

1. Discuss the problems faced by women prisoners in India. Do you think they should be given more compassionate treatment than the male prisoners. (250 words)

Answer:

Problems faced by women prisoners:-

• **Poor infrastructure in prisons:-**

- Overcrowding, a lack of sanitation and unacceptable standards of health care are standard.
- India's women prisoner population has ballooned 61% over the past 15 years, far outstripping the male growth rate of 33%, but infrastructure growth hasn't kept pace.
- Women are often confined to small wards inside male prisons, their needs becoming secondary to those of the general inmate population.

• **Health and hygiene:-**

- Poor sanitation, little medical or psychological help and constant intimidation.
- **Emotional stress:-**
- Women prisoners undergo intensive emotional stress due to separation from their families. A study of the age profile of the inmates in Tamil Nadu prisons reveals that of the total 1,000 inmates about 200 are in the age group 20 to 30 years, which is the child bearing age for women.
- The coverage of facilities such as sanitary napkins, pre- and post-natal care for pregnant mothers is patchy. In many jails, for instance, pieces of cloth are used in place of pads.

• **Brutality and violence:-**

- Prisons have become warehouses for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, people suffering from mental illness, and individuals struggling with drug addiction.
- Prison staff are not sufficiently trained to interact with women who have suffered trauma, and many prisons lack the programs and resources to help women successfully address these issues.

• **Admission:-**

- Women prisoners on admission are in a mentally disturbed condition. Nearly 60 per cent of inmates suffer from various issues of mental health like psychosis, major depressions and personality disorder.

• **Mothers:-**

- Many inmates are in the age group 30 to 40 years where they have young, growing children who are deprived of the emotional support of the mother.
- Many imprisoned women are mothers and usually primary or sole careers for their children. When a mother is imprisoned, her family will often break up, resulting in many children ending up in state care institutions or alternative care. Imprisonment far from home also complicates a woman's resettlement after release.
- The social stigma attached to a woman prisoner is much worse compared to a man inmate.
- Visit by families is also few and far between. They are rarely consulted on important family decisions.

Women inmates can get compassionate treatment than male counterparts because of the following reasons:

- Crime data show that there is a high rate of simple thefts among women prisoners. In the case of non-violent women offenders, community service should be the main option for reform.
- If a prisoner has children living with her in prison. It is the fundamental duty of the state to do everything possible to see to their physical and emotional needs.
- Women offenders are themselves victims of crime before they turn to crime. Therefore, there is a clear case for the award of community service to those women who have been jailed for non-violent offences.
- By treating incarcerated women with dignity and giving them basic support, India can not only improve public safety and reduce recidivism, but also live out its societal values, making criminal justice system more just.
- Incarceration splinters the family ties that help women rebuild their lives when they return to their communities.
- In a landmark judgment in the Upadhyay Vs. State of Andhra Pradesh case, gender specific issues of women have been dealt with in detail and minimum standards laid for the care of the mother and the child. In pursuance of this, women inmates are allowed to keep their children up to six years of age. Pregnant women in prisons have to be given proper pre-natal and post-natal care.
- After her child turns six and is removed from the prison, the woman inmate often has no way of knowing how her child is being brought up or cared for in the outside world.
- Women in prison generally have more, and more specific, health problems than male prisoners and tend to place a greater demand on the prison health service than men do.
- **Other issues show women prisons have many constraints:-**
 - There's a dire shortage of women wardens, superintendents, assistant superintendents, doctors, and counsellors. Because this need is not met, there are huge gaps between the needs of women inmates and the administration providing them
 - There's also a large gap in the range, level, and quality of vocational training given to women inmates as compared to men.
 - Food rations are significantly smaller for women inmates than they are for male inmates.
 - Lack of attention to the very different and often more complex needs of women has resulted in neglect of their human rights, disregard to international recommendations and many instances of social injustice. In a world where there are widespread and persistent inequities between women and men, societies continue to fail to meet the health needs of women at key moments of their lives.

No:-

- Being compassionate to prisoners based on gender alone is discrimination to male prisoners and against equality.

Way forward:-

- Rehabilitation and social integration are two other crucial imperatives, which should receive focused attention of correctional administration and also of civil society.

- There should be reforms that strengthen family ties and support rehabilitation, including requiring the Federal Bureau of Prisons to consider the location of children when placing mothers behind bars, expanding visitation policies for primary caretakers, banning shackling and solitary confinement for pregnant women, and prohibiting prisons from charging for essential health care items, such as tampons and pads.
- Model Prison Manual, drafted by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), also calls for women doctors, superintendents, separate kitchens for women inmates, and pre- and post-natal care for pregnant inmates, as also temporary release for an impending delivery.
- Inmates, whether undertrials or convicts, need access to a woman counsellor
- It would be a good start to have more women's jails rather than confining women prisoners to a small room within a men's prison.
- To prevent imprisonment in the first place, community-based services need to be strengthened and more widely used, especially for substance use, sexual and reproductive health and mental health. A recent report points out that community corrections programmes have been shown to protect public safety and reduce recidivism at a fraction of the human and economic costs of imprisonment.
- The determinants of criminal behaviour in women and the long-lasting effects of histories of violence and abuse should be known and understood by those providing supervision and care for women prisoners. All staff working with women prisoners should have followed gender-sensitivity training to raise awareness of and improve response to these gender-related issues.
- International standards are of vital importance and contain regulations specifically directed to prisoners or women, but they are necessarily general in their terms and do not always sufficiently guarantee the provision of services to meet women prisoners' specific needs. The Quaker Council for European Affairs has published a gender critique of the European Prison Rules, which lists amendments and additions to the European Prison Rules with the status, rights and welfare of imprisoned women in mind.
- Health services for women in prison should be individualized as far as possible to meet the specific expressed needs of the women.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Answer the following Questions

1. Discuss the ideal conditions for formation of coral reefs. Also discuss the theories of coral-reef formation. (250 words)
2. The cabinet mission plan seemed to open an avenue for the reconciliation of a united India with Muslim autonomy. Examine. (250 words)