

Women offenders and prisoners

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Women Offenders and Prisoners of the of the Women Offenders and Prisoners The Bangkok Rules reflect the global norms with respect to the women offenders and prisoners. The following discussion substantiates this contention.

The Bangkok Rules constitute a crucial intervention for promoting the rights of the imprisoned women and female offenders. As such, several of these rules can be implemented straightaway and do not demand additional resources. The essential requirement, in this context, is a transformation in awareness, attitudes and practices. Specifically, there has to be a committed investment in the training of prison staff, policy-makers, prison administrators and the other entities that interact with females in the criminal justice system (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2010/16, 2010).

The special guidelines for the treatment of female prisoners, namely the Bangkok Rules, have been adopted by the United Nations (UN) in the year 2010. Despite the fact that these rules have not been implemented in totality, they represent vast improvement for female prisoners in international law. The main motivator for this astounding development was Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand. This redoubtable champion of women's issues was instrumental in ensuring that the efforts of the Thai delegation to the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was successful in its efforts (Barberet, 2014, p. 174).

It has been acknowledged in these rules that female prisoners have drastically different requirements, in comparison to their male counterparts. To a major extent the Bangkok Rules are evidence based and acknowledge

several of the findings of 'Women Crime and Criminal Justice: A Global Enquiry', by the eminent scholar Ms. Barberet. Moreover, the Bangkok Rules mirror several of the erstwhile reform efforts that had been undertaken on behalf of females in prison, across the world. For instance, these rules acknowledge the high incidence of victimization of female prisoners and their greater inclination to engage in self-harm and suicide; the lower risk of most female prisoners, but higher classification levels; the special status of female prisoners who are also mothers of children; the stigma encountered by female prisoners; the abuse of women for immoral crimes; and the specific needs of indigenous women prisoners (Barberet, 2014, p. 174). Furthermore, these rules recommend the provision of intimate articles for females, alternatives to invasive or strip searching, alternatives to incarceration for females, and research and data collection regarding the issues pertaining to imprisoned females. Moreover, these rules acknowledge that females, in some nations, are incarcerated, in order to safeguard them, and as a consequence of rape or immoral conduct. In such cases, alternate procedures should be developed. The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners of 1955, had failed to address these issues (Barberet, 2014, p. 174).

In addition, these rules make a strident call for policies and programs in prison that are gender-responsive and gender-sensitive, in several areas. Some of these being; intake, classification, psychosomatic health care, mothering in prison, searches, safety, and post-release programs that take into consideration the discrimination and stigma encountered by females upon being released from prison (Barberet, 2014, p. 174). As such, these

rules address a wide range of issues and are pertinent to the requirements and difficulties envisaged by women in prison, as determined by international norms.

List of References

Barberet, R. L. (2014). *Women Crime and Criminal Justice: A Global Enquiry*. Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2010/16. (2010, July 22). United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules). Retrieved May 1, 2015, from <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2010/res%202010-16.pdf>