

# Women offenders offenses punishment and treatment



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The population of women offenders seem to be increasing by the day.

According to Iowa Department of Corrections (2006), women offenders in this prison were less than 5 percent in the last two decades. This is however, not the case today as the number has grown by leaps and bounds.

Approximately 10 percent of the total prison population in Iowa is composed of female offenders. It is imperative to note that this is not an isolated case to Iowa Correction centre since the rise in crimes committed by females is a global phenomenon. In any case, there is a general sharp rise in female offenders than male ones when a random sample is taken.

Females who are victims of mental health have a higher probability of engaging in criminal activities than their counterparts who have not been diagnosed of such (Arrigo, 2005). On the same note, those who are substance and drug abusers may find it cumbersome to evade acts of crime which eventually land them in prisons. This paper explores women offenders

in generally but specifically investigates the nature of crimes committed by this category of law breakers in addition to how they are punished and treated in order to avoid acts of crime.

## **The population of the female offenders**

As earlier noted, the population of female offenders has been growing at a very high rate. This has called for intervention measures to be taken in order to reverse the trend. One of the main measures being taken right from the grass root level is the community based correction programs which aims at rehabilitating those females who have already been convicted of criminal offences (Cook & Davies, 1999). In fact, the main reason of doing this is to change the perception and attitude of the offenders so that they do not commit crime again. Besides, the community based correctional programs is capable of reaching out the majority of female offenders who are undergoing their punishment at a community level. Additionally, the amount of prison space occupied by female offenders will continue to rise and consequently demand for more resource allocation for the prison department. It is therefore important that programs which target a speedy implementation on behaviour on women offenders be put in place and made more rigorous.

## **Offences**

Drug remains to be the main cause why most females find their way behind bars. The prisons as well as community based correction centres have recorded a higher number of female offenders who have been harmful drug handlers and consumers. Although a myriad of law enforcement machineries have been put in place to address the growing challenge of substance and drug abuse, not much positive results has been realised. The population of <https://assignbuster.com/women-offenders-offenses-punishment-and-treatment/>

female drug offenders is incessantly going up notwithstanding anti-drug campaigns. Drug offenders are more likely to be sent in prison within the current state of legislation after drug related laws were made more assertive in the 1980s. Offenders may also stay longer in prison walls as they wait to be sentenced or punished. Examples of hard drugs which have been in the limelight include methamphetamines and cocaine although the former is quite recent. In general, most first time offenders are often charged with drug crimes and the worst part of it is that the number has been going up.

## **Correction and Punishment program**

There are a variety of strategies which can be used to not only assess but also advance treatment to female offenders who have been admitted as first time or multiple time criminals in prison. It is worth noting that the main purpose of arresting these offenders is to correct them. There is that entire need of behavioural change so that the offender does not commit the offence again even after being acquitted having served a particular sentence. Hence, criminogenic is the key issue while crafting programs to correct the female offenders.

To begin with, women who have committed acts of crime are often subjected to an assessment which attempts to establish their needs as well as the risks surrounding them. These two features have a very close relationship. When needs and risks are adequately assessed and evaluated, offenders are less likely to commit the offence again because the strategy acts as a full treatment therapy. Nevertheless, the system which seeks to correct offenders has other underlying strategies which must be adhered to. The first strategy is a program which takes care of the female criminals on the <https://assignbuster.com/women-offenders-offenses-punishment-and-treatment/>

basis of their day-to-day well being. In spite of their acts of crime, female offenders have to be cared for as a show of love and concern so that they do not harbour the feeling of rejection and discrimination from the community. This is a very crucial stage in the process of treating mental or attitude imbalance of the offenders.

Secondly, the risk is diagnosed and later managed. Although daily care of the female offenders has a great impact on attitude change, reducing the risk sums it all. It has been found that when risks are appropriately identified and then strategies put in place to reduce the same, the outcomes are amazing and the resources spent on correction program will not go to waste. If proper treatment procedures are followed, recidivism can be lowered by one third. A case look at the Iowa corrections program takes almost a similar approach of treating female offenders (Wormer, 2010). At this place, the correction system begins by giving attention to the diagnosis of offender's need. Thereafter, necessary treatment programs are instituted to the offenders including all the intervention measures which may be deemed necessary. Finally, this correction centre evaluates the intervention and treatment methods which are effective and efficient. Over and above, the low risk offenders are known to be less likely to re-offend unlike the high risk offenders. Hence, resources such as time and finances are not dedicated so much to low risk offenders owing to the fact that their chances of committing crime again is minimal. Such policies are indeed workable if proper and fruitful treatment is to be advanced to the female offenders.

## **Corrections at the Community level**

Female offenders have a higher prevalence rate of drug and substance abuse than males. The community correction centres are well placed in addressing the needs of females who are chronic and alcohol dependant offender (Purcell & Arrigo, 2006). The community can start by identifying those offenders who are at high risk and then strategising ways and means of alleviating their drug dependence. The community correction centre can also assess the needs of the female offenders more effectively and then offer appropriate treatment on the victims. In spite of the community strategy being in operation, drug and substance is still the main cause of concern as far as female offenders are concerned. In addition, intervention programmes, if well crafted, can be real time solution to the challenge of drug and substance abuse.

## **Treatment Program**

Female offenders need to undergo a thorough treatment program. This is because they have a variety of issues which face them over and above their male inmates. In many instances, women tend to deal with intense moments of trauma, family woes coupled with domestic violence, psychological illnesses as well as low self esteem caused by harassing males especially in relationships. A successful treatment program should not just focus on open and common issues facing such offenders like drugs. Their experiences should be given thorough attention. The National GAINS Centre has been on the fore front in articulating and seeking viable solutions on the challenges facing high risk female offenders (Wormer, 2010). Regardless of the nature of crime committed by female offenders, treatment of the latter should be

more comprehensive, in the sense that the treatment profile should focus on the all round needs of the females. Besides, the cause and development of trauma which is quite often one of the most dominant factors before an offence is committed should be established.

The main reason why treatment of female offenders should be given a special approach to treatment is because gender makes the whole distinction whenever crime is committed. After realising that there is a clear cut difference between the male and female gender, it will be possible to offer the right and most effective treatment therapy on the offenders.

Another important psychological aspect when giving therapeutic treatment is that the female offender needs to feel safe honoured and also valued in spite of her offensive record. Once the female offender notices that she is being dignified in the treatment process, she is more likely to transform her attitude and perspective towards life and embrace a more realistic and positive attitude.

The female offenders should also be connected to their relations like family members and friends and other loved ones. This may not be possible if relevant programs and policy documents are not developed and exercised. This will go along away rehabilitating and treatment their mental health. Moreover, aspects of trauma and misuse of drugs should be harmonised in the treatment program. These treatment strategies should be carried out in a well supervised environment to ensure the success of the treatment process. The treatment services offered should equally be tailored down to fit the cultural needs of the female offender (Purcell & Arrigo, 2006). The

cultural aspects of the offender may entail such factors like their social and economic well being. They ought to find ways and means of managing themselves economically so that they do not develop new forms of trauma. Finally, the treatment of female offenders should put in place a system which will usher in the offenders back into the community in a more coherent manner so that they feel part and parcel of the integrated community.

## **Conclusion**

In summing up this paper, it is imperative to reiterate that there has been a growing population of female offenders on a global scale which has been mainly attributed to drug related crimes. Although there are other reasons why females find themselves on the wrong side of the law, drug and substance abuse remains to be the main cause of concern.

Prison departments and community correction centres serve the sole purpose of rehabilitating the offenders. However, treatment forms the basis of their correction programs because offenders are finally supposed to be ploughed back into the community and well integrated with the rest of the population. In achieving the right treatment process for the female offenders, gender is a very important indicator because female offenders do face a myriad of issues ranging from personal to family level and which must be dealt decisively before any breakthrough can be achieved.

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