

## A Critical Study On Health And Hygiene Of Women Prisoners In India<sup>1</sup>.

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*“Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind and spirit. When one is free from physical disabilities and mental distractions, the gates of the soul open.”*

--- B.K.S. Iyengar

The point of review is to feature the well-being and sterile-related issues on the existences of the ones who are detained. The discoveries have uncovered that the pattern of crimes among the women is expanding step by step subsequently and the number of women in prison is also increasing gradually. This is a significant issue in the Indian culture and this ought to be relieved. The findings have demonstrated that the women in prisons are consistently casualties as they don't get their necessities like food, well-being and cleanliness facilities during imprisonment. Notwithstanding, according to the secondary sources, it is clear that the level of HIV among the women is higher as opposed to that of the men's life. The research highlights that a significant number of the women live in prison with their children in a critical condition.

**Keywords:** Women, Prisons, HIV, Incarceration, Health, Hygiene.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

Prison is often a place where those persons be of men or women are kept for the punishment of breaking law or taking law in their own hands. The Courts in India have indicated to establish the rights of prisoners and make improvement of the condition of their life. There is an international agreement that the condition of women prisoners is to be improved as they are deprived of many necessities in their life and in most cases they are the victims in prison. However, in many cases it is seen that the women prisoners are discriminated and tortured in prison in many ways and thus, their basic rights are violated. This part of the study will highlight how the health and hygiene of women prisoners in Indian prison are violated. The article will highlight the deplorable position of the women in the Indian prison critically and it will be shown how the health and hygienic –related problems have affected the women in the Indian prisons. In the final part of the study, the researcher highlights in improving the conditions of the lives of incarcerated women.

### 1.2. Aim and objectives of the research

#### 1.2.1. Aim

The aim of the study is to identify the health and hygiene related issues in prison and recommend some ways to root out those issues for the standard living of the women in Indian prison.

#### 1.2.2. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are the following:

- To know the state of living of the Indian women in prison.
- To identify the health and hygiene-related challenges in the lives of women in Indian prison.
- To recommend some ways to root out those health and hygiene-related challenges for the standard living of those women.

## 2. Research problem

Prisons in a country are for those classes of people who have violated the law in a country. India is a country where there are both men and women in prisons. As per the constitution of India, both women and men in prison are entitled to get their rights in prison like right of food, right of safety and accommodation, right to education, right to speak with freedom and such others. But in many cases, it is seen that the Indian women are tortured and discriminated in terms of their health and hygiene-related safety in prison. For example, it is necessary to develop their sanitation facilities in their accommodation place in prison. The source has shown that women in Indian prisons are given underrated materials like torn clothes, old mattresses, newspaper and such others. Apart from that, women, in prisons are

not provided standard food products for their daily life. Hence, these all are major issues. If such issues continue in the lives of women in the future, then it will be major social distortion. Hence, this issue is to be resolved immediately for the peaceful living of those women. The findings of this study will help in finding actual issues in the lives of those victim and then recommend some ways to mitigate those issues for the undisturbed living of those women.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology section of this study will discuss the methods in which the entire study will be processed. In this section, research philosophy, research approach, research design, data collection and analysis processes ethical consideration and the limitation of the study will be discussed. Positivism philosophy is followed with the help of pure data without being influenced by the human interpretation and human bias. Hence, positivism is based on pure data rather than interpretation. On the other hand, it has been stated that interpretivism is based on more interpretation with the variables of the research subject. However, in this study, *interpretivism philosophy* has been followed with more detailed discussion on the deplorable situation of the women in Indian prisons. Interpretivism has helped the researcher go into more depth of the study and discuss the same in a subjective manner to meet the objectives of the study. Inductive research approach is the way of going to more general interpretation as it involves detailed reasoning with the observation of theories. On the contrary, deductive approach is based on more data and through deductive approach, one goes to more specific from general interpretation. Deductive approach is based on the hypotheses through assumption of the researcher. However, in this study, the researcher has applied the *inductive research approach* to go into more general through the discussion on the challenges that are faced by the women in the Indian prisons.

Explanatory research design is the design in which a new area of research is made. On the other hand, exploratory research design is the design in which an area of research is done that has already been studied by the other researchers previously. This research area has already been studied by the other researchers in other books and online articles and the materials from those secondary have been taken for detailed discussion. Hence, the researcher has followed here the *exploratory research design*. The exploratory research has been suitable here as the additional data in this research will help the other researchers in the future meet their objectives of research. *Secondary data has been collected* from books and some authentic online articles, journals and reports to research the valuable data for this research. The numerical authentic data have been collected from reliable sources and then they have expressed in a detailed way. The secondary data collection process has been helpful to the researcher as he or she did not have to arrange primary survey and collect data from the participants. This has saved the time of the researcher in this research.

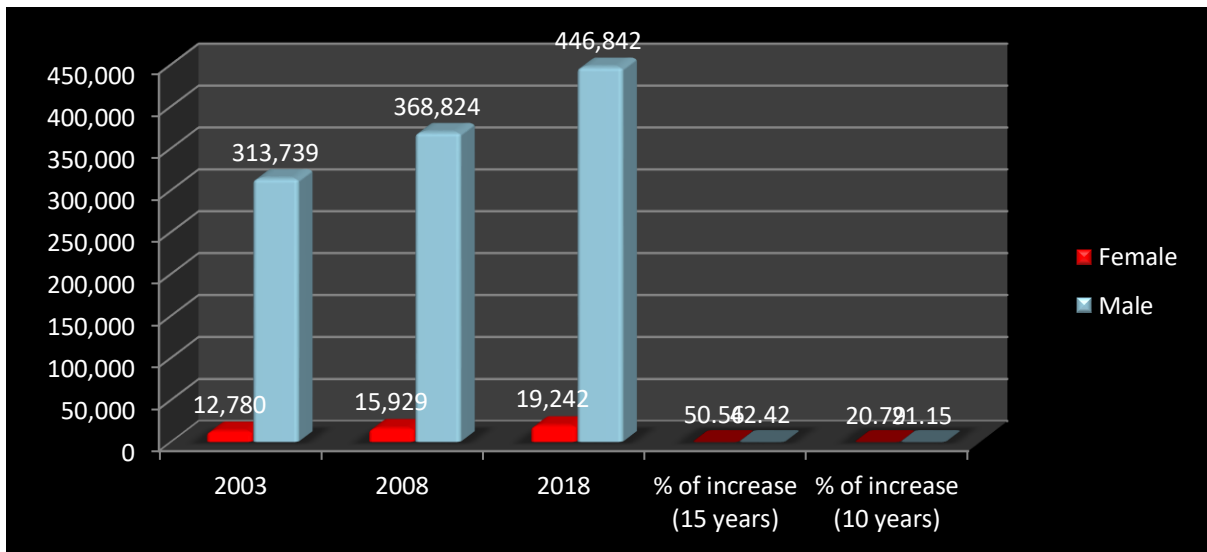
Data analysis is one of the most effective and valuable part in a research as it makes the raw data into readable for the understanding of the readers. In this research study, the secondary

numerical data from different materials have been expressed through graphs for the understanding of the readers. The numerical figures on the sufferings of the women in prisons have been helpful for the effective understanding of the readers. The presentation of the graph has helped the readers understand the state of women in the Indian prisons and also in an easy way. Furthermore, the numerical analysis with graph has been a flexible way to describe them in limited words. Ethical consideration is necessary in every research to conduct the research in an ethical and honest way as the researcher has applied his or her own ethical considerations to find the authentic books and online materials to find the data of the study. The data have been taken from such authentic sources that the researcher has mentioned all the sources in this paper. Furthermore, this study bears the full authenticity and is eligible for the researchers who will continue further tasks.

#### 4. Key result and/or arguments

Equality and giving all the rights equally to the women and girls in society falls under the Sustainable Development Goals and hence, the women in prison are not the exception here. Discrimination with women in society has been noticed and this has drawn the attention to the criminal justice to the women. Most of the systems in India do not have a connection between violence against women and the criminality of women and the systems are not able to protect the women in prison. Although the system in India tries to address the gender inequality, it is shown that the women offenders or criminals in prison suffer a lot in prison from various aspects.

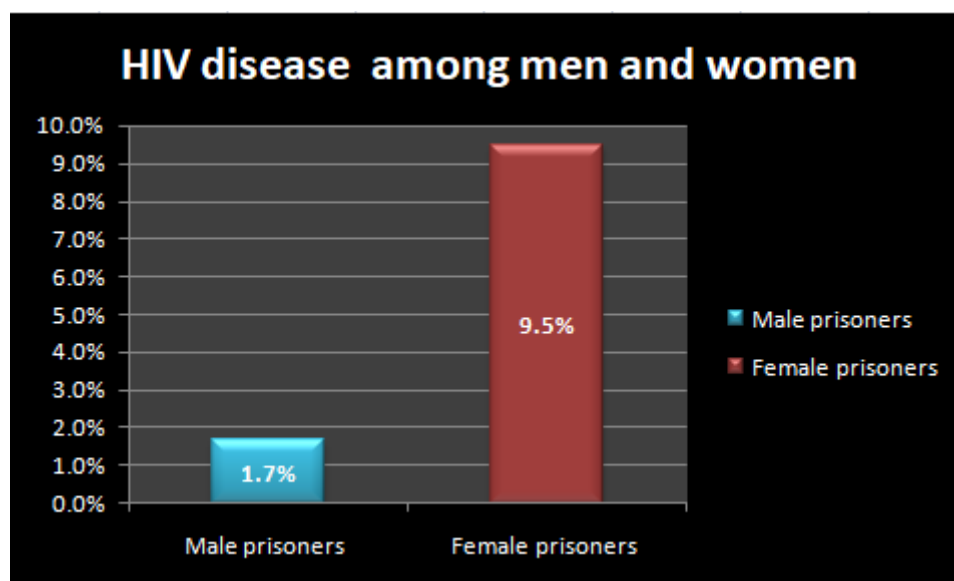
According to the report, there are many political and economic reasons for which Indian women are being charged with offences and criminal activities in India for dowry murder, murder of husbands and other cruel activities by the women in India. In the present time, women are also convicted with theft, burglary and such others. Women of India constitute very small population of the prison population in India. According to the report of NCRB (2018), the number of women in Indian prisons was 19242 as compared to the number of 446842 in the same year. However, the level of women criminality in India is rising day by day as well as the level of women criminality is also increasing globally.



**Figure 1: Figure showing the percentage of increase in the number of female prisoners in India**

Source: NCRB (2018)

The above graph shows that in the last 15 years, the increase in the number of women prisoners in India is much more than that of the percentage of the male prisoners in India. This means that the crime among the Indian women prisoners is increasing gradually. According to the report, a major portion of the Indian prisons is occupied by women and in this regard, the needs of the women in those prisons are to be concentrated for establishing the rights of the women in prison. Insufficient and inadequate health facilities, there is a major health concern for the women in prisons in India. In prison, there is a shortage of medical staffs for looking after the women prisoners. Furthermore, it can be criticised that the medical staffs and the other staffs of the prisons in India are not adequately trained for understanding the needs and requirements of the women in the prison in India. Therefore, the daily life of those women in Indian prison is very unhealthy and unsecured. Apart from that, the place of living in the Indian jails is very unhealthy like torture of mosquitoes that harass the women in the prison in India. The place of cooking and eating in the prison is dirty and unhygienic that are tolerated by the women in prisons.



**Figure 2: Figure showing the percentage of HIV diseases in male and female prisoners**

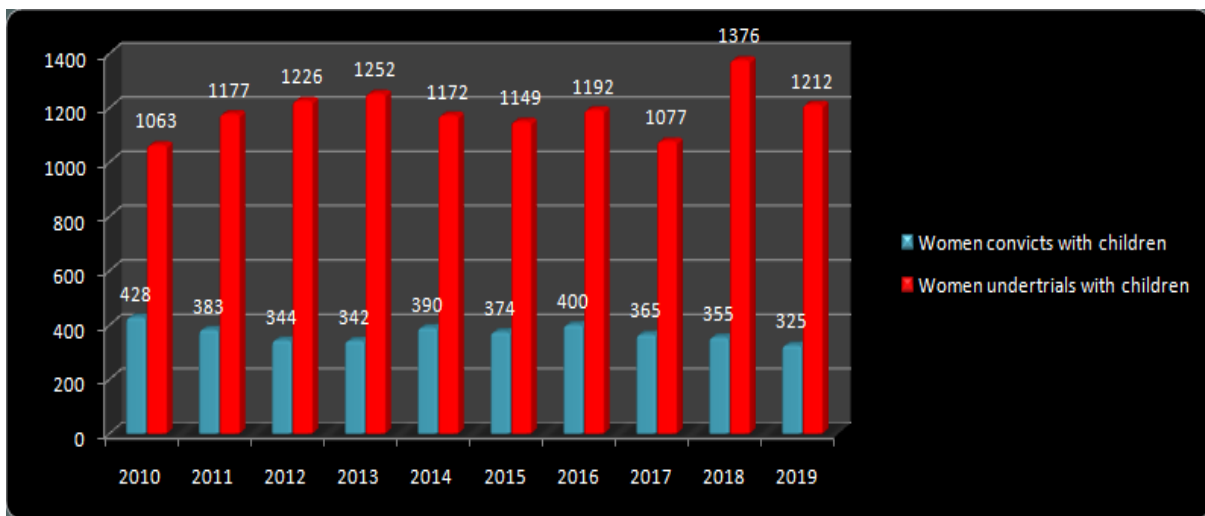
Source: Sharma, 2019

According to the report, it was discovered that HIV was higher among women detainees than the male detainees in Indian prisons. As per the above data, the HIV disease among the male prisoners was 1.7% as against the women 9.5% among the women and the HIV symptoms were much higher than the male in the prison. In addition to the above, it was noticed that women prisoners have to suffer a lot of hassles from the other inmates in the prison. However, from the above data it can be stated that on the one hand, the prison authority in India is not concerned about the spread of HIV amongst women and on the other hand, the women in prisons are not aware of the HIV themselves. The awareness among the women should also be increased in the future.

The people in prisons faces both physically and mentally and apart from that the health of women is also neglected. In many cases, it is seen that in the hospitals of prisons often lady medical officers and gynaecologists are not available. This expresses the deplorable state of women in prisons. The above source also states that adequate concerns are not given on the women and hence, women are detained in prisons for lack of other facilities. In the Indian prisons in between the time of (2015-2020) out of 51 deaths, 48 were normal death and the rest 3 were suicide cases. It can be remarked that women's physical, mental and reproductive health should be protected. As per the report of National Crime Records Bureau in the year 2019, women in Indian jails have occupied at the rate of 59%. This is not well for the women as Indian prisons are overcrowded and notorious. Due to overcrowd the jail authority cannot concentrate on the health of the women in prisons. Not only the health-related problem, but also the women in Indian prisons suffer from hygienic issues. The above source also shows that the women, in many times in jail do not get sufficient number of blankets while lying or they use the mattress is torn or soiled. However, all these have created the hygienic and

unhealthy issues in the lives of women in Indian prisons. The menstrual hygiene was the other thing that the women in prison could not control. This is because of the fact that most of the parts of the women's jail were occupied by men prisoners. In addition to that, the women could not tell the jail authority for food provision and for cooking also. According to the above report, the food provided to the women was horrible. Even the women found insects in egg-plants and caterpillar in the rice. In such a way, the women in the prison in India are in a distressed situation.

As per the statistical data, there are 31 jails in India in all the states and territories while 21 jails out of them have no separate accommodation for the women and most of the women were under trial and with their children.



**Figure 3: Number of women convicted and under trail with their children**

Source: Paliath, 2020

However, the above graph shows that from the year 2010 to 2019, the number of the convicted women with their children did not fall. Again the number of the women who were under trial slightly decreased from the year 2018 to 2019. This means that the prison authority in India did not think regarding the deplorable situation of those victim women. That is why in those prisons in India women were deprived of their health and hygienic benefits. The above source has also indicated that the prisons in Indian are mainly designed for the men. As a result, the women in those jails are lacking many facilities that are necessary for the living of the women. Therefore, from the above discussion, it can be realized that in every place, women in India are deprived of their health and hygienic related benefits. It is necessary to mitigate those challenges in the lives of the women for fostering a social balance in society. The Indian government should be more conscious and come forward to resolve the challenges faced by the women in the Indian prison.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The above discussion has revealed that in the Indian prisons, the condition of the women is very deplorable. This is because of the fact that in the Indian prison, the prison authority is not concerned at all for the facilities and needs of the women in prison. On the one hand, the environment of the jails in India is not healthy and hygienic and hence the women are not in a safe position. The findings have proved further that even the food provided by the jail authority are not up to the standard and sometimes there is the disturbance of mosquitoes. Therefore, not only their food but for a sound sleep the condition is not good.

The trend of the women in India for crime is increasing day by day than before and if the women will not get those facilities in the future there will be a social misbalance. As for health, of the women prisoners in India, the medical officer or the nurse or doctors are not always available in most of the prisons and that is why the women prisoners are not getting their health treatment facilities. Right to health and hygiene fall under sustainable development goals as initiated by the United Nations and hence the rights of the women in prison should be protected by the government India. As for HIV disease, it has been proved in research findings that HIV rather than the men in prisons affect women in Indian prisons. This proves that neither the higher authority of jail arranges for the proper treatment nor the women prisoners are cautious regarding their HIV disease. Therefore, first the health and hygienic related issues in prisons are to be highlighted to be resolved and then the other major issues should be improved.

## 6. Recommendation

Based on the above findings, the following are the recommendations for the mitigation of the women prisoners' challenges:

- The staffs in prisons should be trained well in the Indian prisons so that they can understand and know the value of working ethically in the prison. In this way they can stop the torture and harassment on the women in prison. The police and other staffs in the prison will learn to respect the women in the prison.
- The government of India is required to impose stricter laws if the country so that if any staff commits any illegal task or violates the rights of women in the prison then he should be punished strictly without any consideration. This will ultimately mitigate the sexual harassment and discrimination on the women in prison.
- With the improvement of physical health condition, it is necessary for the healthcare workers to see and support the women mentally so that the percentage of suicide can be lessened in the future. Lessening the post traumatic disorder is necessary within the healthcare system.
- In the findings in previous section it has been proved that medical facilities are not available in maximum cases in the Indian prisons. Furthermore, the doctors and other medical staffs are not available for women's treatment in the prison. All these should



be mitigating and rooted out by the Indian government in the future. Some special types of medical facilities are to be incorporated in the prison so that the rights of medical treatment and facilities can be ensured for the women in prison.

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