

Summary of the Recommendations and Observations of the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women

from the report

‘Women in Detention and Access to Justice’

(Presented to Lok Sabha on 22.12.2017)

Health:

- ❖ The committee recommended the ministry to undertake an extensive survey, in collaboration with State Governments and NGO's, on health of women prisoners and the diseases they suffer the most.
- ❖ The committee also recommended the ministry to maintain a central data bank of the various health related issues prevailing in different prisons across the country.

Women Officials:

- ❖ The committee noted that there is a shortage of women officials in the management of prisons which has various implications like women officials in prisons not having full access to their leave, backup duties and shift duties.
- ❖ The committee therefore recommended an urgent need to fill up the vacancies in prisons across the country in a time bound manner. Special recruitment drives need to be initiated to fill up the shortage of prison officials.

Training of Prison Officials:

- ❖ The committee observed that officers dealing with jail administration and those who handle with women prisoners should be provided emotional intelligence training.
- ❖ It also suggested that there should be special attitudinal change training for developing positive attitude towards women prisoners to meet their specific needs.

Legal Aid:

- ❖ The committee recommended that District Legal Services Authorities must focus on providing legal resources for all classes of inmates and particularly under trials.
- ❖ It also recommended there must be a concerted effort to rope in legal volunteers for rendering various help like drafting of application, affidavits and other legal procedures.
- ❖ The committee recommended that more women lawyers should be engaged with such District Legal Services Authorities so that access to justice for women prisoners is facilitated.

Foreign prisoners:

- ❖ The committee observed that foreign women prisoners face a lot of problems here in India, with regard to language, culture, lack of awareness of our rules and laws. Hence it

recommended that the religious, dietary, spiritual needs of a foreign prisoner must be addressed by prison authorities.

- ❖ It also recommended that special cells/ officials should be delegated to deal with foreign nationals in various custodial situations, so that the foreigners in India do not face any hassle in dealing with the law enforcement agencies, on account of language, cultural, attitudinal and behavioral gaps.

Rehabilitation:

- ❖ The committee observed that there was need to deal with post-release stigmatisation, victimisation and abandonment by the families of women prisoners as they constitute one of the gravest challenges in access to justice by women.

Skill development:

- ❖ The committee directed the Ministry of Home Affairs to coordinate with the Ministry of Skill Development and explore suitable opportunities for development of skills of women prisoners and employment opportunities post release leading to their integration with the society.

Note: This document contains important recommendations only specific to women prisoners from the parliamentary committee's report.