INMATE LIFE AND INCARCERATION EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN MIZORAM PRISON: A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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Abstract: In Mizo society, studies on criminology are rather few, and studies on crimes committed by women are relatively rare compared to studies on male offenders. Considering the statistics from the Prison Department, it is evident that crimes committed by females have increased, but the concern for tackling the issue still seems to be taking a backseat. Women offenders are often victimized, especially in a closed-knit society like the Mizo society. As such, studying this area is crucial to reform and understand the situation of incarcerated women and their overall impact. The subject of female criminality was and still is largely neglected. Once a person has been labelled as a criminal, the person is rarely ever allowed to forget the status. This is the research proposal submitted to the author's university for her PhD. After a brief introduction, the paper starts with a detailed review of the literature at hand under theoretical, methodological, and thematic heads, terminating in an analysis of the research gap and rationale for the study. The second section lists out the possible objectives of the Study and the study methodology. The next section highlights the research ethics of such a sensitive type of study. The penultimate section visualizes the limitations of the study. The proposal terminates with the tentative chapterisation.

Keywords: Research Proposal; Incarceration; Women; Convict; Undertrial.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of crime depends on the ideas, philosophies, and culture of every society. It changes when there is a change in the values and attitudes of society. When new regulations are imposed in society due to change, the concept of crime assumes a new meaning. What a society defines as crime is socially constructed and highly relative. Social environment and deviance are highly relevant to the subject of criminality. Research on prison life was susceptible to misinterpretation for a very long time, and studies on female criminality were very few.

Crime is a serious anti-social action to which the State reacts consciously, and this reaction is justified by punishment. Shankardass (2000) examines how punishment has been viewed as an accepted form of social life. Scott and Flynn (2014) have highlighted the link between crime and punishment. The existence of punishment is said to be justified by the problems of crime, and the amount of the crime committed is the most important component in deciding the severity of punishment. However, several of the most significant and renowned criminologists, including Emile Durkheim, Georg Rusche, and Michel Foucault, have contested this widely held assumption. They believe that crime is generally insignificant and that social, cultural, economic, and political variables play a considerable role in determining the types and extent of punishment in society (2014, p. 12).

Hence, the punitive justice system shifts towards restorative justice. The purpose of imprisonment undoubtedly is the retribution or reformation of a person. Restorative justice seeks to raise awareness among offenders of the impact of their crimes on victims through 'sentences' served within the community. Offenders may be ordered to participate in community service projects or mediated reconciliation meetings, or conferences with victims and their families. Rather than antagonizing them from society, they need to be educated on the costs of crime in a meaningful way that helps them to reintegrate into the mainstream social relationships.

Studies on crime, punishment, and imprisonment are often considered a male phenomenon. For a long time, any sort of deviance committed by a female has been condemned by society at large. Women are considered to be the vulnerable section of society, and the gender differences in male and female criminality have been a questionable topic. Women in prison have

an unparalleled sensation of loneliness. Sykes (2007) argued that the frustration, tension, and guilt of being separated from and unable to care for their children are added to the suffering of women who are imprisoned.

Incarceration is a complex reality because perceptions from the outside might sometimes be manipulated or biased. The experiences of incarcerated women all over the world differ from country to country, but at some point, the prison system has failed to cope with their needs. The question of women being granted their rights within the prison has become a questionable topic. According to the World Female Imprisonment List 2017, over 714,000 women and girls are imprisoned around the world, accounting for 7% of the global prison population. Since 2000, the female prison population has grown at a higher rate than the male prison population, with the number of women and girls in jail increasing by more than 50% while the male population has grown by roughly 20% (World Female Imprisonment List, 2017)

Since time immemorial, imprisonment has been the expected mode of dealing with offenders. The universally held view of imprisonment suggests that incarceration is justifiable only if it guarantees the protection of society against crime. India also shares this view, which could be achieved only if the process of incarceration prepares and motivates the offenders to be law-abiding and self-supporting after they are released from prison. It further suggests that the prison experiences should not aggravate the sufferings already inherent in the offenders, whose liberty and self-determination are often deprived within the prison walls. Hence, imprisonment should be catered in such a way that a few offenders who endangered public safety should be segregated meaningfully and ensure that they come out of prison as better people than they were at the time of their incarceration (The Mizoram Gazette, 2017)

There has been a rise in crime rates in India from 241.2 in 2019 and 314.3 in 2020. (NCRB Prison Statistics, 2020). The capacity of women's Jails has increased by 34.6% during 2014-2019 (status as of 31st December of each year); however, the actual number of women inmates has increased by 21.7% in the same period. The capacity of women Inmates in Other Jails (except Women Jails) has increased by 4.0% during 2014-2019. During the same period, the number of women in these jails increased by 10.77 percent (NCRB, Prison Statistics, 2020).

With the rise in female inmate rates and the total crime rates in general, the situation of prisons in India needs much recognition as female sections in the Indian prisons are usually spaces for rape, torture and violation of any right which women has. In some states in India, women offenders are not ensured any proper hygiene, no proper sanitation, or reproductive hygiene. The prison walls have stripped off their rights as human beings, and not only that, being within the prison has taken away their family ties and snatched away the roles which they hold in the society.

In Mizoram, there are 8 District Jails, one Central Jail, and a separate Central Women's Jail located in Aizawl. In total, there are 951 inmates out of 1607 capacity. Among the total inmates, 73, which is only 7.6 percent (51- Under Trial Period, 18- Convict), are female prisoners (Prison Statistics, Mizoram, 2019). There is a drastic increase in the number of female inmates in Mizoram. According to the (Prison Statistics Mizoram, 2022) daily report Dec, 2021, there is a total of 71 female inmates, while the number of female inmates has increased to a total of 107 as per February 2022. As such, the cause for the level of increase in female inmates needs a systematic investigation.

In Mizo society, studies on criminology are rather few, and studies on crimes committed by women are relatively rare compared to studies on male offenders. Considering the above statistics from the Prison Department, it is evident that crimes committed by females have increased, but the concern for tackling the issue still seems to be taking a backseat. Women offenders are often victimized, especially in a closed-knit society like the Mizo society. As such, studying this area is crucial to reform and understand the situation of incarcerated women and their overall impact. The subject of female criminality was and still is largely neglected. Once a person has been labelled as a criminal, the person is rarely ever allowed to forget the status (Bhosle, 2009).

After a brief introduction, the paper starts with a detailed review of the literature at hand under theoretical, methodological, and thematic heads, terminating in an analysis of the research gap and

rationale for the study. The second section lists out the possible objectives of the Study and the study methodology. The next section highlights the research ethics of such a sensitive type of study. The penultimate section visualizes the limitations of the study. The proposal terminates with the tentative chapterization. This is the research proposal submitted to the author's university for her PhD. The next section deals with a review of the literature.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to the particular issue, area of research, or theory provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of the works about the research problem being investigated. Several literatures have been reviewed for this research, which are divided into three themes which are theoretical perspectives, methodological reviews, and thematic reviews.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The theoretical perspective explores theories related to the topic under study, which helps in a better understanding of the study in question, while at the same time putting forth a justification for the proposed study. The proposed study focuses on the following theories which are Erving Goffman's Total Institution, Agnew's General Strain Theory, and Foucault's Discipline and Punish, and the focus will be on the Theory of Penology based on the objective of the study.

ERVING GOFFMAN'S TOTAL INSTITUTION

Jacobsen and Kristiansen (2015) examine the work of Erving Goffman's 'Total Institution', in which he considered a total institution as a mini-society in itself, where they are governed by a person's or a person's authority as they are cut off from the rest of society. To him, a total institution is a "closed social system" that is walled off from the rest of society by high walls, barbed wire, and barred doors. As soon as they enter a total institution, a new identity is given to them, which is much lower than their previous identity. As their old identity is stripped off, such members of total institutions are often prone to stigmatization. The aim of each of these total institutions, which are prescribed by higher authorities, is to help them overcome their deviant behaviour and inculcate good morals within them. He further examined how the total institution acts as a 'forcing houses for changing persons'. Firstly, the person is admitted to a total institution, which is normally accompanied by 'degradation, humiliations, and profanations of the self'. Secondly, the person goes through a 'rite of passage' which creates a new identity for the person along with a new social status. After going through both these procedures, the person experiences immense changes in their 'moral career', which in turn changes the perception of 'the self and of the 'significant other'.

AGNEW'S GENERAL STRAIN THEORY

Proctor (2004) examines incarcerated females with Agnew's General Strain Theory, which suggests that if people are treated badly, they might get mad and engage in delinquency. In this theory, the strain creates pressure for corrective action, with delinquency being one of the possible outcomes. Agnew believes that participation in crime functions as a way of dealing with negative social relations and their consequent psychological states, such as anger and frustration. From this study, it is shown that the inmates with a higher level of strain due to a history of sexual and physical victimization, impoverished socioeconomic backgrounds, or weaker social bonds and support were more likely to have higher levels of criminality. In addition to this, inmates with more friends who engaged in unlawful acts, as well as those who reported spending more hours per week with such friends, were more likely to have higher levels of criminality. This study suggested that strain associated with a particular form of negative social relations- sexual and physical abuse may influence female to engage in serious criminality and to ultimately establish their criminal careers.

FOUCAULT'S DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

Foucault (1977) examines the evolution of the modern prison system, from execution to incarceration and ultimate supervision of criminals. Foucault shows how stringent discipline

and morals have shifted punishment's agency from the physical to the spiritual. Before the eighteenth century, punishment was aimed at the human body. Violent torture, body mutilation, and cruel executions were all part of a public display meant to teach a lesson and dissuade others from committing similar acts. The terrible suffering of wrongdoers was interpreted as confirmation of the sovereign's total control over all citizens. French reformers began to criticise the prison system in the 18th century, calling for less dramatic and severe sentences. They were more concerned with social control than with the well-being of offenders. When citizens witness extreme brutality, they generally side with the tormented criminal, resulting in riots. The emergence of a new economy and body politics elevated "the art of punishment" to new heights. The major purpose, according to penal reformists, should not be to seek revenge on the perpetrator, but rather to avoid future crime. The state would now focus on reducing the potential consequences of a crime, making punishment less violent on criminals' bodies, but ensuring a stronger mental effect. The number of jails and criminal correctional facilities has increased as a result of this transition. Instead of being horrifying and dreadful places, prisons, according to Foucault, became sites of correction, reclamation, and soul cure.

THEORIES OF PENOLOGY

Dharm and Shelke (2019) examine the different theories of punishment and analyse their changing trend. They have highlighted that there is no single theory that is sufficient in itself to limit crime, and usually, theories of punishment aim to control the increase in crime rate and to prevent the deterrent effect of criminal activities on society. Theories of punishment include the Deterrent Theory, the Retributive Theory, the Preventive Theory, and the Reformative Theory.

THE DETERRENT THEORY OF PUNISHMENT

Meyer (1969) looks at Cesare Beccaria's 19th-century punishment theory, which was previously proposed by Plato. The goal of punishment, according to this theory, is to cause suffering to the offender to make them pay for their wrongdoing. As the name indicates, deterrence is the use of punishment to prevent the offenders from repeating the crime they commit and also warn other potential offenders of the dreadful consequences of wrongdoing. The extent of punishment inflicted on the criminals will be a message for them never to repeat their actions in the future.

THE RETRIBUTIVE THEORY OF PUNISHMENT

The most ancient kind of punishment is based on this principle. Private retribution, such as an eye for an eye, blood for blood, and tooth for a tooth, reigned at times. At times, the state usually administers such private vengeance in its hands. A person committing criminal activities will be punished straight away without any second thought. This theory is not advocated that much by criminologists. (ibid)

THE PREVENTIVE THEORY OF PUNISHMENT

Dharm and Shelke (2019) analysed that the preventive method of punishment seeks to prevent the criminal from committing the crime either by imprisonment, inflicting the death penalty, or by ending the modes by which they used to commit a crime. With imprisonment, the chances of the offender repeating the crime are limited. Sometimes the mode of criminal acts is chopped off like the hands of robbers and thieves, organs of sexual offenders, etc., to prevent the criminal and deter them from committing the crime. Through this preventive method, the offender is put away from the chances of committing a crime, which results in the safety of society.

THE REFORMATIVE THEORY OF PUNISHMENT

According to this theory, the offender is to be cured physically and morally. It aimed to make the offender mentally strong through re-education and discipline so as to prevent them from the temptation of committing a crime. And for this, a healthy environment of imprisonment is necessary to transform the criminal. (ibid)

Theories of deviance, imprisonment, and punishment are discussed in this part in the hopes of providing support for the planned research. In this context, the reviewed theories will be contextualized based on the lived experiences of incarcerated women. Based on the reviewed theories, the causes of their deviant behaviour, the

effect of confinement within the prison walls, and their overall impact will be analysed. The theory of punishment will be contextualized to provide an understanding of prison as an institution of rehabilitation for the study population. Hence, the reviewed theories seek to provide an overview of sources explored on the research topic so that the research fits within a larger field of study.

METHODOLOGICAL REVIEWS

The methods used in research provide a framework for understanding the study population. For this proposed research, methods such as ethnography, in-depth case studies, observation in the field, and an interview schedule are commonly employed sources of primary data collection. Secondary data are often collected from the concerned Departments. Sample size is usually smaller as the studies usually focus on in-depth analysis of the data from respondents. The following are some of the studies and methods employed by others in the area of the proposed research.

Kumar (2017) in her research used an ethnographic study in the Women's Prisons of Kerala, which involved twenty-two inmates who voluntarily cooperated in the study. Ethnographic studies improved not only the quality of the study but also helped in resolving the major issue of many inmates, i.e., time and space to talk. As per the principle of ethnography, the method is more important than the actual product of research; the fieldwork for a prolonged period, observations, and in-depth conversations have constructed the substance of the study. Rowe (2004) employs an ethnographic perspective to unravel the lived meanings of both the culture of the female prison writer and the consequences of the prison environment based on her experience.

Parveen (2018) conducted a study on the condition of women prisoners using the census method concerning the total population of female undertrials and convicts from jails in UP. The study found that the low economic status of the family is an important factor in crime.

Das (2013) conducted a study on 35 female prisoners from three jails in Odisha using observation in the field, an interview schedule, and in-depth case studies. The research aims to highlight the socio-economic, cultural, and psychological aspects of the women prisoners and also analyzes the prime cause for committing crimes.

Sen (2005) researched women inmates in West Bengal. In the study, there are 53 jails in West Bengal, from which a sample was selected only from 4 Central Jails, including one Women's Jail. A total of 200 women inmates were interviewed, which constitutes only 16 percent of the total female inmate population in West Bengal.

THEMATIC REVIEWS

Thematic reviews examine themes within a topic by detecting, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the research subject. It is an in-depth analysis of the existing literature for the proposed study, which is divided into different themes. The reviewed literature is divided into six thematic areas, which are causes of imprisonment, socio-economic profile, gender differences in prison, women's experiences in prison, women's imprisonment and family relationships, and women's incarceration and rehabilitation.

Causes of imprisonment

Dirks (2004) found a wide range of physical, emotional, and sexual assaults in the lives of jailed women. According to the report, many jailed women had been sexually victimised at some point in their lives, with many of them occurring before the age of 18. Those having such histories tend to face the same traumas during their service time within the prison. Their history of poverty, sexual abuse, mental illness, and substance abuse has marked their advent into the criminal justice system. The study further stated that the prison system often contributes to the revictimization of women by perpetuating powerlessness and vulnerability, which often triggers them to deviate from society at large.

Palermo (2003) analyses the cause for the increasing antisocial and criminal behaviour perpetrated by women from a sociological point of view. The study argued that the emancipation of women from patriarchy brought them not only freedom but also new responsibilities. The greater desire for achievement and material possession at times weakened the moral sense in some women, creating difficulties in self-control, which leads to aggressive behaviour.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Bhandari (2016) argued that there is a need to have a holistic understanding of the problems faced by persons involved in criminal activities. It is clearly shown from the studies that persons involved in criminal activities usually come from families with low class status. They are brought up in a family which have experienced unemployment, marital difficulties, neglect, abuse, mental health problems, and are usually from a low social class status. It is observed from the findings of NGO's and organizations researching criminal activities that the reality is quite harsh and beyond imagination. Besides, children of the incarcerated parents faced problems of maternal deprivation, embarrassment, and stigmatization from society. Children who are accompanied by their mothers have no choice rather than being brought up and socialised within the prison walls, which is neither ideal nor conducive for the development of a child.

Brock and Brekken (2019) suggest that incarcerated women possess lower levels of educational attainment when they enter prison. Neglect and severe physical, emotional, and sexual abuses weaken their motivation and ability to concentrate. The study revealed that incarcerated women suffered negative educational experiences due to a lack of parental support and alienation in schools. The findings of the study may contribute to scholarly inquiry of women's pathways to prison, a construct now underrepresented in the literature.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PRISON

Ginn (2013) examines the differences in men's and women's offences, arguing that women tend to be involved in less serious crimes, like domestic situations, to support the needs of their own and their families, as compared to men's involvement in serious violence, criminal damage, and professional crime. He argues that women who usually played a central role in their families before imprisonment are taken away from their families. These experiences of imprisonment lead to multiple health and social needs. Women entering prison tend to have a history of sexual abuse, victims of domestic violence, and drug abuse. It is also shown that they tend to rate their physical and mental health as poor and are usually engaged in drugs and alcohol.

Smith (1894) highlighted the problems faced by women prisoners in comparison with male prisoners. He argued that since the percentage of female prisoners is comparatively less compared to male prisoners, society as a whole tends to neglect the condition of women's imprisonment. As far as concerns, there are fewer studies of female prisoners than male prisoners. Apart from this, the extent of crimes committed by female prisoners is usually petty offenses and is usually mild in comparison with the crimes committed by male prisoners. Despite the scenario, female prisoners bear a greater load of physical and mental abnormalities and also face many medical problems as compared to men in prison. Many of the female prisoners have a history of severe social, mental, alcohol, or drug abuse. For female prisoners, their entry into prison has little or no success either in deterring them from committing further crimes or in rehabilitating them. Indeed, it separates them from their families and children, and mothers with children often face double the problems concerning the overall condition of themselves and their children.

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN PRISON

Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2003) highlighted the importance of understanding women's experiences in prison, their responses to treatment, their lives after prison, and how changing prison regimes have affected them. They further suggested that studies on these things remain limited. According to them, individual attributes, pre-prison experiences, and prison conditions are associated with how women respond to incarceration, but assessments of their joint and conditional influences are lacking. Understanding of ways women negotiate power and construct their lives in prison is important, and systematic evaluations of interventions based on these assessments are rare; as such, they suggested the need for studying the long-term consequences of imprisonment.

Fettig (2009) examines that the majority of women behind bars commit crimes such as drug and property offences, and most of them have minimal education, few job skills, and little employment history. Female prisoner experiences certain significant characteristics during their criminal participation, incarceration, and their re-entry into society; a number of them suffer from the

dual problems of mental illness and drug abuse. Apart from that majority were both custodial parents and primary financial providers. Unlike male prisoners, incarcerated women report that the other parent is not the caregiver for their children while they are imprisoned. Instead, a grandmother or other relative is the most likely caregiver for their children. The study reveals that proper treatment is beyond the reach of low-income women, and hence, they often resort to self-medication.

WOMEN'S IMPRISONMENT AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

La Vigne, Brooks, and Shollenberger (2009) examine that incarcerated mothers look forward the most to their children's well-being upon release. They often experience more conflict with family members than male prisoners; they usually do not receive financial support from their families, and it is difficult for them to find a job when they are released. The employment hurdle is mainly due to a lack of proper job training during their imprisonment. They face re-entry challenges with a different set of skills and deficits than men, which are manifested in higher rates of relapse and recidivism. All this suggests that a focus on women as a distinct subpopulation of persons re-entering society is critical to the development of effective policies and practices.

Ruso, Fabian, Domokos. (2010) examines how a woman in prison experienced an unparalleled sense of isolation. Especially, the mother faced several challenges within the prison and after her imprisonment. Their children are at risk of lots of difficulties and problems. They had issues with housing, insufficient personnel, a lack of family interaction, a lack of education and employment programming, and inadequate healthcare. A high percentage of female inmates have a history of mental, physical, or sexual abuse.

WOMEN'S INCARCERATION AND REHABILITATION

Tittle (1974) examines the ambiguous concept of rehabilitation in the study of imprisonment. He analyses several arguments related to the idea behind the prison as a rehabilitating agency for criminals, its failure, and success. Recidivism as an approach to measure rehabilitation is considered uncertain, as criminal behaviour results not only in personal defects but is also as much a function of social conditions and influences as of individual characteristics. The study concluded that due to a lack of poor data/ records, people will continue to assume prison as a moulding ground for recidivism, regardless of any form that is instituted. It suggests rehabilitation to be considered as a community-based institution that serves everybody in need, rather than the responsibility of the prison alone.

Chandra, Kunjappan, Jaishankar (2018) highlighted the need for Indian criminologists to study the causes of crime, its prevention, and the rehabilitation of offenders. It also implies that reformative measures should be investigated, and that the interaction between criminology, public policy, and practice should be improved.

Gul (2018) in the research-based article reveals the problems of prison management, which include overcrowding, torture, under-budgeting, understaffing, lack of basic needs for the prisoners, and proper training of the staff within the prison system. The article recommends a holistic rehabilitative approach within the prison regime. To accomplish this approach, it suggests meaningful, practical, and effective training of the prison staff to restore their moral and professional integrity. It further suggests the need for programmatic intervention based on individual assessments of the inmates.

RESEARCH GAP AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1. All the existing literature reviewed was the works of researchers mainly from other countries. Despite the increasing rate of women prisoners, in-depth studies on the life and experiences of women prisoners in the country, North-east India, and especially Mizoram, are rare. Poverty, low educational profile, broken family, or unstable income may at times contribute to the deviant behaviour, which will be studied in this research.

2. The impact of incarceration on their families' relationships will also be taken into account, which is something that is frequently overlooked. Thus, in-depth research in this area is necessary to find solutions to their problems in life and experiences within the prison.

3. Studies on criminology and deviant behaviour often contribute to the legal aspect. The institutional facilities available to them, especially for female inmates, need a systematic investigation. Thus, this research hopes to seek from the sociological point of view and reveal the causes, effects, and solutions of deviant behaviour and find solutions for their prevention.

4. Mizoram is a state in the Northeast East that recently had a separate Women's Jail, i.e., in 2019. According to the National Crime Records Bureau 2019, Mizoram has the second highest number of female inmates, i.e., 187 convicts and 29 under-trial 158 (NCRB, 2019), next to Assam, where the total population is high as compared to that of Mizoram. All the other North-East states have below 100 female inmates. Thus, there is a need to have an in-depth study on female prisoners in a closed-knit society.

5. In Mizo society, with the majority being Christians, criminal behaviour is considered to be a sin, and reformation is mandatory. Civil society and family members remarkably contribute to the proper functioning of society. However, crimes involving law and order are considered to be a serious offence, especially when the perpetrators are women. They often faced stigmatization and shame in society as compared to male perpetrators. As such, studies on female incarceration are necessary in a society with a majority following the Christian religion.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the factors that cause women's offending and consequent incarceration.

2. To understand the socio-economic profile of women offenders.

3. To study the effect of imprisonment on women and the lives of their families.

4. To examine the institutional facilities available for women offenders in incarceration that can promote re-entry into society.

5. To contextualise the theories of penology and to make a macro analysis of this micro study.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic plan for conducting research, or how the research will be conducted, is referred to as research methodology. It is the study of the strategies for obtaining knowledge for research. A researcher can draw on both quantitative as well as qualitative methods. Quantitative method has numerical data and it is analysed using statistical and mathematical methods, while qualitative methods involve no numerical data. It is often expressed in languages, pictures, photographs, and observations.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a detailed plan of how the goals of research will be achieved. It plans as to what, why, how, when/where it is to be observed, how to record observations, how to analyse/interpret observations, and how to generalise. Thus, it is a systematic planning of conducting research. For this study, qualitative methods will be used. The research will be descriptive-exploratory.

Descriptive research aimed at finding out and describing the phenomena. Its primary goal is to describe, explain, and validate research findings. It will also serve to organise the findings to fit them with explanations, and then test or validate those reasons under the intended study.

UNIVERSE AND SAMPLE

The universe of the study comprises all the district jails of Mizoram. There are 8 District Jails located in Aizawl, Lunglei, Siaha, Champhai, Kolasib, Serchhip, Mamit, and Lawngtlai Districts of Mizoram. A separate Central Jail and Central Women's Jail are also located in the Aizawl District of Mizoram. The universe of this study includes all the female inmates from 8 districts of Mizoram, including Central Women's Jail, with a total of 107 female inmates as per the list from the table.

From the above table-1, it is shown that the majority of female prisoners are found in the Central Women's Jail, Aizawl. The figure shows 73 female inmates, excluding two children, in Central Women's Jail out of the total 107 female inmates from all of the District Jails, which is 70.09 percent of the total female inmates.

The Central Women's Jail, Aizawl, will be purposely selected for the present study. All the 73 women prisoners found in Central Women's Jail, Aizawl, will be taken using the census method. Case studies will be conducted on only one available life convict to be selected, purposely looking at the gravity of the case, and further two mother(s) with accompanying children.

Table 1: Mizoram Female Prisoners Daily Population Report as on 24th February, 2022

JAIL	UTP	LIFER	CONVICT RI	CONVICT SI	CHILDREN	TOTAL
Central Women's Jail (Aizawl)	56	1	13	3	2	75
District Jail (Aizawl)	-	-	-	-	-	-
District Jail (Lunglei)	10	-	-	-	-	10
District Jail (Saiha)	-	-	-	-	-	-
District Jail (Kolasib)	1	-	-	-	-	1
District Jail(Champhai)	10	-	-	-	-	10
District Jail (Lawngtlai)	-	-	-	-	-	-
District Jail (Serchhip)	6	-	-		1	7
District Jail (Mamit)	4	-	-	-	-	4
TOTAL	87	1	13	3	3	107

PRINCIPLE OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

For this study, Central Women's Jail located in Aizawl district of Mizoram is included as the sample location of the study since it houses 70 percent of the total female inmates in Mizoram. The research will include only female inmates of the State, i.e., 73 (56-UTPs, 1-Lifer, 16- 16-Convicts). It will exclude all other female inmates from the other District jails of Mizoram, as they constitute only 30 percent of the total study population, and due to the requirements of research convenience. It will also exclude the two children from Central Women's Jail.

Moreover, with regard to the review of literature, international and national journal publications were included since they were accessible and available. Care has been taken to include as much of the literature as possible, and no literature has been intentionally excluded. There is a possibility of exclusion only in cases where they were either unknown, unavailable, or inaccessible.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONCEPTS

Operationalization of a concept is the process of turning abstract concepts into measurable observations in relation to the research topic. For this research, the following concepts, such as crime, penology, inmate life, incarceration, prison, and women prisoners, are taken and operationalized.

Crime: A crime is defined as an offence that extends beyond the private realm and into the public sphere, involving the violation of rules or regulations, which are subject to legitimate punishments or consequences, and which necessitates the intervention of a public authority. It is an offence committed that breaks the norms of society and is begged by legal sanctions. The legal definition of crime may sometimes be insufficient because the idea of crime in a society is very much socially constructed and highly relative, which can be highly influenced by the ideas of morality, religious faith, and scientific reasons.

Penology: Literally, penology is the study management and punishment of criminals. It is the branch of criminology that is concerned with society's thoughts and practices in the fight against criminal activity. It deals with the treatment of prisoners and the subsequent rehabilitation of convicted criminals. It also redefined prisons as a correctional rather than a retributive establishment.

Inmate Life: Basically, inmate life refers to those who are confined within a particular place for their misconduct. For this research, an inmate refers to a woman who is confined within the prison. Inmate life denotes the study of the life and experiences of incarcerated women prisoners.

Incarceration: Incarceration means a state of being confined within a prison; imprisonment. It is a process of being institutionalised by a carceral organization such as the prison service, in a prison that isolates inmates from the wider society. It represents the consequences of illegal activities.

Prison: Basically, a prison is a building in which people are legally held as a punishment for a crime they have committed or while awaiting trial. It can also denote a place in which criminals (those individuals who do not conform to the norms of society) are forced to live as a punishment.

Women prisoners: Women prisoners are women who are confined to imprisonment because of their deviant behaviour. They constitute the minority in the prison population as compared to male prisoners. Although they represent the minority, the population of incarcerated women is growing at a rate twice as fast as the male prison population. The crimes committed by women prisoners differ in the degree of severity; as such, they continue to be treated differently by the criminal justice system. In response, separate prisons are created for incarcerated women.

SOURCES OF DATA

The two main sources of data, which are primary and secondary sources, will be used for this research.

Primary Data: Primary data includes interview schedule, observation, and case study methods. It basically refers to first-hand information which is obtained by the researcher himself/herself from the field. To gain a deeper understanding of the research population, ethnography will be employed as a method. This research aims to collect primary data from the field itself through an interview schedule by interviewing the incarcerated women. Besides this, the Key Informant Interview (KII) schedule will be utilised to get insight from prison officials, GOs, and NGOs. It also relies on observation in the field by observing the daily routine of the prisoners and the institutional facilities available within the prison itself. An in-depth study will also be conducted through a case study method with selected respondents.

Secondary Data: Secondary sources of data are those data that are obtained from published or collected data by another person. Secondary data will be gathered from secondary sources such as case histories, prison records, unpublished theses, articles, journals, books, magazines, newspapers, and diaries for this study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation: Data analysis is the process of arranging, categorizing, manipulating, and summarizing information in order to answer research questions. The cases collected through interviews, observation, and case study will be classified and analyzed, which will be followed by findings, conclusions, and suggestions of the study. SPSS will be used wherever necessary for quantitative data.

RESEARCH ETHICS

The following research ethics will be followed, which are based on the norms and regulations of Social Science Research:

1. The proposed study is mainly for academic research and will fulfil this purpose till the end of the research.

2. The researcher will interview the respondent only when valid approval is received from the concerned authorities.

3. The researcher will maintain good rapport with the respondents and will not force any respondents or prompt them to give answers. The willingness and consent of the respondent will be of utmost priority. Without the direct consent of the respondent interview will not be conducted.

4. Confidentiality of the research work and respect for the privacy of the respondents will be strictly maintained throughout the fieldwork.

5. Respondents will be interviewed only after prior notice informing them of the date, time, and place of the interview.

6. The researcher will be punctual, will maintain strict discipline, and will be empathetic throughout the interview session.

7. The secondary data, which are collected from the works of others, will be properly cited throughout the research.

8. The researcher will avoid any sort of misleading or false information and will not exaggerate any of the information obtained from primary sources.

9. The researcher will respect the respondents, will take their consent before every interview with utmost sincerity and modesty.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Since the study is within the premises of strict law and order under the Government, it may be difficult to get permission to do regular field visits and observation.

2. It may also be difficult to get the correct information and experiences of the inmates as they are under strict surveillance.

3. A problem may also arise regarding the consent of the respondents for the interview.

4. Regular visits and observation will be necessary in order to build a good rapport with the respondents, for which time may be limited.

5. If the pandemic continues, regular field visits may also be a problem.

TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION

1. Introduction

2. Review of literature

3. Methodology

4. Women and crime

5. Socio-economic profile of the study population

6. Lived experiences of incarcerated women and their families

7. Incarcerated women and institutional facilities

8. Contextualization of theories of Penology

9. Findings, conclusion, and suggestions

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