

## **Imprisoned mothers and Effects of Jail Environment on Socialization of Young Children**

Amber Ferdoos\* & Nadia Hafeez\*\*

### **Abstract**

The objective of present study was to observe the problems faced by incarcerated mothers regarding the socialization of children. How jail environment effect the personality development of child was also major objective of study. Thirty women from *Adiala* jail Rawalpindi were selected for study. Study findings were supported by attachment theory that argues that parental imprisonment sometimes has severe impact on children that damages their physical and mental health. Results of present study showed that when mother was incarcerated she was unable to maintain control over children and sometimes could only act in a restricted capacity. Children of criminal women were badly affected due to the environment of jail. Result of chi square confirmed the existence of strong association between jail environment and poor personality development of a child.

**Keywords:** Physical health, mental health, Imprisonment, personality Development.

### **Introduction**

Parents are a constructive agent of socialization and social control. Our first communication and relationship is created with our parents naturally, they provide us basic essentials of life. Incarcerated parents are either unable to impose restrictions on their children or have limited ability to maintain control and socialize their (Hagan, 1999). When children are disconnected from their family members especially their fathers and live without adult supervision, observe delinquent environment they become unstable and violent (Institute for Families in Society, 1997). The vast majority of women sent to prison are mothers of small children and in most cases these children lived with their mothers prior to their

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\* Dr. Amber Ferdoos is Assistant Professor Department of Sociology, International Islamic University Islamabad. Research interests are gender, women and crime, socialization, social change, Sociological Theory.

\*\* Nadia Hafeez is MS scholar in Department of Sociology, International Islamic University Islamabad. Research interests are women and crime, gender, organizational behaviour.

incarceration (Flavin, 2001). The incarcerated parents especially the mother has intense effects on the children and adolescents (Children of Incarcerated Parents, 1999). Parental incarceration instigate chaos in the lives of their children, including traumatic separations and irregular modifications from one care giver to another (Seymour, 1998). The experience of ambiguous loss is confusing (Boss, 2009).

The effect of incarceration of women are frequently disregarded or considered insignificant (Flavin, 2001). Mother's incarceration has harmful effect on children socialization and personality (Beck, 2002). Children of criminal women are badly affected due to the environment of jail. The socialization of children in jail environment lead to imperfect personality of children which become a purpose of their absence from school and isolation from family members and friends. Numerous types of social exclusion such as withdrawal from substantial and social capital, stigma, political exclusion and deficient future possibilities are faced by the incarcerated women and their children when they are released from jail (Murray, 2007). Incarcerated parents suffer from various psychological disorders that lead to dearth of positive intervention of children's education and socialization. The absence of positive intervention leads to school failure, delinquency and negative behavior of children (Simmons, 2000). The consequences of parents' incarceration on children are very destructive as children suffer from multiple psychological problems including stress, anxiety, disgrace, shame, and humiliation from their peers and society (Women's Prison Association, 1990).

Children living in prison almost always live in more restrictive conditions than they did outside, even though they are not themselves prisoners and should not be treated as such (Singh, 2006).

### **Justification of the Study**

Deficiency of basic requirements have caused in a dramatic increase in the prison population in the Pakistan over the past few decades. The number and proportion of women who are incarcerated have vastly increased as a consequence. Despite increased interest among criminologists, a variety of questions remain as to how women experience incarceration. Most women

who are incarcerated are mothers, but criminological literature has not fully explained how mothers fulfill their parenting roles or navigate motherhood while incarcerated in the context of Pakistani culture. This research addresses such limitations by exploring the question: How do incarcerated mothers exchange motherhood from behind barriers? When considering the associations of creating cycles of crime within families, the importance of further study in this area is evident (Reed and Reed, 1997).

### **Objectives**

To observe the effect of jail environment on children.

### **Research Question**

How incarcerations of women influence their children's mind and personality?

### **Hypothesis**

There is association between jail environment and poor personality development of child.

### **Literature Review**

Parental incarceration can produce strain for a child due to changing living situations, financial stress, less time from a remaining parent or caretaker, assumption of adult roles, and the disruption of the relationship between imprisoned parent and child. Thus, the incarceration of parent can result in the loss of educational opportunities (Foster, 2007). In KPK jail no facility of any recreation and entertainment exclusively for young children was provided. Either the children play in jail premises with one another or just hung around their mothers. These women and their children were almost abandoned by their families. Some of prisoner family members never visited them in jail due to embarrassment. As they consider it as symbol of disgrace. Some of the prisoners reported that the visits by family members were quite seldom. Most of the mothers demanded particular enhancement in fulfilling certain requirements of their children especially in terms of supplementary food, garments and medical facilities (Javeed, 2011).

Abuses in childhood for example physical and sexual abuse and negligence appears to be commuted to many types of maladaptive coping behavior such as truancy, running away from home, drug use and later criminal behavior (Gilfus, 1997).

The incarcerated parent is also limited in their ability to provide support, guidance, or regulation from within the prison (Nesmith, 2008). They are unable to be an active part of their children's lives; instead they are reduced to limited regarding their accommodation, health facilities, financial stability and recreational facilities. These socialization problems have been associated with diminished educational success for the child when the child's mother has been incarcerated (Foster, 2007).

Children are primarily in need of precautionary arbitrations due to their augmented vulnerability to the enhancement of deviant activity. Parent's incarceration may particularly have an adverse effect on a child's feelings of self-assurance and concentration (Hairston, 2003).

The children of incarcerated mothers demonstrate indications of post-traumatic strain, anxiety nervous tension, including trauma, feelings of constant worry and apprehension. They also suffer from distressing memories of their mothers arrest and detention (Kampfner, 1993). Consequent imprisonment and involvement of mothers in crime are contributing factors for delinquent and antagonistic conduct of children. Such children may develop beliefs and judgments by imitating the negative behaviors revealed by their parents that may eventually escort their association with delinquent activities and subsequent incarceration (Dalley, 2002).

The children confront adverse effects of parental imprisonment; those children whose parents are detained are less likely to obtain commiseration from society as compared to children experiencing other nature of parental detachments, such as casualty, divorce or separation (Fritsch 1981). The general consequence of paternal incarceration is expected to be pessimistic for children, as well as escalating behavioral tribulations and psychological wellbeing (Wakefield, 2011). Children with imprisoned parents cope with frequent challenges in their surroundings and repeatedly resist at every stage of their life (Poehlmann, 2004). Children inclined toward high pessimistic reactive incidents, higher levels of anger, frustration and touchiness. These children are susceptible for behavioral and psychological problems particularly when there is inadequate parent's supervision (Morris, 2007). This proposal is one of the few research articles which addresses the problem of mass incarceration's collateral consequences on children .A social

insurance program for such children should be started on priority. A social insurance model that intervenes to dissolve lines of inequality would provide a unique benefit and would be compatible with other policies. Other policy proposals, while recognizing a state obligation towards child welfare generally (Cai, 2014).

### **Theoretical Framework**

A developmental ecological model is more effective for examining the effects of mother's incarceration on child's socialization and behavior. The standard of this model is incorporated with attachment theory. Ecological models put emphasis on the significance of numerous perspectives which are interrelated for the development of personality (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Cultural environment has most powerful influences on the personality development of children. The interaction with social realities forms the behavior of individual (Bickhard, 2012). When in jail a child observes others using abusive language and quarrelling with each other he takes the phenomena as social reality and such factors influence his personality. Thomas (2014) described that Environment psychologist emphasized that in order to change people's delinquent behavior their personalities must be understood. Personality informs about people's convictions, assessments and approaches. Scientists have established the fact that various factors persuade the possibility to engage in environmentally receptive practices. There are some elementary characteristics of personality. There is usually comprehensible regularity to control the behaviors of people. People proceed in the analogous manner in an array of circumstances as they observe their surroundings. Personality does not just depict how we behave and respond to our environment, it also controls our actions in certain ways. Personality is demonstrated in more than sole behavior and manners. It can also be observed through our thoughts, judgments, affiliations and our social interactions with society (Tacianno, 2015).

Whereas attachment theory concentrates on the traits of the parent-child interactions which promote children's close association and consolation across the life span (Bowlby, 1982). Children's affection, associations and communication with parents

are considered as an important element of the child's micro-system. Early attachment traits are significant predictor of children's later social and emotional improvement (Thompson, 2008). In case of stressful and frightening circumstances the child develops a secure and consolation association with the attachment figure and treats the attachment figure as a support from which he can explore the environment with increasing self-assurance and confidence with the passage time (Ainsworth, 2015). In contrast, unprotected and confused, attachments are considered challenging factors for developing psychological disorders (Thompson, 2008). The impact of parental detention on children can be overwhelming and enduring. As a consequence of parental confinement often children of prisoners are discriminated and isolated and have suffered from psychological illnesses, disturbance, anxiety, embarrassment, guilt and low self-respect (Simmons, 2000). Some children suffer from severe health problems and regressive behaviour they become antisocial and aggressive introvert personalities (Cunningham, 2001). Parental incarceration sometimes has extremely negative impact on children that destroy their physical and mental health. The health impact differs from case to case but some observed problems are transformations in sleep patterns, eating behaviour, use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, stress, depression and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder such as flashbacks about the offence or arrests (Crawford, 2003).

Majority of the prisons in Pakistan are not designed to situate children. The overcrowding environment and unhygienic conditions affect not only mental and physical children but also imprisoned mothers. Inappropriate basic needs and unhygienic environment are also detrimental measure in socialization of children in jail (Javeed, 2011).

## **Material and Method**

### **Universe and Population**

Adiala jail in Rawalpindi was selected to interview the imprisoned women. Adiala jail is the only jail where women criminals with young children are imprisoned. Researcher restricted this research to Adiala jail Rawalpindi to collect first-hand information for the systematic understanding of the problem. All the prisoners' women with young children were selected as a

population of study. Total population of women criminals with young children was 30. The whole population was selected for the study.

### **Sampling and Tool for Data Collection**

Thirty women prisoners who were living with young children for more than six months were selected for interviews through Purposive sampling method. In the light of research objectives a self administered comprehensive structured interview schedule has been developed for data collection. Interview schedule was prepared in English but always questions were asked in Urdu and sometimes in Punjabi because most of the prisoner women were illiterate and were not able to understand English.

### **Pre-testing**

To check the reliability of questions 5 respondents were selected for interviews. 5 questionnaires were pre-tested and some alterations were made to obtain accurate information.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

The data was processed and analyzed using MS-EXCEL. Further percentage and CHI-SQUARE test was applied by the researcher to get result and check the association of hypothesis. In order to make inclusive presentation the data was presented in the form of graphs (Pie and Bar) and tabulation.

## Data Presentation and Discussion

Table 4.1: Problems faced by mothers in jail

S.No.	Categories	Frequency	Percent
1	Quarrel with other children	5	21.73
2	Learn Abusive Language	11	47.82
3	Ask about other family members	2	8.69
4	Unhealthy environment	5	21.73
TOTAL		23	100

children problems in jail

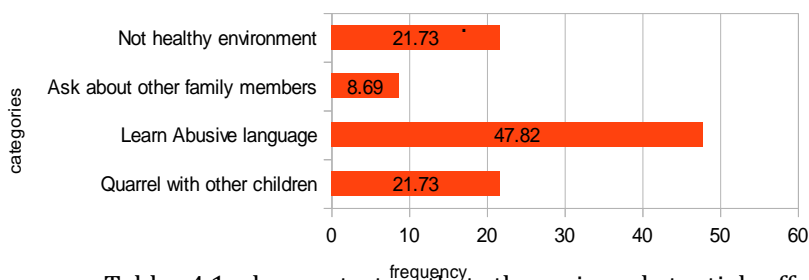


Table 4.1 demonstrates that there is substantial effect of mother's imprisonment on many aspects of a child's personality, including responsive and behavioral well-being, family permanency and economic conditions. Sometimes mother in prison face problem with children. Their children learn abusive language in jail. Young children (5-6) years old children ask about their other family members like father, sibling and relatives. That create complex stressful situation for children and mothers. These children are more vulnerable to many challenging factors. Jail environment not only destroy the personality feature of children but also cause a disturbance for their parents as this concern with their future.

Table 4.2: Children use abusive language in jail

S. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percent
1	Always	10	34.48
2	Often	8	27.58
3	Sometimes	9	31.03
4	Rare	2	6.89
5	Never	0	0
TOTAL		29	100



Table 4.2 shows that the incarcerated women who are mentally upset don't bother about socialization of her children. Imprisoned women deal aggressively with each other in jail and use abusive language as well. The data shows that a high frequency of children uses abusive language. When children fight with each other they use abusive language as mimicking the behavior of their mothers. The nature and standard of a child's living conditions are contributing factors for the positive development of personality. Prisons have an antagonistic impact on learning process of children as these institutions are not predominately planned to locate, raise and educate children (Loureiro, 2010).

Table 4.3: Effect of jail environment on children

S. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percent
1	Aggressive behavior	15	50.0
2	Scared from jail officers	2	6.67
3	Shyness	5	16.67
4	Lose confidence	8	26.67
TOTAL		30	100

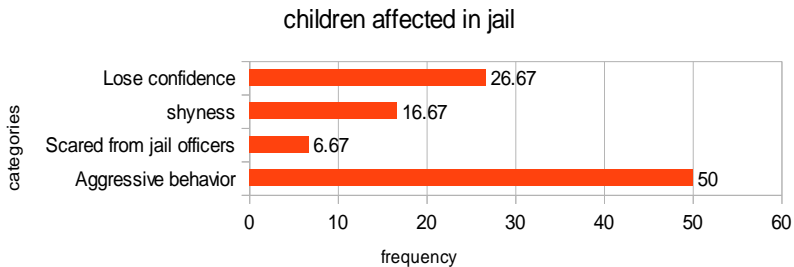


Table 3 demonstrates the effects of jail environment on children. It has been observed that the jail environment has significant psychological and emotional detrimental effects on normal childhood development. Most of the children were observed with aggressive behavior, shyness, scared from jail staff and lack of confidence. The impact of parental imprisonment on children can be intense and enduring. Therefore, the personality shaped in jail lead to a person who has different complexes in jail and at the same time in external world. These children are ignored not only from family and relatives but also from, policy makers and researchers (Cunningham, 2004).

Table 4.4: Incarcerated mother effect children’s social status in society:

S. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly disagree	0	0
2	Disagree	2	6.67
3	Neutral	0	0
4	Agree	8	26.67
5	Strongly agree	20	66.67
TOTAL		30	100

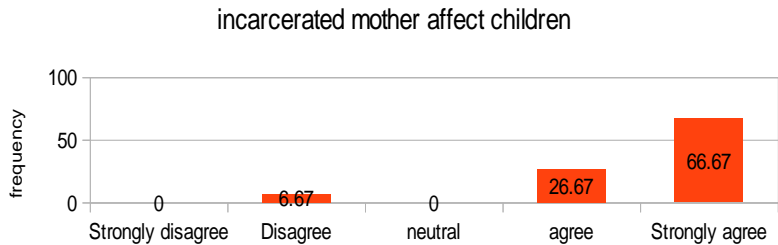


Table 4.4 shows the ~~opinion~~ of respondents regarding incarcerated mothers effect the children’s social status in society. The impact of a mother’s detention and imprisonment on a family is often more disturbing than that of a father’s detention and imprisonment (Legislative Analyst Office, 2000). Mothers incarceration not only create different complexes in personality but also constraint them to become good citizens (Bloom, 1995). Criminologists have paid attention to imprisonment as a stigma that attributes to individual’s life and their families and children (Hagan, 1991). In present study mostly mothers were strongly agree that due to stigma of criminalization children lose their upcoming social status in society.

**Hypothesis**

Jail environment strengthen the risk of poor personality development of child.

Table: Association between jail environment and poor personality development of child.

Variable	Variable	
	Jail Environment	
Poor Personality	Yes	No
Quarrel with other children	5	0

Learn abusive language	11	0
Ask about family members	2	0
Unhealthy environment	5	0
Basic facilities	0	4
Protective environment	0	3
Total	23	7

{Observed count(o),expected count(e)}

$$\text{Chi-square} = \sum \frac{(o-e)^2}{E} : 28.02 \quad \text{Significance level (SL): 0.99}$$

The above table shows association between bad jail environment and poor personality development of child. The hypothesis is tested by using chi-square test at significance level of 0.99. The value of chi-square at 0.99 significance level confirmed the existence of strong association between jail environment and poor personality development of child. The data shows that poor jail environment is a great risk for the development of children. Jail environment not only destroy the personality features of children but also a cause of disturbance for parents. Children of imprisoned parents are at prominent risk for a number of pessimistic attitudes that can direct them in some circumstances towards delinquency and lacking their involvement in studies (Simmons, 2000).

## Discussion

The finding shows that according to data most of respondent who have less income involve in crime. Data shows the respondent have difficulties to socialize their children in jail regarding their physical and mental health. According to data majority of respondent have negative effect, depression, poor mental & physical health, desperate, harsh attitude and aggressiveness after imprisonment. Distribution shows respondent's problems of children related to abusive language used by them. Data demonstrate that poor condition of imprison women leads improper development of their children in context of their personality construction. Crime increases in society due to inequality of resources and anomic situation. Women primarily adopt the criminal activities because they don't have education or skills through which they can fulfill the basic needs of their family. The effects of women crime are devastating not only for themselves

but also for their children. Incarceration mothers faced problem in the socialization of children. These problems are with respect to their food, health care accommodation, education and psycho-social development and recreation facilities.

### **Conclusion**

Mother incarceration has harmful effect on children socialization and personality. In jail there is no suitable program held for the psycho- social development of children. No-trained staff found in any jail to take care of these children. Children in general living under very difficult situation facing deprivations. Imprisoned women are mostly depicted as imperfect, incompetent mothers who are incapable to deliver effectively for the essentials of their children. Children of imprisoned women greatly disturbed by the emotional behavior of their mother. These children experience depression, anger, substance abuse from the jail environment which also effect their socialization. When the incarcerated women and their children are released from jail they face numerous forms of social exclusion including deprivation of social and biological needs, loss of material and social capital, imprisonment disgrace, political exclusion, meager future possibilities and administrative invisibility (Murray, 2007). The women's crime not only destroy the life of women but also have dangerous consequences for the life of their children. These children are to be stigmatized as child of criminal mother that render them to acquire their position as a respectable citizen in society.

### **Recommendation**

Before sending a women who is being accompanied with her young child to a jail, concerned authorities should ensure that whether jail has basic minimum facilities of health, recreation, accommodation and nutrition to care child and mother. In case, such facilities are not available in the jail, concrete efforts to avail such facilities should be made by jail authorities (Pal, 2012). The children must be separated from such a state of living, which is harmful for development of children. Prison administration has to be made more sensitive and responsive to the problems of the children of women prisoners. The jails should be provided sufficient resources to ensure that care, nourishment, protection, welfare and development of young children living with their mothers in jails.

Psychologist should be available in jail for proper counseling of children in order to change their thinking which help them to move in a society with bright perception not criminal attitude (Murthy, 2014).

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