

HEALTH ISSUES OF WOMEN PRISONERS - A STUDY OF REMAND PRISON IN JAFFNA

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Although research is unanimous in highlighting the particularly detrimental effects of prison on women, their special needs are rarely taken into consideration. The change in the configuration of the prison population has highlighted the deficiencies in almost all prison systems in meeting the gender-specific needs of women prisoners. Any contemporary approach to afford a more standard criminal justice policy for women must pay greater attention to their problems. In Sri Lanka, only a few studies worth their name have been conducted on the prison life of women prisoners. This study focuses on the health issues of women prisoners in the Jaffna Remand Prison. Based on the study, this research underlines some of the steps prison systems should take to curtail the public health risks from compulsory detention in often unhealthy situations, to care for women prisoners in need and to promote the health of women prisoners. This especially requires that everyone working in prisons including the prison medical officers understand well how imprisonment affects health and the health needs of women prisoners and that evidence-based prison health services can be provided for everyone requiring treatment, care and prevention in prison. Other essential elements are being aware of and accepting international standards for the health of women prisoners; providing professional care with the same obedience to professional ethics as in other health services; and, while considering individual needs as the fundamental feature of the care provided, promoting a whole-prison approach to the care and promoting the health and well-being of those in detention. Furthermore, the objective is to contribute to legislation and policymakers framing policies based on understanding ground reality.

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