

# CONDITION OF WOMEN PRISONERS IN MODEL JAIL, CHANDIGARH: A COMMUNICATION STUDY

Bharat Dhiman

*Department of Communication & Media Technology, J.C. Bose University of Science and Technology, YMCA,  
Faridabad, Haryana, India*

---

**Abstract:** Female Prisoners is the study of special subject of research. Prison is an isolated social system and is easier to analyze from a social system perspective than other cases, primarily because society is too complex to examine directly. This research study sheds light on the conditions of women inmates in the Model Jail, Chandigarh, and the conditions that are currently burning issues. Female prisoners face several prison problems, such as cultural, social, economic, physiological, environmental, psychological, etc. The researcher used primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary data was collected using a self-structured interview schedule, observation method, and secondary data were collected from journals, books, journals, newspapers, government records, and various published and unpublished works.

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

---

## Introduction

Traditionally, women were the backbone of the family. However, with the onset of modernization, industrialization, and urbanization (processes of change) in society, the structure of the entire system changed socially, culturally, and economically. Now, women participate in the workforce along with men. Indian society is a patriarchal society; women are subordinated and violated by men in the arena of work and family.

Everywhere women is treated as inferior to men. As a result of industrialization and modernization, social stability is removed from the society, due to which several new problems appear in the society, such as family disorganization, marital discord, higher level of frustration, non-adjustment to the environment that forces women to engage in criminal activities and become criminals, for committing crimes, women have to go to jail to face punishment. The prison system functions as a social agency for the reformation of women and prisoners. A crime is a violation of the law and is also called a misdemeanor or a felony. Crime is harmful not only to individuals but also to society, society, and the state. A crime is a sinful activity committed, sometimes intentionally and sometimes accidentally.

The societal definition of crime is that crime is behavior that violates the social norms and codes of a particular community. Crime is an antisocial act (Mowrer), and society rejects crime. A person who commits a crime is known as a criminal or offender. The state is a body of social control and has the power to punish persons who commit a crime or break the law. For Durkheim, crime is a social fact that is inevitable for society because not all members of society share the same values, ethics, and cultural sensibilities. He defines, crime as an act that scandalizes a certain fixed state of collective conscience.

Merton sees crime as a result of pressure or tension. Female crime is also caused by extreme stress, anxiety, and torture. The source of this tension is aspirations to achieve specific goals, which are associated with society's barriers to achieving their life goals. Merton used the term Anomie, but Anomie is not a state of abnormality that leads to antisocial behavior. However, it is a condition experienced by individuals who want to achieve their goals but are denied access. Women also

Corresponding author's email : [bharatdhiman@jcboseust.ac.in](mailto:bharatdhiman@jcboseust.ac.in)



commit crimes mostly when frustrated, tortured, and unable to achieve their goals due to several obstacles in our Indian social system.

### ***Women Prisoners***

Prisoners are those women who commit crimes and are imprisoned for the welfare and correction of their criminal behavior. The task of the prison administration is to provide all the facilities to female prisoners according to their needs and well-being and to create a favorable environment so that their criminal behavior can be reformed into social behavior or behavior that is necessary according to society's norms. Female prisoners are under the supervision of the prison administration or under the supervision of prison staff. Along with male and female employees, employees for the safety and protection of female inmates are also appointed in prison.

Generally, there are two types of female prisoners – convicted female prisoners and convicted female prisoners. Convicted women prisoners are those women who are incarcerated in jail and are found guilty of a crime, while under trial women are those who are in judicial custody and are incarcerated in jail during the investigation.

Female prisoners make up half of the total number of prisoners, but there are also not enough prisons for female prisoners. According to a survey conducted in India, there are only 15 all-women prisons in India, 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. Due to the lack of all-women prisons, female prisoners must be locked up in general prisons for both men and women.

### ***History of Model Jail, Chandigarh***

Chandigarh Jail was established as a Sub Jail in 1972, which was upgraded to a District Jail in 1975. In January 1990, it was upgraded to a model jail equivalent to the Central Jail. Chandigarh Model Jail is the only jail in the Union Territory to cater to the riot needs of three states: Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh. There is no overcrowding problem faced by the inmates of Chandigarh as the jail population in the range of 900-950 falls short of the jail's capacity of 1120 (1000 males + 120 females).

The affairs of the jail are governed by the provisions of the Punjab Jail Manual, which came into force here in Section 87 of the Punjab Regulation Act, 1966. The Punjab Government has since revised the Punjab Jail Manual in 1996 and, at the same time, revised the Manual taking into account the recommendations/suggestions of the All India Committee on Prison Reforms headed by Hon'ble Jr. Justice A.N. Mullah and proposals of various committees and the law laid down by the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of India. As there is no overcrowding problem, the prison is well managed and kept very neat and clean, proving that it lives up to its status as a model prison. The prisoners are well looked after, and food, clothing, and other facilities are provided per the scales given in the Punjab Jail Manual.

### ***Legal actions of female prisoners:***

**Article 21:** No one shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except by procedure established by law.

**Article 5:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – No one shall be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

**Article 142:** The Supreme Court may, in its jurisdiction, make such order or pass such order as necessary to administer complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.

**Article 39 A:** Equal justice and free legal aid.

**Section 428:** Indian Penal Code (IPC) – Count the periods of custody of the accused as an under-trial prisoner against the period 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 used by women prisoners?
3. What facilities and infrastructure provides by the prison department for the women prisoners?
4. What are the various activities conducted by the prison department for the women prisoners?

***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 other countries, women prisoners comprise a very small part of the population. Therefore their problems and needs are ignored in prisons which require special attention. It explains the recommendations of various commissions that are not yet fulfilled and identifies several problems of women prisoners that are violated and exploited by guards, officers, and inmates.

He emphasized that the imprisoned women are illiterate and come from a very poor and backward part of society. He found that the prison condition was worse for residence. It states that female prisoners live for a very long time in an unhealthy environment, and there is a lack of facilities for rehabilitation. She states that because women are imprisoned for life, their family members cut off their relationship with them and suffer from depression and mental illness.

The Association for Penal Reform and Justice (2002) studied prisons in Hyderabad, focusing on the mental health and care of female prisoners and their dependent children. The study aims to find out the problems faced by female prisoners as human beings, not to study the inadequate existing situation for the welfare of women.

The study reveals that female inmates faced several problems in prison, but mainly they worried about the future of their dependent children who live with them in prison. The study found that children with their mothers also faced problems as they did not like the food and lacked medical facilities. They also had no contact with family.

Cho and LaLonde (2005) identified the impact of incarceration on women's employment. They found that incarceration does not adversely affect women's employment levels but positively impacts them. The employment rate of women in prison or while serving a prison sentence has been low, but in the post-sentence period, these rates are higher than in the previous period. They also analyzed that the employment rate was affected by the number of children. The employment rate of women with 4 or more children after prison is very high.

Halder and Jaishankar (2007) analyzed the rights of women prisoners in India. They identified six types of prisoners' rights under Articles 21 and 22, which are 1- Rights of the convict, 2- Rights of the prisoner, 3- Rights against inhumane torture and death in custody, 4- Detention in a civilian prison, 5- Rights against solitary confinement, 6- Rights against arbitrary arrest and detention. They looked into the situation of the female prisoners and found that the female prisoners and their children were in the worst condition in the prison environment. They also gave suggestions to improve the condition of women prisoners like separate courts for women, special policies and programs, new arrangements should be made, etc., to improve the condition of women prisoners.

Saxena et al. (2007) conducted a cross-sectional behavioral study of 177 inmates in a Bhopal prison. The findings show that the highest number of female prisoners have never received dental care, and women in the age group of 25-30 years have a negative attitude toward the importance and usefulness of dental care due to a lack of awareness and literacy. They explain that female prisoners were from a poor socio-environmental status, so they have poor oral hygiene and were not aware of the use of dental care. They also recommended well-structured oral health education programs, regular interval screening programs, female inmates' health awareness, appropriate toothbrushes, fluoride toothpaste, etc., to improve the dental care behavior of female inmates.

Kazhoyan (2013) studied the cause and effect relationship between the crime committed and various socio-economic variables. His study shows that the dominant age for committing a crime was 46 - 55. He found that most women were involved in fraud and murder and came from poor socio-economic backgrounds in childhood. His findings show that economic dependence, unemployment, unhealthy family background, conflictual relationships in the family, drug use, and partner violence were the causes that force women to commit crimes.

Barlow (2014) conducted a qualitative study. She explained theories to understand women's crime. She states that women have different needs than men, but the resources provided by the government were only for men. It is suggested that gender-specific awareness should be implemented in every correctional institution to help reduce recidivism among women. The government should provide tools and assessments that apply to women's needs for reintegration into society.

**Research Methodology:**

The research design of this study was descriptive and exploratory. The present study area was the female inmates of Model Jail, Chandigarh. An interview schedule was prepared to collect data from a sample of female inmates in the Model Jail, Chandigarh. 120 female prisoners were imprisoned for crimes such as murder, attempted murder, theft, smuggling, prostitution, etc. However, only 60 female prisoners cooperated with the researcher. Interview schedules were conducted among inmates in Chandigarh jail with prior permission obtained from officials. It was ensured that the response given in the interview schedule was voluntary and aimed to know the actual outcome of the analysis.

The researcher collected primary data through interviews and secondary data collected through books, journals, newspapers, magazines, government records, various published and unpublished works, etc. There were personal observations, interviews, and group discussions – socio-economic variables such as the age of women, education, religion, family status, etc. The dependent variables of this study were based on reason, information, and impact. Based on the data collection, the researcher used statistical techniques such as tabulation, percentage mean, etc.

Findings:

Table: 1 Age wise distribution of the respondents

<b>Age wise classification</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Less than 25</b>	2	3.33
<b>25-35</b>	22	36.66
<b>35-40</b>	16	26.66
<b>40-45</b>	12	20.00
<b>45-50</b>	6	10.00
<b>50-55</b>	2	3.33
<b>Total</b>	60	100

Table 1 shows that the highest number of imprisoned women is in the age group of 25-35 years, as 36.66 percent. It is worrying that most female prisoners are young and in the impressionable age group. The age distribution of female prisoners varies between 3.33% and 36.66%. The least was recorded with less than 25 years and 50 to 55 years.

Table 2. Educational status of the respondents

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Illiterate</b>	22	36.66
<b>Primary</b>	8	13.33
<b>Middle</b>	4	6.66
<b>Secondary</b>	6	10.00
<b>Graduate and above</b>	20	33.33

<b>Total</b>	60	100
--------------	----	-----

Table 2 shows the educational status of female prisoners. The table shows that the smallest percentage (4) of female prisoners belongs to the middle level. It also shows that the illiteracy rate is 36.66 percent, the highest among female inmates. It is clear from the table that the second highest is graduate and above, which is 33.33 percent. It means that more educated women were involved in crimes.

Table 3 Religion of Respondents

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

Table 3 presents the religion of the respondents. The maximum number of female prisoners belonging to the Hindu religion with 80 percent. About 15 percent and 5 percent of respondents profess the Muslim and Christian religions.

Table 4 Marital status of the respondents

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

The marital status of the respondents is shown in Table 4. It follows that 46.66 percent of the respondents are married. Only 10.00 percent of the respondents are single, 13.33 percent are widowed, and 30.00 percent are divorced.

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

Newspaper read by Women Prisoner

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

Table 5, it is clear indicated that the highest number of women inmates 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 prefer English newspaper i.e., Times of India and Hindustan. Times. Clearly, women mainly preferred the Hindi newspaper Dainik Bhaskar, the largest read and circulated daily in India.

Table 6 Magazine Read by Women Prisoners

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

Table 6 shows that female inmates read Aha Zindagi magazine with 51.66 percent, which is the first, followed by Jagran Sakhi with 30.00 percent, and Amar Ujala Udan with 18.33 percent is the third. Women preferred Aha Zindagi, a magazine popular among women and female inmates. Aha Zindagi is a Hindi family magazine published monthly by the Dainik Bhaskar group.

### ***New initiatives started by Prison Department***

1. A drug de-addiction center called "Rupantran Kendra" has been set up in Chandigarh Model Jail. Sh. VP Singh Badnore, Hon'ble Governor, Punjab & Administrator, UT, Chandigarh, inaugurated Rupantran Kendra at Model Jail, Chandigarh, on 12.02.2020 at 11:30 AM. Sh. Manoj Parida, IAS, Adviser to Administrator, UT, Chandigarh, Sh. Arun Kumar, IAS, Principal Secretary Home, Sh. Sanjay Beniwal, IPS, DGP Chandigarh, Sh. Omvir Singh, IPS, I.G. Jail, Chandigarh, Sh. Mandeep Brar, IAS, DC UT Chandigarh, Ms. Nilambari Jagadale, IPS, SSP UT Chandigarh, and Sh. Virat, HCS, and Joint I.G. Prisons were present on occasion.
2. The inmates did art work at Rupantran Kendra with the help of the expertise of Home Science College, Sec-10, Chandigarh. The walls of the Rupantra Kendra were painted in soothing colors. The department also planned to paint the other walls of the prison in soothing colors.
3. Various ornamental/flower/medicinal plants have been planted in prison. The premises and the jail complex were kept tidy and clean as part of a special Clean Jail Green Jail campaign.

4. National Sports Day 2019 was celebrated at Model Jail, Chandigarh, on 29th August 2019. Undertrial and Convicts played games like 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 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 were also present. The sports meet was organized on the birthday of Major Sh. Dhian Chand

5. In association with Burail Jail, Chandigarh, Social Welfare Department started "SARTHI," a canteen run by Divyangjans of Asha Kiran, Sector-46 Chandigarh. Sarthi Kiosk was inaugurated by Ms. Kirron Kher, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, UT, Chandigarh, on 27.09.2017. The Divyangjans would sell the products of Burail Jail in Chandigarh at the Saarthi Kiosk. Saarthi canteen was launched to focus on different politics and maintain a meaningful trust in activities for the welfare and empowerment of persons with disabilities. In addition, the inmates' skills will also be promoted by selling prison products.

### ***Creative activities for Women Prisoners***

#### **1. Recreational activities**

Yoga classes are held daily in prison. Prisoners participate in yoga activities daily. International Yoga Day is celebrated annually in the jail by senior dignitaries. Sports activities (indoor and outdoor) like volleyball, kabaddi, table tennis, badminton, ludo, chess, carom, etc., are provided to the inmates to relieve their mental stress. An annual sports meet is also held at the prison every year.

The Prisoner Gym was inaugurated by the Governor of Punjab and Administrator, UT, Chandigarh Sh. V. P. Singh Badnore. It has multiple stations, a commercial treadmill, cycles, abs trainer, incline trainer, exercise balls, twisters, etc. It is very beneficial in keeping inmates healthy; they avoid negativity and negative activities. It also helps to reduce drug expenses.

#### **2. Educational activities**

##### **IGNOU Study Centre**

Prisoners are given free education in prison. IGNOU Study Center offers higher education such as graduation, post-graduation, degree, and diploma programs. National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) offers matriculation and 10+2 course. The Adult Education Center is run in collaboration with the Department of Adult Education, UT Chandigarh, to provide reading and writing skills to the illiterate.

To provide additional study material to inmates enrolled in various educational programs, books on different academic faculties are available in the library. Many novels, autobiographies, biographies, and story books in various local languages are available in the library. Religious texts like Ramayana, Gita, Guru Granth Sahib, Quran, and Bible are available in the library. Prisoners are provided with a proper arrangement of sessions as per the schedule.

#### **3. Social activity**

Festivals like Diwali, Holi, Id, Christmas, Teej, Raksha Bandhan, Guru Purab, etc., are celebrated by inmates and jail staff. Senior officers also participate in various social activities on many occasions. Special "Bada Khana" food like Halwa, Kheer, and special vegetable dishes are provided to the prisoners at all important Indian festivals. Prisoners are given special interview time on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan & Karwa Chauth.



## **Conclusion**

The study reveals that the maximum number of women inmates were from the Hindu community and had a low socioeconomic profile, forcing women to commit crimes. The women appeared to have been jailed for enmity murder, dowry, extramarital affairs, theft, and drug-related crimes. The maximum number of female prisoners who were married and educated committed the crime. Women preferred to read the Dainik Bhaskar newspaper, the largest read and circulated newspaper in India. The Prison Department has introduced some new initiatives and creative activities in prison for the women prisoners from time to time and actively participated in them.

## **References**

- Ahuja, R. (1969). *Female Offenders in India*. Meerut. Meenakshi Prakashan.
- Atray, J.P. (1988). *Crime against Women*. Delhi. Vikas Publishing House.
- Dhiman, Dr. Bharat, *Science Communication in India: Current Trends and Future Vision* (June 10, 2022). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=>
- Bharat. (2021). Social Media exposure and Psychological problems during COVID-19 outbreak: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 25(2), 346-351.
- Carlen, P. & Anne, W. (2004). *Analyzing Women's Imprisonment. USA and Canada*. William Publishing.
- Carmody, P. & McEvoy, M. (1996). *A Study of Irish Female Prisoners*. Dublin2. Stationary Office.
- Cho, R. & LaLonde, R. (2005). *The Impact of Incarceration in State Prison on the Employment Prospects of Women*. The Institute for the study of Labor (IZA). Germany. Discussion Paper No.1792.
- Covington, S. S. (1998). *Women in Prison: Approaches in the Treatment of our Most Invisible Population*. *Women and Therapy Journal*. 21(1), 141-155.
- Dhiman, B. (2019). *Effects of Online News Applications for Android—A Critical Analysis*. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 815-819.
- Dhiman, B. (2021). *The Practice of Media Education and Media Research: A Review on Five Asian Countries*. *Global Media Journal*, 19(44), 1-7.
- Dhiman, B., & Malik, P. S. (2021). *Psychosocial Impact of Web Series and Streaming Content: A Study on Indian Youth*. *Global Media Journal*, 19(46), 1-7.
- Dr. Abid Ali, Bharat. (2021). *Impact of Smartphone: A Review on Negative Effects on Students*. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology*, 18(4), 5710-5718. Retrieved from <https://www.archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/7164>
- Dr. Abid Ali, Bharat. (2020). *Influence of Social Media in Developing Social Anxiety: A Study of Kurukshetra University Students*. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology*, 17(12), 1585-1592. Retrieved from <https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/7167>

Jaishankar, K. & Halder, D. (2007). Rights of Women Prisoners in India: A Legal Analysis. *The Indian Journal of Criminology & Criminalistics*. xxviii(2), 12-20.

Kaushik, A. & Sharma, K. (2009). Human Rights of Women Prisoners in India: A Case Study of Jaipur Central Prison for Women. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*. 16(2), 253

Shivakumar, M. A; Lobo, S. S. et. al. (2018). Student's Perspective on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Female Prisoners. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*. 6(1), 177 186.

<http://chdmodeljail.gov.in/>

<https://thearticle.in/courtroom/plight-of-female-prisoners-one/>

<https://thearticle.in/courtroom/plight-female-prisoners-two/>

<https://thearticle.in/courtroom/plight-of-female-prisoners-three/>

<https://indiapoliticalprisoners.wordpress.com/2016/02/08/india-how-women-prisoners-are-treatedworse- than-men/>

<https://ui.womencenter.wordpress.com/2016/11/01/the-treatment-of-women-in-U-S-prisonsystem/>