crime to heinous crime. The socio-economic factors behind committing their crime, their perception towards society and jail administration are analyzed by using primary data which are collected by interviewing 35 women prisoners of three jails of Odisha. The data were collected by using structured interview. The findings showed that lower socio-economic condition of the prisoners have compelled them to commit crime. Lack of health care, infrastructure and employment opportunities are the major problems faced by the prisoners in jails. Their perception towards the society and jail administration has significantly deteriorated. Results are interpreted in terms of current theories and implications for future are pointed out.

Chapter-I

Introduction

Crime is an anti social behaviour. Crime occurs when someone break the law by over act. Crime rejects by the society. In the words of C. Darrow “Crime is an act prohibited by the land and for which penalty is prescribed”. The concept of crime is a relative and complex one, which is viewed as a norm breaking natural phenomenon of human society at all times and has changed in accordance with the socio economic development of the society. The rate of crime has increased tremendously in the contemporary world. The rate of female crime is gradual rise around the world. And it is particularly apparent in developed countries. The rising female crime rate may be result of rapid socio-economic changes, industrialization and consequently urbanization. One of the most reported aspects of the Maoist ‘people’s war’ in Nepal has reveals that the involvement of women has increased. Some observers estimating that up to 40 percent of all combatant and civilian political supporters are women (Pettigrew and Shneiderman, 2003).

The rate of female crime is rising throughout the world and particularly in developed countries. Germany's female crime rate is 24% of the total crime, and the rate in the U.S. is 30%. The female crime rate also has increased rapidly in China. After the founding of New China, from the 1950s to the 1970s, the female crime has accounted for 2% of the total number of crime. After the 1980s, with the social transformation, the number of female crime has increased significantly. While the number of crime increases, the proportion of the female offenders has increased from 2% in the 1970s to 3% in the 1980s, to 5% in the 1990s, and to 18-20% now which almost equal to that of Germany and the United States.¹. And there is a trend towards younger age-crime and organized crime. Female crime has seriously affected the marriage and family stability and social development of the society. After the 1980s, with the social transformation, the number of female crime rate has increased significantly. The crime in India has increased. According to the Crime in India Report (1996), the female percentage for arrested persons at all India level was at 4.7. There has been upward trend in female criminality over the period of 1990-2000. The crime India report compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau

¹ Meixiang, L.I., 2013, Discussion on the Causes of Female Crime and Its Control and Prevention, *M& D Forum*:<http://www.seiofbluemountain.com/upload/product/201112/2011nxscfz04a1.pdf>

(NCRB) reveals that the number of women arrested for criminal activities in 2003 were 1, 51,675 which rose up to 1, 54,635 in 2007. The demography picture reflects that though the numbers of female offender are low in compare to men, the nature of crime committed by them is really matter of deep concern. The nature of crime committed by women is changing. From softer crimes like drug trafficking and prostitution to heinous acts like murder: 3,543 women were arrested for murder in 2005 and 3,812 in 2007. This reflects an increase in murder from 5.4% to 6%². Highlighting the all India Scenario the NCRB report 2011 reveals that in 2011, 4,959 women are convicted in their respective cases, and 10,934 women are in under trial.

The infrastructural facilities available throughout the country to meet the increasing female criminals are not enough. According to NCRB only 1.4% jails throughout India are declared as women jail. Along with women jail, 2.2% special jails are providing occupancy to female criminals and the occupancy rate is 71.6%. The prison infrastructure available in India is huge but the main problem of the prisons is overcrowding due to under trial prisoners. The occupancy rate has been reported to be 128.5 percent during 2000 which demands the need for additional capacity of 60359 Persons in Indian jails.

In the past, crimes were found to be very few but with the changing scenario of the present society during the last few decades, there has been a rapid increase in crimes. A few psychologists Clinard (1942), Durkheim (1947), Koblin (1951) stated that there is a correlation between crime and social disorganization, and the increase in crime is not only the outcome or consequences of urbanization but also due to anxiety to achieve certain goals. The ill effects of development efforts are manifested in the industrialization and consequently urbanization viz., migration, increased mobility, population increase, unemployment, poverty, loss of values, cultural crisis are responsible. Within the last few decades the female criminality is growing at a higher rate. The history of mankind reveals that the women have been the stellar stone of the family. Since the dawn of civilization women have been considered as the preserver of social norms, traditions, custom, and morality. With the passage of time the role of women is transforming gradually. The gravity of the challenges increases manifold. The most important thing is to understand how women have been involving in crime and the impact of imprisonment

² Narayan, V.,2010, Maharashtra has highest number of women murders, The Times of India 25th October.

on them. The causes of female crime may be attributed to various reasons. It might be because of the personal cause. The male offenders have relatively more education than the female offenders.

When offenders are illiterate or uneducated, then the female prisoners lack less legal awareness. Sometime domestic violence becomes another reason behind female committing crime. In some family women are confined to do the house hold chores and they have no income source. Sometime they are victim of the husband beating. The imbalance in family structure creates space for domestic violence. The breakdown of the marriage relationship is a serious psychological blow to women, and it will make psychological crisis. And if there is not a timely manner to ease the psychological crisis, some women will commit crime in society.

From the last decades there have been further fundamental societal changes contributing to an increasing crime load. Female crime, by definition, refers to the crimes committed by women. It corresponds with the male crime, and crime classification which is made from a gender perspective. The needs and necessity of women prisoners are different from male prisoners. Women delinquency is increasing rampantly and we can't say single factor is responsible for it. Women are always a part of exploitation. Physiological or psychological behaviour of women offenders were usually viewed as pathological distortions or departures from the normal, inherent nature of women. Greater freedom has allowed them to enter new positions and new roles, thereby giving them more opportunities for participation in crime. Maintaining double standards by women also helps create female crime because it leads to frustrations and greed on their part. Freedom has allowed them to enter new positions and new roles, thereby giving them more opportunities for participation in crime. Maintaining double standards by women also helps create female crime because it leads to frustrations and desire on their part. Restrictions and social roles have also impact on women criminality. The reduction of restraints on women is further likely to increase female crime. It contends that educated girls and women are more willing than ever to challenge traditional. Interpersonal relations with husband and other family members, husband's extra-family relations, deprivation and denial of basic needs of life (like affection, security, etc.) were the main causes of frustrations and ultimate crimes. Women convicted for minor thefts are mainly housewives who usually lack money to be able to buy things which were later stolen. Many a time, they steal to 'stretch their budgets'. The lower-class social status of women convicted. Female crime is a main indicator to measure a community's moral standards. Because compared with male crime, the number and proportion of female crime

is low. More men than women are commits crimes and tend to be more violent in nature. Men have a greater involvement in crime in compare to women, yet it is important to understand women in crime. The gender approach to understanding women crime is less due to gender differentiations. The different norms in socialization, culture, psychological differences between men and women are always looked women delinquency in different ways. Although men are more in to heinous crime in compare to women. Male crime rates are more in compare to those females. Criminologist points out that the emotional, Psychological differences between male and female explain the differences in crime rates. The female criminality was often neglected by justice and authorities were reluctant to take any action against women. The main gender base traits are the sole factor of crime rate differences. Women comprise just a small segment of all the people in prison.

But now a days the females are offending serious crime. The gender approach reflects both man and women are socialized differently. Girls are more supervised and controlled by the social system and norms. Discrimination against women is deeply historically and culturally rooted in the society. Women are always staying under the clutches of man's grip (Renzetti & Goodstein, 2000). The patriarchal society controls the economic power as well as status of women. From economic point of view women is always marginalized from the economic resources. In the present society women want to stand equally with man, so to get success they are not stepping behind to adopt wrong paths. Even the women commit the social environment contributes a lot to the making of women criminals. It reflects that female offenders have lost faith in social system. Despite constitutional guarantees of equal rights and privileges, women's fate could not be changed. Discrimination prevails from birth till last breath. Even her education, her involvement in every work equally is not enough to give any credit to her (Bajpai & Bajpai, 2000). The problem becomes manifold when despite her awareness and ability she is to obey orders of man (in form of father, brother, husband etc.) of lesser ability. Her own opinion is brutally crushed overheard and she is subjected to victimisation because she is a woman. Most of the women commit crimes because they are at some point of time are the victim of crime and gradually steps in to the arena of crime.

Educational status plays as major role in criminal activities. As it is observed the percentage of literacy is less among women in comparison to man they lack analytical skills in dealing with problems, and they are not sensible to deal with things. When they are instigated or enticed by

others, they easily fall in trap of crime. Because of the low level of education; their legal awareness is relatively weak. When they have been violated by unlawful infringements, they cannot look at and solve the problems from a legal perspective, but take extreme and violent and lawless ways to solve the problems. Highlighting the educational status of women prison in Scotland, Loucks claimed that the women in prison are not much educated. Around 90% of them had left school at age 16 or under (2004). The similar kind of study conducted by Henderson in Scotland reflected that only 14% of women in prison had stayed in school beyond the statutory minimum age (16 years), and 61% left school with no qualification (2001).

Highlighting the reason for crime, Henderson said that shortage of money and financial requirement are the main cause of crime. Citing the example from his study at Scotland he claimed that around 50% of the respondent revealed that their offence was related to financial need (2001). According to Klein, the female crime is the result of physiological or psychological characteristics of individuals, with little or no recognition being given to the importance of social-structural factors (1973). While discussing the causes of crime in USA Potter said that women usually commit violent crimes against husbands and boyfriends, usually after years of abuse (Potter, 1979). The economic crime done by women stands for the economic gain basically related to earning income. Prostitution, shoplifting, theft, fraud and forgery and drugs are related to economic crime. These crimes are committed by women due to lack of money or to obtain more money (Davies, 2001).

Women and Prison

A prison is a State subject under List-II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. The Prisons Act, 1894, on the basis of which the present jail management and administration works in India. Many committees and commissions appointed by both central and state governments after Independence have improved to look after the conditions of the prisons. The committee like A.N. Mulla, R.K. Kapoor Committee (1986) and Justice Krishna Iyer Committee (1987) were constituted to bring suggestions for improving the prison conditions and administration of the country. The state Govt has its own rule and regulations to run the prison system. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in Annual Report (1993-94) has expressed its deep concern regarding the conditions of overcrowding, lack of sanitation, poor medical care, and inadequate diet facilities in most of the jails of the country. Again the United

Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners has declared certain important rules that should be applicable to all the prison and prisoners. It declares that there shall be no 'discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or origin, property, birth or other status. There should be separate jails for the man and women. The convicted and under trial should be kept in different places.

"Prisons, though for a short or longer period are places of living for both accused as well as convicts. The reformatory objective expects that it should also be a place of learning and earning. To provide physical, material and mental conditions of decent living to prisoners, it requires recreating almost a miniature world inside the prisons. This is difficult if not impossible. European countries are increasingly in search of alternatives to confinement, as they realised more resources for assimilation of deviant are available in open society rather than inside the closed walls. This has not happened so far in India as governments across the ideological spectrum are illiberal and society is unsympathetic to rights of the incarcerated.

Though most of the prison studies focused on male prisoners, few studies on women prisoners are available. The situation of female imprisonment is distinctly different from that of male imprisonment. There are different reasons that forced the women to do crime and pushed into prison. The woman who is considered as most sociable person once entered into prison faced lots of difficulties and confined her within the four walls of prison. The research in Scotland showed that the vast majority of women in prison are direct and indirect victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and often combination of these (Loucks, 2004). Suicide and self injury are common experience for significant portion of female prisoners. The most painful issue facing many women in prison is separation from their children; a few prisons have established appropriate facilities for visits by children. However, the problems of distance from children, foster care, and anxieties faced by mothers remain unresolved (potter, 1979).

The complete prison formation is based on seclusion and separatism Prisons are always unattractive places. The incarceration life is really pathetic. The imprisonment is one of the most painful parts of the prisoner's life. Life in prison is difficult to understand. The prison life reflects its harshness and pain. The prison culture restricts the freedom of the prisoners and stores them in isolation. Prisons issued uniforms also play a large component in destroying personal identity, and crashing individual feelings. The pains of jail confinement have an effect on all prisoners in

different ways. In prison prisoners major source of stress would consist of the failure of contact with family and friends outside the prison. The isolation culture of jail system creates a major problem among the inmates. It creates a major distress among the prisoners to wear the prison uniform. Firstly, the convicts are isolated from the external world. Secondly, they are to a large degree isolated from one another. The prison life of both men and women are difficult, but it has more disadvantages on women prisoners. Some time the women prisoners became the victim of sexual act like rape, physically tortured and mentally harassed. The level of healthcare provided to prisoners is not merely inadequate; it often constitutes torture. The health conditions of female prisoners get more worsen in jail. The impact of imprisonment on women's health was mixed but was largely perceived to be negative. Despite policy initiatives to introduce health promotion in prisons, there is little evidence of the extent to which this has been effective. The increased control and surveillance that prison-based health programmes represent the prioritisation of criminal justice aims over health interventions and the stigmatising attitudes and poor practice of prison healthcare providers make highly problematic the claims of those who argue for the health improvement (Douglas, Plugge and Fitzpatrick, 2009).

Women are especially sensitive to imprisonment. The sexual and physical abuse during their incarceration hardly ever seems to be notified by the general public or those who work in the criminal justice system. Physical victimisation includes assault, homicide and homosexual rape. They are raped, stripped and face all kind of torture and it has always ignored and suppressed by the prison authority.

It is clearly seen that the prison system is built accordance to the male prisoners. The needs and importance of women prisoners are always given least priority in compare to the male prisoners. The women in prison are having more chance to get affected by sexually transmitted diseases. Women in prison have a double disadvantage and discrimination get worsened during the imprisonment period (Cathrine, 1998). The female offenders are victimization of sexual harassment and physical abuse. The needs of women prisoners are always ignored because of their minority (Merry, 1998).

During the imprisonment period the women prisoners are abstain from their family contact, which really makes mentally depression. The society has different attitude towards the women

prisoners. Generally the women have considered as foundation stone of family. The imprisonment affects the relationship of the prisoners with their family.

Cauffman's study on women prisoners reveals that the female delinquents have a high rate of mental health problems. There is a need of gender specific treatment, which can be effectively deal health crisis of the female offenders. Victimization during childhood or adolescence is a risk factor for both male and female offending but is a stronger predictor among females (2004).overcrowded prison and the inadequate healthcare, lack of counselling services, sexual abuse and few job trainings programs are the central problem for the women offenders. Over crowded prison creates unhygienic atmosphere (Jennifer, 1983). The mother incarceration has negative impact on their children and sometimes it leads to juvenile delinquency. The absences of mother care to the children make them to adopt illegal activities. Victoria Law viewed that Woman prisoners are even more overlooked by mainstream society than their male counterparts. They have not passively accepted their conditions. Women inmates have both individually and collectively struggled to improve their health care, abolish sexual abuse, maintain contact with their children and further their education³. These actions are often ignored or dismissed by those studying the prison-industrial complex, Prisoner rights activists and outside feminists, making documentation and research all the more important in giving women inmates a voice in the discourse. The society has always rejected the criminal activity. The women offenders have to face more challenges regarding their future life in compare to the male offenders. Women has to face personal crisis to social crisis, it's hard on her part to relive again in society. The women prisoner lack medical care and often the jail administrators ignore the health aspect of the prisoners.

Haney explained that the sexual injury of the imprisoned women is a human rights issue, as well as psychological consequences of the imprisonment on them have a deep impact. In this case the women prisoners should get proper medical care n psychological treatment. Health condition of women gets poorer in the prison due to absence of proper medical care facility (2006).

³ Victoria, Law, 2002, Invisibility of Women prisoners Resistance, <http://zine.library.info/files/invisibility%20of%20women%20prisoner%20resist%20zine%20FINAL.pdf>

The imprisonment has a crucial impact on health of women prisoners like heavy bleeding, irregular cycles, early menopause, cervical cancer, hepatitis, hypertension and arthritis (Katti, 2011).

Many imprisoned women are mother and usually sole carer for their children. Recognizing the importance of prisoner's health has always neglected. If the women prisoners get useful protection and promotion work can provide them a new way to improve their life in prison. The necessary change will require political awareness and support, considerable gender sensitivity training for all staff and policy makers in criminal justice. (World Health Organization, 2010). Despite policy initiatives to introduce health promotion in prisons, a little progress is being observed. Imprisonment could also lead to poverty, social exclusion and make female prisoner more destitute (Douglas, N, Plugge, E, Fitzpatrick, 2009).

Imprisoned women experience sexual abuse in prison. Women offenders are the victim of sexual abuse in prison. Women offenders are the victim of abuse within the system. In most prisons women can't have even take care of their basic hygienic needs. The continuous introspection of the guards creates a lot of insecurity towards the female prisoners. Separation from families support and detached from their children makes women prisoners weak. Separation from these leads to isolation. A restriction on personal freedom is acute pain for the prisoners. According to Poole Susane the prisoners are deprived, by law and their political right. During the imprisonment period it's hard to demand for their right. The prisoner loses control over their time and space. The detention period has major impact on their social life. The precarious living condition of jail life becomes curse for their present as well as future life (2007). Imprisonment creates enormous turmoil and problem for the children. The incarceration period has serious issues like poverty and trauma for women prisoners (Natasha, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Indian society has changed tremendously during last two decades. The role of women is becoming challenging. The involvement of women in different criminal activities is rising up. Their number in prison is rising day by day. However, there is no much study on women prisoners. Though, few people have done study on prisoners they are mostly confining to male prisoners or prisoners in general. Significantly very less study has been conducted on women prisoners. Though few studies are done on women prisoners, most of them conducted outside

India. Especially in the case of State of Odisha there is no such study. From the beginning there always have been paid less attention towards women prisoners. Women prisoners are always segregated from the society. The present study has stressed why do women commit crime? How their socio-economic condition play as deterministic role in committing crime. What perception they do have towards the prison life and towards administrative functionaries. There is an utmost need to study the women incarceration and their life.

Objectives of the study

- To study the socio-cultural, economic and psychological factors that have compelled the convicted female offenders to commit crime.
- To study the perception of convicted women prisoners towards jail and administration as well as their imprisonment experience.

Methodology

Study Area

This is an exploratory study, with a focus on the objectives stated. For this purpose state of Odisha was chosen purposively. First hand secondary information was collected regarding women prisoners in various jails of Odisha. Based on this information we had selected three jails such are Chaudwar central jail, Jharpada jail Bhubaneswar and Bolangir jail purposively. In these jails all the thirty five women prisoners who were staying in jail since last five years and more were interviewed.

Source of Data

The study is based on intensive field work. Both quantitative and qualitative information was collected for the study. Both the primary and secondary data was collected to meet the objectives of the study. Secondary data source includes the population census, past record file of the prisoner concerned with the jail authorities and all legal and judicial records of the prisoners. Primary data was collected from the prisoners and jail authority by using household schedule, questionnaire, interview guidelines, case study and observation methods. Besides this to verify the prisoner's crime, respected jail authorities were also interviewed.

Data analysis

Data collected from the field was entered into SPSS and analysis was done as per requirement.

Significance of the study

The central focus of the study is to highlight the socio-economy, cultural and psychological aspect of the women prisoners as well as analyse the prime cause for committing crimes. This study will make an attempt to point out on the required policy measures particularly related to “imprison counselling” and reintegrating these criminals into the society with proper gender specific treatment and income generating activities.

Chapter-II Analysis and Findings

Socio-economic profile of the women prisoners

The study was carried out in three separate jails of Odisha. These prisons are the most highlighted prisons of the state. These jails are the common for both male and female offenders. Out of the total 35 Prisoners around 20 (57.1%) prisoners are under trial (Table No. 2.10). Those who are under trial most of them are in jail since 3 years. Our interaction with those prisoners reveals that most of them are not in a position to get a lawyer because of financial crises. Their economic condition has forced them to be in jail rather fighting for the justice. They have no other option but to depend on government lawyers for their justice. Though some of them feels that they are innocent they have no other way to proof themselves as innocent. Even our interaction with jail administration reveals that due to administrative procedures the process is taking long time.

Table No 1.1 Status of the prisoner

Status	No of Respondents	Percentage
Convicted	15	42.9
Under trial	20	57.1
Total	35	100

The sample we collected shows that around 80% of the prisoners are staying in jail since 5 years, while only 5.7% prisoners are above 10 years (Table No. 1.2).

Table No 1.2 Years of Imprisonment of the female offenders

Years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
0 to 5 years	28	80
5 to 10 years	5	14.3
10 years above	2	5.7
Total	35	100

Understanding the socio-economic back grounds like caste, class, land holding size, occupation, income and demographic details, of a prisoner will help in understanding the reasons of a crime.

Table No 1.3 Religion statuses of the Respondent

Religion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Hindu	33	94.3
Muslim	2	7.8
Total	35	100

The analysis over caste and religion of sample prisoners reveals that around 94.3% prisoners belong to the Hindu religion. The respondents belonging to Muslim community is about 5.7 percent. The highest number of female offenders belongs to other backward class that is 57.1%. Around 31.4% respondents belong to general caste. As per the literature we reviewed nature of crime varies from caste to caste and class to class. Basically the minority people are involved in crime due to economic insecurity. The lower class are always marginalized from the society. The low economic condition has compelled them to commit crime. The sample we interviewed revealed that the cause of their imprisonment is dowry incident. The practice of dowry has become a status symbol especially for the upper castes, agricultural castes and the dominant castes. The rapid social changes in terms of industrialization, urbanization, new avenues of education, new employment opportunities, higher standard of living, and Sanskritization and soon have increased the incidence and the dimension and magnitude of dowry⁴. As the case of dowry is more confined to higher class and higher castes, it is found that women belonging to other backward classes and general castes are imprisoned (Table No 1.4). During field work it was observed that the prisoners belong to SC and ST communities were imprisoned due to murder for personal reason.

Table No1.4 Community wise distribution of women prisoners

Caste	Number of female Offenders	Percentage
General	11	31.4
OBC	20	57.1
ST	3	8.6
SC	1	2.9
Total	35	100

⁴ <http://dilipchandra12.hubpages.com/hub/System-of-Dowry-in-India>

Crime has no age limit. It does not confine to any particular age. In the present study, it reveals that the women who belong to the age group of 50 years and above are more exposed to crime than the age group of 35 years. The data revealed that the young women are more involved in crime like theft and murder of their own enemy. Whereas the old and middle aged women are more involved in dowry death (Table No. 1.5). Though the literature review shows that majority of women have committed crimes in their young age but present study reflects that most women criminals belong to the middle or old aged group. This difference may be due to the nature of crime. Most of the women prisoners interviewed came to jail due to dowry cases and the case was filed by their daughter-in-laws family. Most of the convicts interviewed during the study were in their middle or old age group. (1.5)

Table No. 1.5 Community and Age wise and Reason for Imprisonment

Reason for imprisoned	Caste	Age Group			Total
		18 to 30	30 to 50	50 above	
Theft	General	1			1
	OBC	2			2
Murder for enmity	General	3			3
	ST	0			0
	SC	0			0
	OBC	2			2
Murder for dowry	General		2	4	6
	ST		3	0	3
	SC		1	0	1
	OBC		1	7	8
Drug related	OBC		3	1	4
Others	General		0	1	1
	OBC		2	2	4
Total		8	12	15	35

During field survey it was observed that most of the women who are imprisoned are married (65.7%). Most of the widows and married women (54%) were dowry accused. Single ladies are involved in theft (Table No 1.6).

Table No 1.6 Marital Statuses of the respondents and the Reason for Imprisonment

Marital status	Reason for Imprisonment					Total
	Theft	Murder due to dowry	Murder for enmity	Drug related	Others	
Married	1	12	5	1	4	23
Separate	0	1	0	0	0	1
Widow	0	5	0	3	1	9
Single	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	3	18	6	4	5	35

Education

The women prisoners who are in prison are mostly illiterate. The data reveals that around 80% of the prisoners are illiterate. Due to their ignorance some women have trapped by other people and found guilty. According to one female offender Mamata Kandi, “she had not committed the fraud crime, rather she was trapped by some people who promised her to provide loan, by asking her signature on the paper.” Her poverty driven condition and expected to provide a better life to his son, had motivated her to put her signature. But the consequence turned to be worsening her life. She is allegedly found guilty before the eyes of law. The level of education among the female are considerably low. There are very few prisoners who have attended the primary level of education (2.9%). Around 8.6% of female prisoners have reached at secondary level of education and only 2.9% of women have attended high school (Table No 1.7).

Table No 1.7 Education levels of the women prisoners

Level of Education	No of prisoners	Percentage
Illiterate	28	80
primary(1-4)	1	2.9
secondary(5-7)	3	8.6
High school(8-9)	1	2.9
intermediate(12)	1	2.9
Above	1	2.9
Total	35	100

Women reflect the virtue of morality and non-violence. From the literature review it can be stated that, when women face personal crisis in their life and get abused they step into committing crime. They may be forced by their husband and family or sometime it's their societal conditions which drag them into crime.

The economic conditions of the female prisoners are one of the important factors which play a crucial role. Literature review reflects that sometimes the lower economic condition of women forced them to commit crime. Due to low economic condition sometimes they get sexually abused. The data collected from the field reveals that around 51% prisoners are from lower economic conditions. Their annual income is less than Rupees 5,000/-. Among these prisoners 72% are imprisoned due to dowry case. During our interaction they revealed that due to their lower economic condition they had forced their daughter-in-law to bring some more dowries through that their son can start a business or they can buy some land for survival. The rest 38% prisoners belong to this economic condition are imprisoned due to robbery, theft and drug related causes. Very few (14%) prisoners are having annual income more than Rupees 10,000/-. This group have committed some crime which has nothing with economic requirement. They have done this crime either due to personal enmity or bribing activity (Table No. 1.8). The data collected reflects that even all most all prisoners (94.3%) are accused of dowry related crime.

Table No 1.8 Income levels of women prisoners

Reason for imprisonment	Annual income			Total
	1000-5000	5000-10000	10000 above	
Theft	1	2	0	3
Murder due to dowry	13	5	0	18
Murder for Enmity	0	2	3	5
Drug related	3	1	0	4
Others	1	2	2	5
Total	18	12	5	35

Occupation

Occupation plays an important role in human life. The data collected reflects that around 54.3 percent of prisoners are unemployed and 20 percent are daily wage employed. Around 94% prisoners who are convicted due to dowry death are unemployed and daily wage labours. It also

reflects that their economic crisis has forced them to do such crimes. Those who are imprisoned due to theft are also unemployed and daily wage labourers. The prisoners belong to employment sector are involved in bribing. (Table No 1.9).

Table No 1.9 Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Reason for Imprisonment					Total
	Theft	Murder due to dowry	Murder for enmity	Drug related	Others	
Daily wage	1	3	0	2	1	7
Employment govt.	0	0	2	0	1	3
Employment private	0	1	3	0	1	5
Business	0	0	0	1	0	1
Unemployed	2	14	0	1	2	19
Total	3	18	5	4	5	35

Family Structure

The present study reflects that the majority of the prisoners are from joint family (71.4%). The discussion with these prisoners reveals that the conflicts over property sharing, economic crises, and dowry cases are the basic reason for committing crime and their imprisonment (1.10).

Table No. 1.10 Family size of the Respondents

Family	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Joint	25	71.4
Nuclear	10	28.6
Total	100	100

Socio-economic Impact of Imprisonment

Jail life and imprisonment has serious impact on the prisoners, especially for women. From the literature it reflects that the jail imprisonment makes life pathetic for women. It has affected their entire life and destroys their future course of life. Imprisonment has created mental disturbance and health problem among the women prisoners. Women are more prone to diseases. Whether the imprisonment period is longer or shorter it creates problem of depression among the

prisoners. When a women put in to jail, the entire society look her in to a different way. She is segregated or alienated from the community as well as from the daily social life. Higher the imprisonment period higher is the risk for the women offenders, because they are away from their family, children and all. It's really hard on them to bear this physical and mental problem. Our interaction with the sample prisoners reveals that all most all the prisoners are having adverse life style.

Women in the contemporary prison face many problems. Imprisonment period is the biggest challenge for the women prisoners. It's the difficult situations for women that they are separated from children and other people, including family. According to Kunjalata Nath the convicted female prisoner described that her imprisonment has devastated her family life. According to Bidutlatta Swain convicted female offenders expresses her realisation of her crime. In her words "I am mother and it is not possible for a mother to kill her own son, I was under the influence of black magic and mental imbalance so killed my son unknowingly. But hard to believe neither my husband nor any of my family members want her back in to the home. It's better to live in jail for the rest of my life."

Another convicted female offender said no doubt imprisonment has serious impact on life and health. She did not commit the crime, allegedly her family members; especially her sister in law accused her of killing his son.

Sabitri Patra, one of the aged women mentions that the imprisonment on this stage is really painful. She mentioned that her high diabetics' problem needs special care and attention, which is not possible inside the prison. In old age people wants to stay with family not in jail. As the health facility inside the prison is not good, so she is frustrated from her life. Most of the women prisoners said that they are missing their family in each and every second. They lost their social status, cut off from their family relation and their personal liberty has taken away. All these has created psychological and physical problem for them.

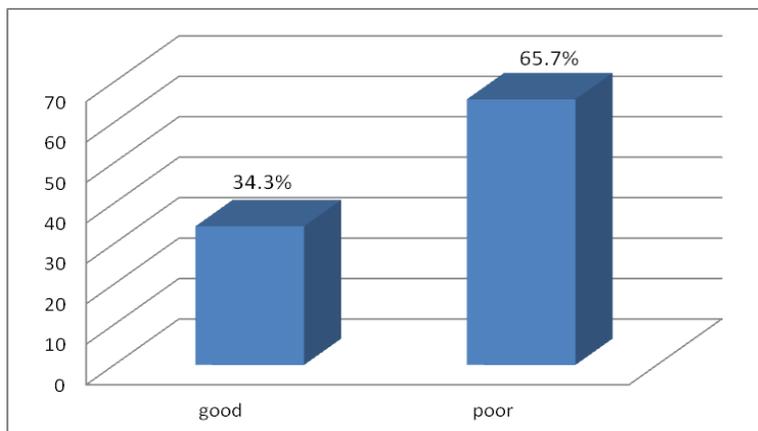
Majority of women prisoners are not addicted to drugs and there is a strict prohibition on using drugs and alcohol inside the prison. There are some prisoners who are used to take alcohol and drugs before coming in to jail but due to strict prohibition they have to abstain from it for which they are facing lots of health problems.

When it comes to women prisoner then the most important thing that comes into focal point is the health facility inside the prison. Most of the literature review reflects that the health facility for female offenders in jail is of poor quality. They don't access to the regular health check up. It has been seen during field work that women are more prone to health crisis than man. Few prisoners found suffering from some serious acute diseases like tuberculosis, diabetes and high blood pressure. The most difficult part is to access proper health services in privacy. The women prisoners are always guided by the prison staff for their health check up.

Women are always more risk of having mental problem. The detachment from family, social life and to live incarcerated life always gives rise to mental problem. Even the literature review shows jail life creates a major mental distress and health disorder among the women prisoners. Near about 97.1 percentage of women offenders reported that they don't have any serious mental illness, but they suffer from mental stress and depression. Only 2.9 percentages of women prisoners have serious mental problem. But there is no provision of effective care for mental illness.

The health scenarios of women are always a matter of deep concern. The unhygienic living condition, lack of care, absence of good medical care during the incarceration period creates lot of physical illness among the women prisoners. There are 73 percentage of women prisoners have physical illness like diabetics, blood pressure, Asthma, Arthritis, gynecology and depression problem. It has been seen that the health care facility in the prisons are poor. Women prisoners are always get difficult to get good medical care in prison.

Figure.1.1: Prisoner's Response towards the available medical care



In the above chart it shows that 34.3 percentages of women prisoners are agreed that they are getting good medical care from the Jail, where as 65.7 percentages of female offenders have said that they are not getting good medical care facility.

Literature review depicts that in prison there is more chances of disease like T.V, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV aids. But significantly the total numbers of female offenders are not having any kind of sexually transmitted diseases. The total medical care expenses of the women prisoners are taken care by the Jail administration.

Women prisoners have a different perspective towards their life. Majority of female offenders are worried about their family, health, and their rejection by the society. The majority of the female offenders are married and some of them are divorce and separated. All the women prisoners are desperately miss and worried about their children and family.

According to the women prisoners interviewed it is very difficult for their children to stay without mother. They are become the victim and sufferer of their crime. Some of the women prisoners are sole bread earner of their family. Their absence in home has compelled their children to go to work for their survival. Women prisoners said that it's hard to leave their children in other's home. Sometime they get tortured and became mentally stressed.

Table No. 1.11 Residential Status of the Children of the Prisoners

Children staying	No of the Respondents	Percent
Prison	3	8.6
At Home	21	60
Relative House	6	17.1
Orphan house	2	5.7
Not Applicable	3	8.6
Total	35	100

The above table reveals that 60% percent of the children are staying in their home with their father or grandparents. 17.1% percentages are in their relative house. 8.6 percentages of children are staying inside the jail with their mother. 5.7% percentage of women is staying in orphanage; school hostel etc. 8.6% percent of women don't have any children. The children's are taken care of by the husband, grandparents, relatives or orphanage. Imprisonment has rigorous impact not only on the women prisoners but also on their children. Mother is always treated as closest to

their children. When the women are imprisoned and if they have children then the severe disaster is faced by their children. The ways mother takes care of their children are not possible to meet by any one. It becomes very difficult for mother to stay away from their children. The jail authority doesn't give much space and time to the prisoners to meet with their children. The hard and stringent rules of the jail allowed the women prisoners to meet the children from inside the bar. During our field work it was observed that there are 2 children who are staying with their mother. Except food there is no other special facilities has provided by the jail authority for the betterment of the children. They are not allowed to play even the ground inside the jail. They are only confined to the area where women prisoners are staying. The children born with innocence are suffering due to their mother's fault. They are deprived from their right to live. The prison has no education facility for the children who are staying inside the jail with their mother. The prison authority allows the children to stay with their mother till they reach at the age of five. Thereafter, the child has to go out. Either he/she has to sent their home or to the orphan houses/schools. There is no special provision for the mother to meet their children. It is possible only after taking special permission from the jail authority. The majority of the women prisoners are not satisfied with the facility that has been provided by the jail authority. Even they don't get any special permission to meet their husband. If they get the permission they are followed by the guard, which disrupts the privacy between them. Some of the respondent reviewed that the relation with their husband has get bitter after the imprisonment.

Prison Infrastructure and Hygiene facility

The literature review shows that the prison is always an unattractive place. Especially the unsatisfactory living condition, manpower shortages, overcrowded and unhygienic practises makes it more unattractive. Our interaction with women prisoners reveal that though they are receiving some minimum requirement, it is not sufficient and regular. The prisoners used to take care of their own surroundings. There is no sweeper appointment to clean the prison where women are staying. It was observed during the field work that as most of the women prisoners are old they are not in a position to make the prison clean. Even they claimed that they are not receiving proper hygienic equipments to make their area clean. During our interaction around 77% prisoners claimed that the hygienic condition of the jails are very poor, where as only 23% said that it is average (Table No 1.12).

Table No 1.12. Prisoner's perception towards the Hygienic condition of the Prison

Hygiene facility	No of Respondents	Percentage
Poor	27	77
Average	8	23
Good	-----	-----
Excellent	-----	-----
Total	35	100

During the interaction with prisoners it was found that though the jail authority is providing basic needs like mosquito nets, sanitary napkins, it is not sufficient.

Employment opportunity

Employment plays a crucial role for the livelihood of the people. There are certain women prisoners whose family are dependent on them. But after coming to the jail they lost their income security. Some prisoners are separated from their husband so they have to look after their family. They are the sole bread earner of their family. Three jails dont not have any noticeable employment opportunity for the women prisoners. But some time the convicted women prisoners get the employment facility by the jail authority and that employment is for temporary. The working hours are also depends on the availability of work. The nature of work mostly consists of sweeping and cleaning the jail surrounding. Neither there is provision of vocational training nor education facility for the women prisoners, which will enhance the opportunity for income. The above analysis reflects that the ongoing activities will spoil the working capacity of prisoner's. The movement they will be out of jail it will be difficult in their part to do physical

activities for their survival. Even some prisoners claim that if they get some opportunity to work it will keep them physically fit.

Our discussion with prisoners reveals that most of the prisoners (62.85%) are sparing their time in watching TV and gossiping. Around 11% prisoners said that they are spending time in games (Table No. 1.13). As part of recreation some time jail authority used to organise some cultural programmes like melody party for the prisoners.

Table No.1.13 Recreation Facilities in the prison for the prisoners

Recreation	No of the Respondents	Percentage
Gossiping	10	28.6
Watching TV	12	34.3
Games and others	4	11.4
All the above	9	25.7
Total	35	100

Perception of the women prisoners towards the Jail administration and Society

The data collected from the field shows that around 70 percentages of women prisoners have lost their faith on justice. They are quite sure that they are not going to get any justice in life. They have felt that without strong financial source they can't get good lawyer who will fight for them. Again the poor economic condition and burden of the family don't allow them to fight for a longer period. The young age prisoners are helpless and hopeless about the future because neither there is provision of employment opportunity inside the prison nor there is availability of income generation activity, which will somehow give an economic security for the future. Staying idle for long period will destroy their working capacity and become unproductive. Most of them have realised that the jail administration is concerned towards the male prisoners due to their large number of prevalence. The administration process is more oriented towards the development of male prisoners. They viewed that women involved in crime should be given special care and attention. Women should not be held for a longer period in under trial session. Most of the prisoners have mentioned that the society won't accept them the way it used to accept earlier. They have lost their social status and cut off from the family. The strict jail rules are making them deprived from personal liberty and cut off from family and friends are terrible on their part. They have lost their own identity. Women prisoners mentioned they have

completely changed their attitude towards society. Some of the prisoners are compromising their life and do not want to release from the jail. According to them they are old and not in a position to work hard, no one is going to accept them whole heartedly, so it's better for them to stay in jail and get two meals in a day. They perceived that only those who have the power and economically influential they can enjoy everything and the poor people are always victim of accidents. From the beginning society has made a wide distinction between male and female. The society accept a male prisoners more easily then the women prisoners. So being in jail spoil the entire life of women, neither her family nor the society accepts them so easily. Some of the respondents viewed that the administration authority is just only to stand and act according to the prescribed rules and regulation. It is neither interested bring any reformation for the women prisoners. Majority of the women prisoners are feeling guilty for their crime. They themselves are not only the victim of the punishment but also their family and children are facing the punishment. All the women prisoners mentioned that imprisonment period is the most difficult and challenging period. The jail administration and stringent rules is other tedious thing to face in prison life. As the majority of respondents are from middle aged women they perceived their family members are reluctant to bring back them. So staying inside the prison and facing the imprisonment at this stage is a terrible thing. Some of the respondent said that after release from the prison they won't go back to their village or to their home because nobody is going to accept them, so they will go some new place in order to start a new life. The jail authority should be lenient enough to the prisoners while they are meeting with their family members and lawyer. The strict time limit and seeing the members behind the bar is painful for the women prisoners.

Chapter III

Summary and Conclusion

The study conducted among 35 women prisoners in three jails of Odisha. Majority of the women prisoners are from Hindu community, while few are from Muslim community. Most of the women prisoners are unemployed and having poor family back ground. Most of the women prisoners are married and from joint family and do not possess any land particulars and having annual income level Rupees 1000 to 5000. Most of the women prisoners are imprisoned in case of murder for enmity, dowry, drug related issues and theft. Basically the poor condition of their families has compelled them to commit the crime. Some of the women prisoners are trapped by mafias and found to be guilty. Due to lack of legal awareness and lack of adequate financial and physical resources they fail to get justice. Most of the women are from poor economic class they are unable to hire private lawyer to fight for their justice.

Traditionally prison facilities are designed according to male needs rather than on female needs. As the women prisoners are less in number, the Govt. has not paid much attention for their betterment. Due to their minority number they are neglected from the benefits and development of prison. Even no special step is being taken to provide either the basic education or vocational training. The most depressed fact is that there is no provision of employment opportunity for these small numbers of women prisoners. So they feel more helpless and loss the financial security. Neither the Govt nor the prison authority has taken any significant reformation or step to create income generation for these women prisoners. Though very less employment opportunity has created like sweeping and cleaning of the jail for the convicted prisoners and which is also in temporary basis.

The current study reflects that the imprisonment have adverse impact on the personal life as well as on the social life of the women prisoners. The stringent rules of the jail put restriction on the individual freedom and kill the positive spirit towards life. There is imposition of restriction on use of Drugs and Alcohol consumption inside the prison. Imprisonment directly affects the physical and mental health of the women prisoners. Health care facilities are available in the jail for the prisoners but insufficient. Women prisoners are guided by the guards during their check up and they hesitate to discuss their personal health problems with the male doctors. Though there is no serious mental disorder found among the female offenders, still they suffer from

depression and mental trauma. There are no proper facilities available for the women prisoners to deal with traumatic disorders. Almost all the respondents who were interviewed are of middle aged and old. Most of them suffer from physical illness like high blood pressure, diabetics, menopausal disorder, asthma and arthritis. There is no prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the women prisoners. The day to day medical expenses are being meeting by prison authorities. None of the women prisoners have ever been sexually abused or assaulted or molested.

The majority of the women prisoners are married and bear children. Some of the women prisoners are having small children who are staying within the jail. They are not happy from the facility that has been provided by the prison authority to their children. The most pathetic part is they are victim of their mother's crime and face hardship from the innocence stage of their life. They are restricted from playing outside. It can be fairly seen that the imprisonment has badly affected their relationship with their family and children.

The prison conditions are always disappointing. The ruined infrastructure and overcrowding prison are the terrible part of prison. Majority of the women prisoners have rated the hygiene facility of prisons are poor. Though the prison authority provides mosquito nets and sanitary napkins that are inadequate. The prisons have source of recreation facility for the women prisoners like watching TV, games, etc. All most all of the women prisoners are jolting with their past life. Some have realised their mistake and they strongly miss their family life. The women prisoners describe the jail administration has to be stringent by nature. The jail administration should bring some reformation in prison system. Poor legal awareness among the prisoners makes women likely to serve longer period of sentence. The jail authority should draw attention towards the counselling of women prisoners and create some income avenue for the women prisoners.

The respondent has felt that the society won't accept them after releasing from the prison. The prisoners felt the guilty of their crime and repentant. The rigid custom and typical attitude towards the women has precipitated the women to commit crime in the society. Most of them feel that they have lost their status in the society. All the respondents have viewed that the jail or prison should not be a punishment place. Rather it should be positive reformatories place. Meeting with the relatives should be more frequent and should allow some special arrangement to meet their relatives and lawyer. Women prisoners expressed they need a lot of support and

encouragement from their families. So family oriented counselling should be organized by the jail administration to cope of them during the imprisonment period. While few feel that they deserve the punishment, others want to start life again.

Limitation of the Study

There was a strict prohibition of using electronic gadgets like camera, tape recorder etc, which would have helped in collecting more information. The respondents' self reports might have been biased due to social desirability factor or reluctant to share the crime. Due to academic constrains and long official procedure to get appointment, the research failed to carry out the field work for long time. The number female prisoners are less in all the three jails, again the shortage of time and difficulty in getting permission to various jail has reduced the sample size of the study. The political crisis and administrative rigidity did not allow much time to interact with the prisoners.

Scope of the study

The basic understanding about the socio-economic factors of crime helped us in developing an idea for further study. A future study can be carried out in relating to a particular crime. Even Govt. policy and provision should be studied for an intensive study.

Suggestions

- The reformative objectives of prison should be based on learning and earning for the prisoners. Awareness should be created among the people about the consequence of committing crime and the adverse impact of imprisonment on family.
- Most importantly women prisoners should not be kept under trial for a longer period of time. The accessible to lawyer for the poor women prisoners should be given priority.
- Women are more tender and prone to psychological depression during the imprisonment period. Inside the prison there should be provision of psychological counselling for the women prisoners.
- The prisons authority needs to address the health and hygienic conditions of the women cells and prisoners. The prisoners who are facing the serious diseases should avail the proper health and diet by the prison.

- The children who are staying inside the jail should get the facility, which a normal child used to get. There should not be any deprivation for the development of the children.
- The prisoners are afraid of their acceptance by the society after releasing from the prison. So proper counselling and positive environment should be created. How well the prison might be after all the prison culture restricts the personal freedom of the person. Released convicts should be encouraged to start their life again.
- The prison authority must come with some rehabilitations programme for bringing change in the attitudes towards society and life of the women prisoners. Govt and NGO's can come up with counselling centres for women to coping with the inter-personal problem.
- The joint ventures can be created by the prison and NGO's to create employment opportunity for the women prisoners, which will give economic security to the women.
- The prison should encourage the yoga facility for the women prisoners, which will help the prisoner to a greater extent.
- Legal awareness should be given to them. The women should be engaged by some productive work which will occupy them busy and they won't think about their guiltiness much and this will help them a new start to their life.

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**APPENDIX
Questionnaire**

PART: I

Prisoners Basic Information

1.

Name of the Prisoner	Age	Caste	Religion	Marital status	Place of residence	Qualification	occupation	Type of family	Annual income

2. How many members were there in your family?

3. Was there any other working person in your family?

1. Yes 2. No

4. Land holding particulars 1. Land less 2. Land owner 3. Share cropper

Area (in Acres)			
Area Owned *	Area leased in	Area Leased out	Net sown area'

* Area Owned = Total Area – Home Area
Net sown area/Net operated area = Area Owned + Area leased in – Area leased out

PART: II

About The Offence

1. In what case you are imprisoned?

1. Theft

2. Murder

3. Drug related

4. Assault

5. Rape

6. Others

2. Since how many years you have imprisoned?

1. 5 yrs

2. .5 yrs to 10 yrs

3. Above

3. What makes you to do this crime?

Please specify

5. Do you have any prohibition on drugs/alcohols in prison?

1. Yes 2. No

6. Are you addicted to drugs now?

1. Yes 2. No

7. If yes, are they providing any treatment?

8. Are you getting benefited from it?

1. Yes 2. No

9. What kind of facility they are providing for the drug rehabilitation please mention?

PART- IV

Physical and mental Health

1. Is Health care provided for you, inside the prison?

1. Yes 2.No

2. Are you able to consult a doctor or other healthcare worker in privacy?

1. Yes 2.No

3. Please tell us a bit about mental health, have you been diagnosed with any mental illness (includes depression).

1. Yes 2. No

4. Do you take any medication for mental illness?

1. Yes 2. No

5. Did it start before you went in to prison?

1. Yes 2. No

6. Is your mental illness having something to do with your offence?

1. Yes 2. No

7. Do you suffer from any physical illness or disabilities?

1. Yes 2. No

8. Do you have HIV/AIDS?

1. Yes 2. No

9. If, Yes do you get any special treatment for these?

1. Yes 2. No

10. Did you become infected in prison?

1. Yes 2. No

12. Do you get good medical attention in prison?

1. Yes 2. No

13. Are you or have ever been, pregnant while in prison?

1. Yes 2. No

14. Who used to take care of the medical expenses?

1. Self 2. Jail administration 3 both

15. While you have been in prison, has anybody physically or sexually assaulted you?

1. Yes	2. No
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16. The person who has physically/sexually tortured is the staff or prisoner?

1. Inmate 2 staff

PART- V

Women prisoner and Children

1. Do you have children?

1. Yes 2. No

2. If yes please mention his/her sex and age?

- Sex- Age-

3. Where are your children staying?

- 1-Prision 2- At home 3- Orphan house 4. Relative's house

4. Do they provide facility to mother and children to stay together?

1. Yes 2. No

5. If the children are not staying with the prisoners, then how often children are allowed to visit their mother in prison?

6. Are there any special arrangements children's visit?

1. Yes 2. No

7. Are women are allowed physically contact with their children during visit? (e.g. To hold on their lap and hug)

1. Yes 2. No

8. If the children staying with mother in jail, getting education facility?

1. Yes 2. No

9. If, yes then where are they going for education?

1. Yes 2. No

10. Do the small children getting facility to play outside?

1. Yes 2. No

11. Are you happy with the facility provided to your children at jail?

1. Yes 2. No

12. How many times are you allowed to meet your husband?

1. Frequently 2. Monthly 3. Often

13. While you are meeting with your husband / family member do you followed by any guard?

1. Yes 2. No

14. If the children are not staying with you, then who are taking care of them?

1. Husband	2. Grandparents	3. Social service	4. others
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15. Are you getting the basic requirements from the jail?

1. Yes 2. No

16. Are you getting sanitary napkins and medicine?

1. Yes 2. No

17. How you will rate the hygiene facility of jail?

1. Poor 2. Bad 3. Average 4. Good

18. Do they provide Mosquito net and mosquito coil during night?

1. Yes 2. No

PART- VI

Employment/ Education

1. Are they are providing any educational facilities for women prisoners

1. Yes 2. No

2 .The educational facilities is based on what basis

1. Educational 2. Vocational

3. Do they have employment opportunity for women in prison?

4 .What kind of employment opportunity they provide?

1.compulsory work arranged by the prison (unpaid)
2. compulsory work arranged by the prison (paid)
3. optional work schemes (where prisoners may earn money)

5. What are the working hours in a day? Please mention.

6. Do they provide any kind of recreation facility in jail?
7. How you spend your time in jail?
8. Have you ever thought about your past life?
9. How you will describe your imprisonment and the jail administration?
10. What you will do after releasing from the jail?
11. Do you feel society will accept you after you will be out from the jail?
12. Where you will go after sentence get over?
13. What facility do you need according to your concern?