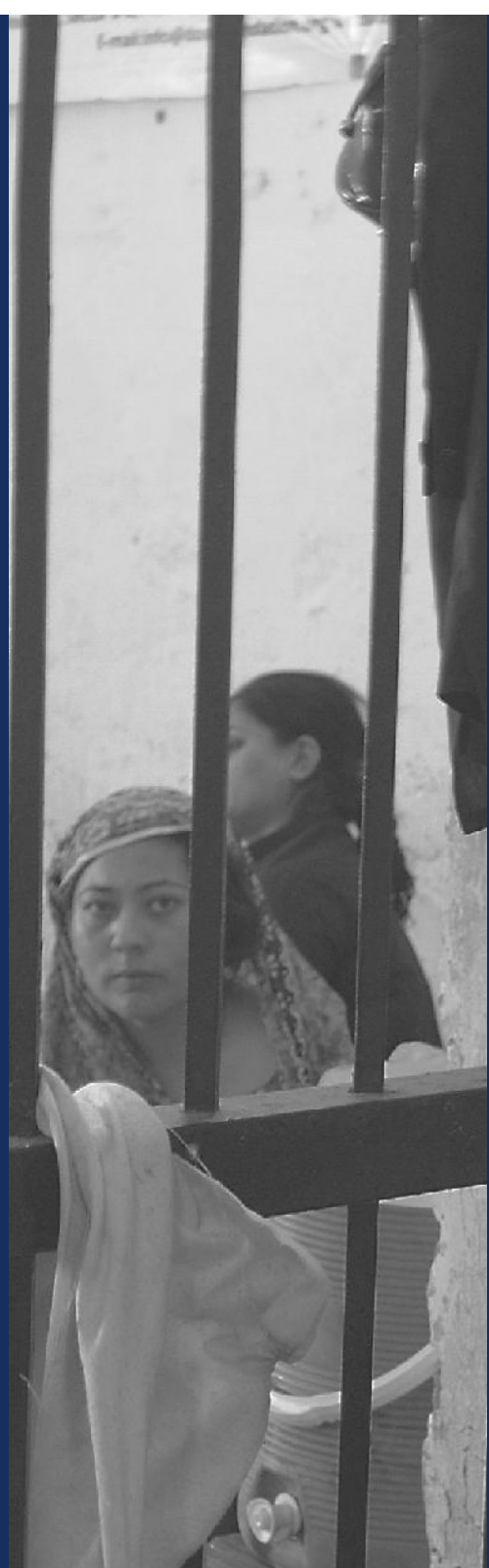




**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

**Tools and  
strategies for  
service providers  
working with  
female prisoners**





## Table of contents

- 01** Violence and mental health: sexual violence, depression, self-harm and suicide among women in prisons
- 09** Tuberculosis and hepatitis in women's prisons
- 15** Supporting reproductive health in female prisons
- 23** Children of women prisoners
- 29** Stigma and discrimination among female prisoners
- 33** Educational needs and opportunities for female prisoners
- 37** Legal needs and problems of female prisoners



**Violence and  
mental health:  
sexual violence,  
depression,  
self-harm and  
suicide among  
women in prisons**





## Violence and mental health: sexual violence, depression, self-harm and suicide among women in prison

### Quick facts

Worldwide, women prisoners have higher levels of mental disorders and depression than male prisoners. In Pakistan, women prisoners similarly report depression, stress, mental illness, sleep disorder and generalized anxiety.<sup>1</sup>

Levels of suicide among women in prison are considerably higher than among men.

Women prisoners are more likely than men to take part in self-harming behaviour such as slashing and cutting as a coping strategy. A 2010 study of women in prisons found that 36 percent engaged in some form of self-harming behaviour during incarceration.<sup>2</sup>

Worldwide, three times as many women as men report having experienced physical or sexual abuse before imprisonment. Despite women prisoners' self-reports of histories of abuse and trauma, and experience of anxiety, depression and interpersonal conflicts, few women recognize the need for counselling.<sup>3</sup>

Women prisoners tend to have less family support than men, including less contact with family members. A review of female prisoners in Pakistan found that 30 percent were divorced or separated.<sup>4</sup>

Women are at risk of being murdered by their families after release from prison, if they have committed 'moral offences', or are victims of rape or other sexual abuse. Women may also be at risk of being forced to return to a marriage with a violent partner or being forced into a marriage.<sup>5</sup>

### Prison practices that adversely impact women's mental health

In some prisons, mothers are temporarily separated from their children as punishment. This practice adversely affects a woman's physical and mental health and also punishes the child.

<sup>1</sup>UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>2</sup>Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Women in Prison, HIV and Hepatitis C, 2012

<sup>3</sup>Weissman, M., DeLamater, L., & Lovejoy, A. 2003. Women's choices: Case management for women leaving jails and prisons. The Source, 12(1): 9-12.

<sup>4</sup>UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>5</sup>UNODC Handbook for prison managers and policymakers on women and imprisonment. 2008.

In some prisons, self-harm and attempts at suicide are penalized.

Women prisoners report being forced into unprotected sex with male guards, sex work, sex for favours, and rape. A review of female prisoners in Pakistan found that 12.5% of the total women interviewed stated that they had faced some form of sexual harassment while in prison (not rape).<sup>6</sup>

Some female prisons lack psychologists to provide women with counselling services. In Pakistan, a review of female prisons found that no measures were in place to deal with the mental health issues among prisoners. (Psychologists were made available through a UNODC supported project). The review additionally found that healthcare assessments on entry into prison do not include a thorough assessment of mental healthcare needs.<sup>7</sup>

Some prisons lack adequate recreational activities for women. A review of female prisons in Pakistan found that no recreational facilities were available except television (available in only 2 prisons), and no indoor games or activities were provided.<sup>8</sup>

## Strategies for NGOs and prison management

### Educate prison staff on women's mental health vulnerabilities

Staff working in women's prisons should be

aware of women's prisoners' vulnerability to mental illness and the particular risks of self-harm among women in custody.

NGOs: can provide information and capacity building on these issues by:

- ♦ Developing simply IEC materials with facts and data about mental illness and self-harm among women prisoners
- ♦ Providing training, mentoring and coaching to prison staff.

Prison management: can ensure that staff have the proper training by:

- ♦ Ensuring that appropriate educational materials such as pamphlets or handouts are distributed to prison staff and available at all times
- ♦ Requiring prison staff to take short training courses and regular refresher trainings on women prisoner's mental health vulnerabilities.

### Support the development of standard operating procedures for prison staff on gender-based violence

Because gender-based violence in female prisons is both prevalent worldwide and is often severely under-reported, it is especially important that prison staff understand that violence against inmates is not acceptable and that measures to punish staff who assault female prisoners be in place.

<sup>6</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>7</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>8</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011



NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Building awareness of gender-based violence among prison staff through training, coaching and IEC
- ♦ Supporting the development of standard operating procedures for female prisons that focus on elimination of gender-based violence.

Prison management: can work to reduce or eliminate violence against women prisoners by:

- ♦ Developing a clear set of rules and regulations for prison staff on acceptable methods of interacting with prisoners
- ♦ Ensuring that the rules and regulations that specify no violence against prisoners is distributed to prison staff and posted in the prison
- ♦ Providing guidance and support to prison staff on defusing tense situations in prison settings without the use of violence, by for example, holding support groups for prison staff, offering training seminars for prisons staff, and ensuring regular access to counsellors for prison staff.

### Support development of counselling and other support services for women in prison

Women prisoners should have access to a trained counsellor or psychologist. Supporting women prisoners to establish self-help groups can also be extremely beneficial.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Advocating with prison authorities to establish a permanent post for a female counsellor in every female prison
- ♦ Having a trained counsellor on the NGO staff who can visit female prisons and provide counselling services
- ♦ Establishing self-help groups in female prisons.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Establishing a post for a full or part-time female counsellor based in the prison health services (or elsewhere if there is no prison clinic)
- ♦ Providing a private space for self-help groups to meet

### Support suicide prevention in prison

Because suicide is a serious concern among female prisoners, measures should be in place at every female prison to prevent suicide. These should include “first-night watches” to prevent new prisoners from committing suicide, and establishing a suicide prevention coordinator in each women's prison.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Developing IEC materials for prison staff on female prisoner suicide
- ♦ Training and mentoring prison staff to enable them to carry out first night watches

- ♦ Advocating with prison authorities to make first night watches standard practice in all female prisons.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Ensuring that prison staff have access to educational materials on female prison suicide risks
- ♦ Providing prison staff with training on female prison suicide risk and on how to carry out a first night watch
- ♦ Including first night watches in standard operating procedures in female prisons.

### Set up a system for confidential prisoner complaints

Women prisoners may be particularly fearful and reluctant to disclose instances of abuse in prison, to discuss mental illness, or to make demands for appropriate mental health support. "An effective system of prison inspection and oversight carried out by an independent body that includes a confidential complaints system is essential in preventing violence and abuse within the prison."<sup>9</sup>

NGOs: can support the development of a confidential feedback and complaint system

for female prisoners by:

- ♦ Working with an existing prison inspection system or advocating for the establishment of an independent prison inspection system that allows female prisoners to lodge complaints in a confidential manner
- ♦ Work with prison staff to build understanding of the value of a complaints system.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Cooperating with prison inspectors
- ♦ Establishing a confidential system for female prisoners to lodge complaints.

### Support women to maintain family contact

Lack of family support severely aggravates female prisoner's mental health. Supporting beneficial family relations is therefore an especially important strategy for supporting mental health among female prisoners.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Contacting prisoners' family members, with the prisoner's consent.
- ♦ Visiting family members and providing family counselling
- ♦ With the consent of the prisoner, facilitating family visits to the prison.

<sup>9</sup>Penal Reform International. Women in Prison: Incarcerated in a man's world. 2007

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Ensuring that a counsellor is available to families during visiting times
- ♦ Providing families with information and education about female prisoners' needs and vulnerabilities
- ♦ Developing a system to evaluate women prisoners' risk of violence from family members
- ♦ Developing and implementing a strategy to reduce women prisoners' vulnerability to violence from family members both during incarceration and post-release.

## Reduce incidents of physical self-harm

Information on safer slashing/cutting, as well as safer alternatives to slashing, should be developed and made available. (Slashing is a form of self-injury that involves using blades or sharp objects to cut the skin). Non-punitive responses to women who slash should be implemented in both policy and practice.<sup>10</sup>

NGOs: can support this process by

- ♦ Researching the extent of slashing/cutting in female prisons and producing IEC for prison staff to raise awareness of this problem

- ♦ Developing guidelines to safer alternatives to slashing/cutting and coaching women prisoners in these alternatives.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Ensuring that rules for prison staff clearly state that prisoners should not be punished for slashing or cutting themselves
- ♦ Ensuring that women who harm themselves have immediate access to quality medical care and non-judgemental care providers
- ♦ Providing training and educational materials to prison medical staff on self-harm among female prisoner.
- ♦ Providing access to counsellors for female prisoners who self-harm.

## Support access to mental healthcare post-release

Women prisoners may require mental health support after release. This is of particular importance if female prisoners have received treatment for a mental health condition while in prison; that treatment should be continued in community.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Building relationships with mental

<sup>10</sup> A. Dicenso, J. Gahagan and G. Dias, Unlocking Our Futures: A National Study on Women, Prisons, HIV and Hepatitis C, Prisoners' HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN), 2003, in Hard Time: HIV and Hepatitis C Prevention Programming for Prisoners in Canada Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, PASAN 2007

healthcare providers in the community and establishing agreements to treat women post-release

- ♦ Providing women with information about mental healthcare options prior to their release
- ♦ Establishing a case-management system to facilitate women prisoners' access to mental healthcare upon release.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Ensure that female prisoners have access to case managers prior to release
- ♦ Provide female prisoners with a list of mental healthcare providers in the community, including names of specific providers, their address and telephone number, and a map that shows the exact location of their offices.

### Good practice case study: peer-led support groups for women in prison<sup>11</sup>

A support group was started by two female prisoners in February 2006 at Edmonton Institution for Women in Canada. The group ran every Saturday for an hour. One of the organisers would book the room and put the schedule on a monthly calendar that would be posted in an area visible to all of the women classified as minimum and medium security prisoners. She would come to the meetings early to open the door, get the room set up and make coffee. The prison staff would make an announcement when the meeting was about to begin to inform the women that the program was starting. No staff attended the program sessions. Women spoke about what was going on in their lives. They would have a general discussion, play educational games (related to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C or harm reduction), and sometimes women who were HIV-positive would share their experiences. Unfortunately, the group stopped meeting when the women who initiated the group were released. Nonetheless, the experience showed that peer-initiated support groups provide a safe and accepting learning environment for women prisoners who have experienced marginalization to share, support and learn from one another. The women who initiated this program were able to identify a gap in services and then meet that need. The high turnout of women at each session indicates that women were interested in learning more about HIV and HCV prevention and harm reduction.

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from Hard Time: HIV and Hepatitis C Prevention Programming for Prisoners in Canada Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, PASAN 2007, p. 84

**Tuberculosis  
and hepatitis  
in women's  
prisons**



the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 13.5 million (19.5% of the population).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for ageing, which sets out the government's commitment to improve the lives of older people. The strategy is based on the following principles: (1) to ensure that older people are able to live independently and actively; (2) to ensure that older people are able to access the services and support they need; (3) to ensure that older people are able to participate in the life of their communities; and (4) to ensure that older people are able to live in dignity and respect.

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## Tuberculosis and hepatitis in women's prisons

### Quick facts

Women prisoners have a higher prevalence of tuberculosis (TB) and hepatitis than male prisoners.<sup>12</sup>

Hepatitis C (HCV) infection is more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.<sup>13</sup>

Women are at greater risk than men of contracting HCV in prison. Like HIV, HCV is contracted through sexual contact or through activities in which blood is shared, such as sharing injection equipment. Women have a considerably greater risk of contracting hepatitis C from sexual activity than men.

TB spreads through the air and can be transmitted through coughing or sneezing. Persons who share a room with people with active tuberculosis are at the greatest risk of infection. People cannot get infected through handshakes, sitting on toilet seats or sharing dishes and utensils with someone who has tuberculosis.

Due to overcrowding and poor nutrition, tuberculosis rates in many prisons are 10 to 100 times higher than in the community outside prisons.

### Prison practices that put women prisoners at risk of TB and hepatitis

Lack of screening, vaccination or treatment for hepatitis in prisons puts women at risk of infection. Screening of hepatitis is provided in female prisons in Pakistan, but vaccination for hepatitis A and B, and treatment for HCV are not provided.<sup>14</sup>

Unsafe sexual practices, such as unprotected or forced sex, put women prisoners at risk of HCV.

Unsafe injection practices among women prisoners who inject drugs: In a review of female prisoners in Pakistan, women reported that they did not inject drugs in prison. The review also found, however, that 23.7 percent of the women prisoners interviewed had been imprisoned on drug related offenses.<sup>15</sup>

Poor or non-existent access to screening and treatment of TB puts prisoners and prison staff at risk of TB. TB screening and treatment is not provided in female prisons in Pakistan.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> WHO and UNODC, Women's health in prison Correcting gender inequity in prison health, 2009

<sup>13</sup> Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Women in Prison, HIV and Hepatitis C, 2012

<sup>14</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>15</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>16</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

Overcrowding in prison settings accelerates the spread of TB. In Pakistan, overcrowding is not reported to be an issue in female prisons.

Poor ventilation aggravates the spread of TB in prisons. Lack of heating in prisons in cold weather can lead prisoners to seal the windows. This creates the perfect environment for tuberculosis to persist in the air.

Heavy smoking indoors facilitates the spread of TB. A review of female prisoners in Pakistan found that a fairly large proportion had been tobacco smokers before imprisonment and nearly half of them continued smoking in prisons.<sup>17</sup>

Lack of general hygiene in prisons contributes to the transmission of tuberculosis. A review of female prisons in Pakistan found serious hygiene issues.

## Strategies for NGOs and prison management

### Support safe sexual practices

Women prisoners should understand the risks associated with unsafe sex—including the risk of HCV and HIV—and should have access to the supplies they require, most

notably, condoms. They should also be free from sexual coercion in prison.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Taking steps to eliminate forced sex in prison settings (see Brief on violence and mental health for more details)
- ♦ Educating prisoners and prison staff on the risks of unsafe sex
- ♦ Providing condoms.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Providing educational materials (such as pamphlets) and training to prison staff on HIV and HCV, and on sexual transmission
- ♦ Ensuring that quality condoms are always available to female prisoners in unlimited quantities, in discrete places such as bathrooms. Condom access should not be limited to health clinics and prisoners should be able to access condoms without having to ask for them.

### Advocate for access to hepatitis A and B vaccination and HCV treatment for female prisoners

Women prisoners should have access to hepatitis screening, vaccination for hepatitis A and B, and treatment for HCV.

<sup>17</sup>UNODC Country Office Pakistan, *Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks*, 2011



NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Advocating with prison authorities for hepatitis A and B vaccination
- ♦ Advocating with prison authorities for HCV treatment in prisons

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Providing hepatitis A and B vaccination for all prisoners, and providing a vaccination certificate following vaccination
- ♦ Providing prisoners access to their private medical records, including vaccination history, at all times, and ensuring the upon release, prisoners have a copy of their records
- ♦ Providing HCV treatment to female prisoners
- ♦ Ensuring the prisoners under treatment are able to continue their treatment uninterrupted, should they be released before treatment is complete.

### Advocate for harm reduction

Women prisoners who inject drugs should be aware of the risks posed by sharing injection equipment and have access to clean needles and syringes at all times.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Educating prisoners on safe injection
- ♦ Educating prison staff on harm reduction, notable needle and syringe programmes (NSP) in prisons

- ♦ Advocating with prison authorities for the establishment of NSP in women's prisons.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Educating prison staff on harm reduction, safe injection, and NSPs
- ♦ Establishing an NSP in the prison
- ♦ Making naloxone for overdose prevention available in prisons, educating prison staff and prisoners on naloxone and how to administer it, and ensuring that naloxone is readily available to prisoners without having to ask for it.

### Support institutional and behavioural measures that reduce the risks of TB transmission in prisons

Institutional measures to prevent the spread of tuberculosis include schedules for ventilating living areas by opening windows, measures to ensure good heating in cold weather (while avoiding sealing windows) and allowing prisoners to spend enough time outside. People with infectious tuberculosis should be kept separate from people with non-infectious tuberculosis. (Isolation should not be equated with punishment or solitary confinement). Behavioural measures include simple cough hygiene—covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing significantly reduces

the number of bacilli in the air; and reducing smoking especially in unventilated areas.

NGOs: can support these measures by:

- ♦ Educating prison staff on TB risks
- ♦ Educating prisons on behaviours that can minimise the spread of TB
- ♦ Supporting prison staff to implement institutional changes by developing ventilation plan and schedules, drawing up improved schedules for prisoner access to outdoor areas and improving heating as needed

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Providing educational materials and training to prison staff on TB risks and risk-mitigation behaviours
- ♦ Developing a prison ventilation schedule
- ♦ Ensuring adequate heating in prisons

### Support early diagnosis of TB and TB treatment

The best strategy for preventing tuberculosis in prisons is early diagnosis combined with effective treatment. Proper treatment reduces coughing in two to three weeks. If proper medication is used, the risk of transmission from an infected individual will be minimal within a month. Treatment is needed for a minimum of six months and often longer, and it is important that people

with tuberculosis adhere to regular drug intake.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Developing IEC material on TB in prisons for prison staff and prisoners.
- ♦ Providing capacity building for prison medical staff on TB through training and mentoring.
- ♦ Advocating with prison authorities for access to TB screening and treatment in prison.
- ♦ Supporting prison medical staff to set up a case finding system for TB in which prisoners with symptoms are referred to health care workers for screening and treatment.
- ♦ Supporting prison personnel to set up a TB ward at the prison or to establish a referral system to TB treatment for prisoners.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Providing training and mentoring for prison staff.
- ♦ Establishing a TB case finding system.
- ♦ Providing screening and referral to treatment for prisoners who are infected.
- ♦ Ensuring that prisoners on treatment have access to providers to complete treatment upon release (in cases where prisoners have not completed treatment at the time of release).

**Supporting  
reproductive  
health in  
female prisons**





## Supporting reproductive health in female prisons

### Quick facts

Women prisoners have gender-specific reproductive health needs related to STIs, menstruation, menopause, pregnancy, miscarriage, and nutrition.

Women in prison are a high-risk group for sexual and reproductive health diseases, including cancer of the reproductive organs and sexually transmitted infections.

Women are more likely than men to enter prison with an STI such as chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis, and with HIV. A survey of women prisoners in Pakistan found that slightly more than half the respondents knew about the existence of sexually transmitted infections, one fifth reported to have experienced an STI in the previous 6 months, and only 18 percent received proper treatment for these infections.<sup>18</sup>

Women prisoners are vulnerable to sexual HIV transmission through unprotected sex with male guards, sex work, sex for favours, and rape.

Sexually transmitted infections are common among female prisoners and are often undetected. This is a major factor in the spread of HIV among women in prison.

### Prison policies that adversely impact women's reproductive health

Many prison authorities around the world fail to cope with women's menstruation. They fail to provide menstrual products such as sanitary napkins, only providing them as part of medical supplies or sometimes even withholding them as a punishment.<sup>19</sup>

Privacy and adequate bathing and washing facilities are often not provided in women's prisons. This contributes to unhygienic circumstances that facilitate the spread of disease.

Women's prisons do not uniformly provide nutritional support to pregnant prisoners and nursing mothers in prison. This severely impacts the health of new mothers and their babies in prison.

Prisons may not have adequate support for

<sup>18</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, *Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks*, 2011

<sup>19</sup> Penal Reform International, 2007

women to deliver their babies, leading to birth complications in prison settings. In Pakistan, women prisoners are transferred to hospitals for child birth in larger cities. In smaller cities a mid-wife visits prisons and assists with child birth. In smaller towns women prisoners sometimes give birth without any supervision or assistance by a medical specialist or mid-wife. Most of the specialist women's healthcare in prisons is provided by civil society organisations, rather than the Ministry of Health or Prison Department.<sup>20</sup>

Breastfeeding women have specific health and nutrition needs that are often unmet in prison. Women in prison are often discouraged from breastfeeding, as it is perceived to interfere with prison routines.

### Strategies for NGOs and prison management

#### Support proper hygiene and the provision of appropriate supplies for menstruation

Women prisoners should have access to menstrual products of a type that they find easily acceptable, and proper disposal

facilities need to be freely available and easily accessible to women in prison at all times. Frequent access to showers needs to be provided.<sup>21</sup>

Pakistan's Prison Rules include specific provisions for women's hygiene, but do not address women's menses, or include the words "menstruate," "menses," "menstrual," or "menstruation."

NGOs: can support proper hygiene for women prisoners, including during menstruation by:

- ♦ Advocating with and educating prison staff on the importance of providing appropriate and adequate menstrual supplies
- ♦ In cases where menstrual supplies are not provided in female prisons, NGOs can provide these supplies, (if possible)
- ♦ Working with prison staff to ensure that proper and hygienic disposal units for menstruation pads are available and accessible to women
- ♦ Advocating with and educating prison staff on the importance of providing adequate access to showers, soap and shampoo for prisoners.

#### Pakistan prison rule 317

Women prisoners shall be supplied with a comb for their hair. They shall be given one chatak of soap and one chatak of mustard oil per prisoner every week for washing and dressing their hair. They shall also be allowed the use of a looking glass; one or two such glasses should be fixed in the wall in each ward. Sanitary toilets and bathrooms shall be provided in the women's ward.

<sup>20</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, *Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks*, 2011

<sup>21</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe, *Health in prisons: a WHO guide to the essentials in prison health*, 2007; and WHO Regional Office for Europe, *Women's Health in prison: action guidance and checklists to review current policies and practices* 2011

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Increasing access to soap and shampoo for women prisoners to ensure proper hygiene at all times, including during menstruation
- ♦ Providing menstrual pads for women prisoners in adequate amounts and with easy access (such as in bathrooms)
- ♦ Providing proper disposal units for menstrual pads
- ♦ Forbidding practices that punish female prisoners by restricting access to menstrual pads.

### Support high-quality STI diagnosis and treatment

Women prisoners should understand and be aware of STIs, including those that are asymptomatic. Diagnosis and treatment of STIs on site in prison settings.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Developing IEC and educating women prisoners on STIs
- ♦ Ensuring that prison medical staff are qualified to diagnose and treat STIs
- ♦ In case of lack of STI capacity among prison medical staff, organise trainings on STIs for medical staff.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Providing educational materials and

face-to-face trainings for women prisoners and prison staff on STIs—what they are and what the symptoms are

- ♦ Provide special training for prison medical staff on STIs
- ♦ Provide women prisoners low threshold, discrete and confidential access to medical staff knowledgeable in STI diagnosis and treatment.

### Support improvements in the system for pregnant women who are in prison

WHO guidelines state that pregnancy should in principle be an obstacle to incarceration, both pre-trial and post-conviction, and that alternatives to incarceration should be identified for pregnant offenders. When pregnant women are incarcerated, they should be ensured a nutritious diet, timely and regular meals (not being kept to a rigid timetable), a healthy environment and regular exercise.<sup>22</sup>

The difficulties of coping with morning sickness should be considered, and pregnant women's schedules altered accordingly. Pakistan's Prison Rules include special considerations for pregnant women:

NGOs: can support improvements in the system for pregnant women who are in prison this process by:

- ♦ Supporting prison authorities and staff to develop a protocol for providing proper support to pregnant women

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008

- including access to adequate nutritional food and regular exercise
- ♦ Educating pregnant prisoners on their nutritional and health needs during pregnancy
  - ♦ Educating pregnant prisoners about their rights under the Prison Code, including right to special dietary supplements and right to the services of a midwife or lady doctor.
  - ♦ Developing a protocol for prison staff and prison medical professionals on working with pregnant inmates
  - ♦ Providing educational materials and training as needed to staff and prison doctors on pregnant women's health needs and how to properly address them
  - ♦ Ensuring that pregnant prisoners have access to a qualified midwife or lady doctor during delivery.

Prison management: can support this process by:

#### Pakistan prison rule 322

The case of every woman prisoner in an advanced stage of pregnancy shall be reported to the Inspector-General for reference to the Government with a view to the suspension and remission of her sentence or otherwise. A full statement of the case by a lady doctor shall accompany the report.

#### Pakistan prison rule 323

As far as possible a child birth in prison shall be avoided, but if this is not possible, the services of a lady Medical Officer or failing it a qualified midwife shall be requisitioned. In districts where there is a maternity and child welfare centre, the authorities in charge of such centre shall be requested to depute a lady doctor or a qualified midwife to attend cases of confinement in the women's ward. No charge may be made for the service of a lady doctor or midwife so deputed to prison, but they shall be entitled to conveyance charges to and from the prison.

#### Pakistan prison rule 349

When a women prisoner sentenced to death declares herself to be pregnant and the Medical Officer is unable to certify the correctness or otherwise of the statement, he shall record the fact in writing and the interval of time necessary to enable him to arrive at a definite decision. This record along-with the warrant shall be forwarded to the Session Judge.

#### Pakistan prison rule 350

If a women sentenced to death is found to be pregnant, the High Court shall order the execution of the sentence to be postponed, and may if it thinks fit, commute the sentence to imprisonment for life.



#### Pakistan prison rule 488

The Medical Officer shall pay special attention to the dietary of pregnant women prisoners, and shall, for each such prisoner, draw up a special diet scale, to include milk, fresh vegetables, fruit or any other article of diet. He shall determine the quantities of these according to necessity.

The quantities shall not usually exceed the following scales:

- ♦ Milk 700 gr.
- ♦ Fresh fruits 233 gr.
- ♦ Fresh vegetables 233 gr.
- ♦ Fresh fruits 233 gr.
- ♦ Fresh vegetables 233 gr.

### Ensure that nursing mothers have adequate support

Appropriate food must be provided free of charge for breastfeeding women, as well as for their babies, including milk, high-protein products and fresh fruit and vegetables. Meals should be provided regularly and flexibly, not being kept to a rigid timetable. Breastfeeding is the best method of infant feeding and should be allowed and supported in prison.<sup>23</sup>

NGOs: can support nursing mothers by:

- ♦ Supporting prison authorities and staff to develop specific protocols for nursing mothers, including access to nutritious food, flexible schedules to allow for breastfeeding, and access to newborn health checks and appropriate vaccinations.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Developing protocols and Standard Operating Procedures for nursing mothers which include adequate dietary supplements
- ♦ Providing infants with regular health checks and requisite vaccinations
- ♦ Allowing nursing mothers adequate time and space to nurse
- ♦ Providing breast feeding instruction and support
- ♦ Providing infant formula and feeding bottles in cases where women are not able to nurse
- ♦ Providing infant clothing and blankets as needed
- ♦ Providing additional hygiene products such as baby soap, shampoo, and diapers.

#### Pakistan prison rule 487

A nursing mother with a child admitted to prison, shall receive, in addition to the ordinary diet 467 Gr. of milk and 29 Gr. sugar daily. This issue shall cease when the child is one year old.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008



**Children of  
women  
prisoners**





## Children of women prisoners

### Quick facts

Many women prisoners have young children. A survey of female prisoners in Pakistan found that more than half were married with children.<sup>24</sup>

Children whose mothers have been incarcerated may have experienced the loss and trauma associated with their mothers' incarceration and other problems and may have some attention problems and developmental impairments.

Young children who are forcibly separated from their mothers experience long-term developmental and emotional harm.<sup>25</sup>

### Practices in female prisons that adversely impact the health and well-being of children

In some countries, imprisoned mothers are temporarily separated from their children as punishment. This practice punishes the child.

In some countries, young children are not allowed to live in prison with their mothers. In Pakistan, mothers are allowed to keep their children with them in prison until the age of 6. A survey of female prisoners in Pakistan found that it was common practice for women prisoners to keep children up to the age of 12 with them in prison.<sup>26</sup>

In many countries, prisons do not have proper facilities for young children, such as opportunities for education, toys, or play spaces.

### Strategies for NGOs and prison management

#### Support women prisoners to keep their children with them

While the decision about whether or not young children should remain with their incarcerated mothers is subject to individual considerations on a case by case basis, every effort should be made to support mothers to care for their children during their incarceration. Pakistan Prison Rules

<sup>24</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008

<sup>26</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

#### Pakistan prison rule 326

Women prisoners shall be allowed to keep their children with them in prison till they attain the age of six years.

#### Pakistan prison rule 327

No woman prisoner shall be allowed to keep a child who is over the age of three years.

regarding children staying with incarcerated mothers are somewhat unclear:

NGOs: can support women to care for their children while in prison by:

- ♦ Providing mothers with parenting support and parenting instruction, such as holding parenting classes or organising support groups for mothers of young children
- ♦ Working with prison authorities to create “child-friendly” spaces in prisons, that are private, clean, and have toys and games for young children.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Inviting experts in parenting and early childhood care to provide workshops inside women’s prisons
- ♦ Providing mothers of young children with a child-friendly space including age appropriate toys and games.

### Support female prisons to provide recreational spaces for young children

Young children and their mother require access to safe recreational areas and age-appropriate games and toys for young children. A review of female prisons in Pakistan found that no prisons had such facilities.<sup>27</sup>

NGOs: can support prisons to create recreational spaces for children by:

- ♦ Developing a detailed proposal for the recreational space, including lay-out, furniture, games, and toys, and presenting the proposal to prison authorities
- ♦ When possible, providing the supplies for the recreational space.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Providing appropriate supplies for young children such as games, toys, etc.

<sup>27</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>28</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

## Support female prisons to develop educational opportunities for children

Children incarcerated together with their mother require access to the same quality of educational services as children living outside the prison. A survey of female prisons in Pakistan found that education was not available for children inside the prison.<sup>28</sup> Young children should be provided with pre-school learning opportunities up until the age of 6, and children over the age of 6 should have the opportunity to study at the school level.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Advocating with prison authorities to assign a staff teaching position to female prisons
- ♦ If it is not possible to have a teacher assigned to the prison, work with prison staff to develop an appropriate teaching curriculum for young children
- ♦ Consider having NGO staff provide teaching services inside female prisons.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Hiring a female pre-school teacher for prisons in which young children live
- ♦ Providing appropriate educational materials such as books and other

teaching supplies for young children.

## Support child health in prisons

The children of female prisoners require access to adequate and age-appropriate health and medical facilities, including childhood immunizations. A survey of female prisons in Pakistan found no such facilities were available.

NGOs: can support the development of child health services in prisons by:

- ♦ Organising training opportunities for prison medical staff on childhood health and medical needs and immunization requirements
- ♦ Developing linkages between prison medical staff and child health clinics in the community and facilitating child health checks by doctors from the community
- ♦ Developing referral linkages with child health clinics in the community and facilitating the attendance of children in prison at those clinics.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Organising training workshops for medical staff on children's health needs
- ♦ Ensuring that prison medical staff have the appropriate supplies for children, such as vaccinations.

<sup>28</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

**Pakistan rule 328**

Children in prison shall be provided with such clothing as the Superintendent may prescribe in writing. The scale of diet for children is prescribed in rules pertaining to dietary.

**Pakistan rule 489**

- ♦ A child admitted to prison with his mother shall receive according to age, one or other of the following allowance of food daily:
  - (a) Under twelve months: Milk 467 Gr.; sugar 29 Gr
  - (b) Over twelve months and up to 1 1/2 years: Milk 467 Gr.; Rice 117 Gr.; salt 10 Gr.; sugar 29 Gr.; dal 29 Gr.; ghee 12 Gr.
- ♦ Extras when necessary shall be given as the Medical Officer directs.



**Stigma and  
discrimination  
among  
female prisoners**





## Stigma and discriminations among female prisoners

### Quick facts

Women prisoners face gender-specific discrimination on the basis of their incarceration.

In many countries, the crimes for which women are convicted are highly stigmatised, and this impacts women both during incarceration and following release. A survey of female prisoners in Pakistan found that 15.6 percent were imprisoned for sex work—a highly stigmatised activity.<sup>29</sup>

In many countries, women incarcerated for stigmatised activities, such as sex work, may be ostracised by their families. In Pakistan, as in some other countries, women who have been raped may be convicted and imprisoned for having extra-marital sex.<sup>30</sup>

Gender-specific stigma surrounding women's incarceration adversely impacts women's health as well as their prospects to societal re-integration following release.

### Prison policies that aggravate stigma and discrimination against female prisoners

Stigma about female incarceration and rejection by family members worsens women's experience of incarceration: Prisoners who are not being visited by any family members face harassment from other prisoners as well prison staff.

### Strategies for NGOs and prison management

### Reduce or eliminate stigma and discrimination inside women's prisons

Women prisoners may experience stigma and discrimination from prison staff, and women prisoners arrested for stigmatising activities may then be stigmatised by other prisoners.

NGOs: can work to eliminate stigma and discrimination inside prisons by:

- ♦ Conducting a stigma and discrimination survey among female prisoners to document their

<sup>29</sup>UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

<sup>30</sup>Reforming Pakistan's Prison System Crisis Group Asia Report N°212, 12 October 2011

experiences.

- ♦ Develop a short training course for prison staff on gender-specific stigma
- ♦ Develop a confidential feedback mechanism to allow female prisoners to report instances of stigma and discrimination.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Holding short training courses and refresher courses for prison staff on gender and gender-specific discrimination.

### Reduce familial stigma in women's families

Familial stigma severely impacts women's experience of incarceration as well as their prospects of post-release re-integration.

NGOs: can work to address these issues by

- ♦ Working with women's families to identify key issues around stigma
- ♦ Develop a counselling mechanism to address familial stigma in family counselling sessions
- ♦ Support women and their families to begin addressing issues of stigma and discrimination pre-release.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Providing a counsellor who can work with families to address key stigma-related issues that impact female prisoners' health and safety.

**Educational  
needs and  
opportunities for  
female prisoners**





## Educational needs and opportunities for female prisoners

### Quick facts

Education levels among female prisoners tend to be low. A survey of female prisoners in Pakistan found a 68 percent illiteracy rate.<sup>31</sup>

Despite low education levels, many female prisoners were working prior to incarceration. A survey of female prisoners in Pakistan found that half of the women interviewed shared in the family expenses by providing some sort of financial support.<sup>32</sup>

Vocational training in female prisons tends to be highly gendered, offering courses in hair-dressing, for example.

There is a high demand for education and a range of vocational training courses among women in many countries. A survey among women prisoners in South Africa, for example, found that women would like to be offered courses on small business development, financial management and bookkeeping, entrepreneurship, catering, car mechanics, carpentry, bricklaying, photography, and interior decorating.<sup>33</sup>

An extensive survey of education and vocational training programmes in the United States prisons found that such training reduces recidivism and improves the job outlook after release.<sup>34</sup> This study found that prison inmates who receive general education and vocational training had 43 percent lower odds of returning to prison after release and are more likely to find employment than peers who do not receive such opportunities. It also found that prison education programmes are cost-effective because they decreased the incidence of re-incarceration thereby reducing incarceration costs.

### Prison practices that undermine education opportunities for women prisoners

In many countries, prisons provide no education or vocational training opportunities for prisoners. A survey of female prisons in Pakistan found that there

were no efforts undertaken by the prison authorities to provide basic education or any vocational training to prisoners. Only in Karachi, an NGO was providing skilled trainings to prisoners while some educational support was provided in Multan, while in all remaining prisons no such activity is being conducted.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, *Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks*, 2011

<sup>32</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, *Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks*, 2011

<sup>33</sup> *Women in Prison: Work, Education & Vocational Training*, The Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town

<sup>34</sup> Davis, Lois M., Robert Bozick, Jennifer L. Steele, Jessica Saunders and Jeremy N. V. Miles. *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, *Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks*, 2011

Pakistan's Prison Rules provide the following vocational and educational guidelines for prisoners:

### Strategies for NGOs and prison management

Support female prisons to develop education and vocational training programs. Women prisoners benefit greatly from the opportunity to attend educational classes and vocational trainings.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Educating female prisoners about their right to education under Pakistan's Prison Rules
- ♦ Advocating with prison authorities and staff to allocate a budget for education and vocational training
- ♦ Conducting a survey among female prisoners to identify prisoner educational needs and vocational interests

- ♦ Assisting prison staff to identify appropriate spaces to hold classes
- ♦ Supporting prison authorities to identify appropriate educators and trainers
- ♦ Supporting educators and trainers to develop curriculum appropriate to women prisoners expressed needs and interests.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Maintaining a library
- ♦ Hiring a teacher and/or organising literate female prisoners to provide literacy classes
- ♦ Providing a suitable space for classes
- ♦ Providing educational supplies such as desks, paper, writing implements, and books
- ♦ Providing appropriate vocational training per the expressed interests of female prisoners.

#### Pakistan prison rule 312

Women convicted, prisoners shall ordinarily be employed on spinning, newar-making, etc. and shall, whenever possible be given instructions in needlework, knitting and other domestic industries. They shall not be employed on grinding grain or similar irksome work.

#### Pakistan prison rule 679

Education up to primary standard shall be imparted to all illiterate prisoners daily for at least one hour by paid teachers who may be assisted in this work by educated prisoners. Religious education shall be compulsory for all prisoners. Facilities may be provided to prisoners who are desirous for higher studies. Every prison shall have a well-stocked library; Prisoners shall be permitted to borrow books from it. Prisoners shall be permitted to read daily newspapers to be supplied at State expense. Prisoners may also be permitted to obtain, at their own expense, newspapers and magazines on the approval list.



**Legal needs  
and problems  
of female  
prisoners**





## Legal needs and problems of female prisoners

### Quick facts

Female prisoners often lack an understanding of their legal rights

In many countries, female prisoners have very limited access to legal advice and support. They may be poor and illiterate without the means to pay for legal aid. For this reason they are at risk of signing statements that may have serious legal implications and their lack of legal representation can lead to long delays in the criminal justice process, lowering their chances of being considered for bail.

A review of Pakistan's prison system<sup>36</sup> found that although Pakistan has among the lowest percentage of female prisoners in the world, women are victims of a discriminatory legal system, particularly resulting from the Hudood Ordinances<sup>37</sup> Until parliament passed the Protection of Women Act in 2006, rape victims who failed to prove their case according to Islamic evidentiary standards, including those who were impregnated by their assaulters but lacked four witnesses, were charged and convicted of unlawful sexual intercourse.

### Prison practices that adversely impact women's legal rights

Female prisoners often wait long periods of time before trial and are incarcerated during that period. A survey of female prisoners in Pakistan found that 59 percent were under trial and 8.6 percent were detained, while only 32.6 percent had actually been convicted.<sup>38</sup>

### Strategies for NGOs and prison management

#### Reduce the length of time women wait pre-trial

Women wait inordinate lengths of time for trial.

NGOs: can work to reduce the time by:

- ♦ Advocating for acceleration of the legal system to shorten the period of time women wait for trial
- ♦ Developing informational booklets on legal aid and distributing them to female prisoners.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Ensuring that female prisoners have access to informational pamphlets about legal aid, including appropriate information pamphlets for people who are illiterate

<sup>36</sup> Reforming Pakistan's Prison System Crisis Group Asia Report N°212, 12 October 2011

<sup>37</sup> The Hudood Ordinances, promulgated by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1979, prescribe punishments according to ultra-orthodox Islamic law for theft, highway robbery, intoxication, blasphemy, rape, adultery and extra-marital sex that include amputation of limbs, flogging, stoning to death and other forms of capital punishment. Reforming Pakistan's Prison System Crisis Group Asia Report N°212, 12 October 2011

<sup>38</sup> UNODC Country Office Pakistan, Females Behind Bars: Situation and Needs Assessment in Female Prisons and Barracks, 2011

- ♦ Informing women that they are entitled to legal aid and assisting them to set up appointments, by, for example, providing a private space for women to meet with legal representation.

## Educate women prisoners about their legal rights

Because women prisoners in Pakistan tend to be poor and illiterate, and are more likely to be ostracized by their families than are male prisoners, incarcerated women tend to have a very weak understanding of their legal rights. Pakistan's Prison Rules lay out quite extensive information regarding prisoners' right to appeal and the appeal

process.

NGOs: can support women prisoners to understand their legal rights by:

- ♦ Providing legal counselling to women prisoners one-on-one
- ♦ Offering workshops on legal rights to women in prison

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Ensuring the all legal guidelines and procedures are available inside prisons including in prison libraries
- ♦ Providing a private space for women prisoners to receive legal advice
- ♦ Providing an appropriate space for workshops on legal matters.

### Pakistan prison rule 94

- ♦ If a convicted prisoner without a friend, relative or counsel to act for him, elects to appeal, the Superintendent shall apply to the Court concerned for a copy of the judgment or order against which the appeal is to be filed. If several persons are sentenced in the same case, only one copy of judgment shall suffice for all the prisoners electing to appeal from the same prison.
- ♦ On receipt of the copy of the judgment or order, a prisoner if literate shall be allowed to write his own appeal. If the prisoner is not able to write, the Superintendent shall cause his appeal to be written for him by another prisoner or a prison official strictly in accordance with the dictation of the appellants.
- ♦ An appeal preferred by a prisoner from the prison should, before dispatch, be read over to him in the presence of the Superintendent. If the prisoner approves of the appeal, he shall affix his signature or thumb impression on it. The Superintendent shall sign the document and cause the official seal of the prison to be stamped on it.
- ♦ The Superintendent shall forward the appeal, with a copy of the judgment or order appealed against, direct to the appellate court as required by section 420 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The appellate court will itself requisition the records from the Record Room.
- ♦ If after the receipt of the copy of the judgment or order, a relative, friend or agent of the prisoner undertakes to file the appeal on his behalf and the prisoner is willing, a copy of the judgment shall be delivered to him and a proper receipt obtained for it.
- ♦ The provisions of this rule shall also apply, mutatis mutandis, to petitions for revision or clemency and the like.

**Note (1)** In case other than summons cases convicted prisoners are entitled under section 371 (1). Criminal Procedure Code, to a copy of the judgment free of cost. In summons cases no court fees are payable on the copy of the judgment. Government have further approved the principle that if a person convicted in a summons case is in prison, he or his agent shall be allowed a copy of the judgment free of copying fee.

**Note (2)** If a prisoner's appeal fails and he desires to prefer an application for revision, he is not entitled to a free copy of Judgment and must obtain it at his Own cost.

**Note (3)** Copy of judgment of the High Court will be supplied free of cost to a prisoner under sentence of death if he wishes to file a petition for special leave to appeal to the Supreme Court.

## Support women prisoners to gain access to quality legal aid

Women should be provided access to legal counselling and legal aid if desired, and be able to access lawyers and follow up their cases in courts.

NGOs: can support this process by:

- ♦ Developing a cohort of “trusted” lawyers and other legal professionals who can provide legal aid to women prisoners at reasonable rates or gratis
- ♦ Investigating the availability of free legal services and building referral linkages with female prisoners
- ♦ Investigating availability of free legal aid from the state.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Ensuring that all information regarding legal aid is available in prisons and in the prison library.

## Support women prisoners to know their rights post-release

Women may be particularly vulnerable to violence or homelessness, upon release.

Women prisoners need to be made aware of their rights at release and of required release procedures.

NGOs: can support women to know and exercise their rights post-release by:

- ♦ Providing information about release procedures prior to release, so that women know what to expect
- ♦ Working with family members to ensure that a family member or friend will meet a released woman at the prison gate
- ♦ Monitoring women post-release to ensure their rights are respected and they are not subject to violence
- ♦ Developing a list of legal aid available in the community, post-release
- ♦ Establishing a support groups for released women prisoners to support re-integration and continuing understanding of their legal rights.

Prison management: can support this process by:

- ♦ Ensuring that release procedures are clearly explained to women
- ♦ Providing private space for women and their family members to meet with legal aid or a legal counsellor, pre-release.

### Pakistan Prison Rule 137

- ♦ When a women prisoner is due for release the Superintendent will inform the women's relatives about the date of her release so that they may come and receive her at the prison gate.
- ♦ If relatives do not turn up to receive her and if she is below thirty years of age, she should be sent to her home escorted by a woman warder or a respectable woman entertained for the purpose.
- ♦ In the event of release of a woman prisoner upon acquittal or otherwise when the release is effected late, she may be allowed to stay for the night in the women's ward to enable her to proceed to her home the next morning.



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