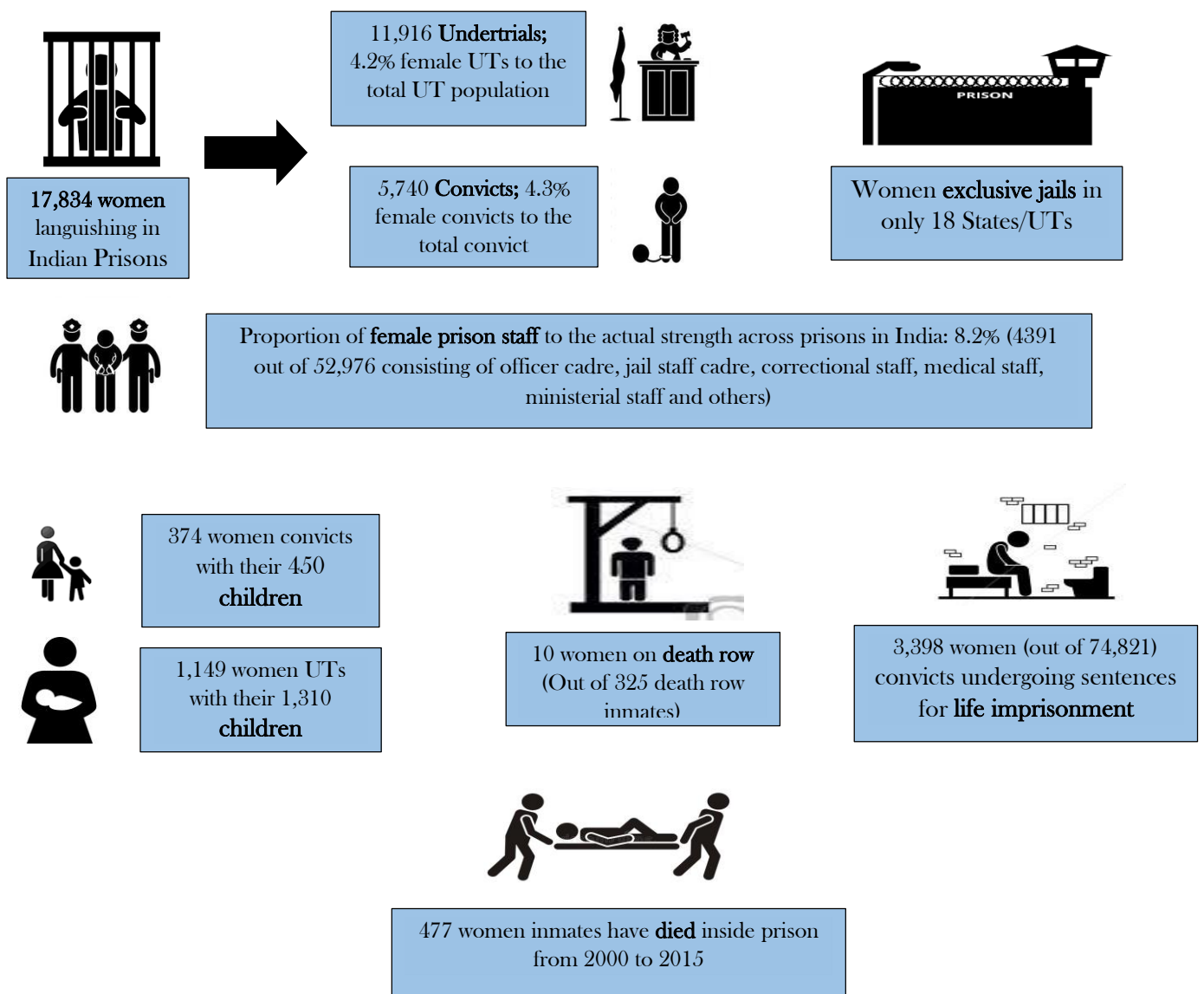


WOMEN BEHIND BARS

A. CONTEXT

Women are a vulnerable group in prisons, due to their gender. While poverty stands as the biggest impediment to access justice, gender aggravates the challenges they face in custodial institutions. The socio-economic condition of women prisoners adversely impacts their access to competent legal representation and therefore the possibility of a fair trial. Lack of trained correctional staff like psychologists or social workers, to deal with women centered issues, add to the plight of women inmates. Women convicts find themselves at the receiving end as long periods of incarceration often result in fading family support/disappearing family ties.

B. STATISTICS



(Source: Prison Statistics India, 2015 NCRB)

C. CHALLENGES

- Lack of proper healthcare including menstrual and psychological well being
- Poor sanitation and un-hygienic living conditions
- Only 1.3% of the total 4.3% female prison is housed in all-women's jails. The remaining ones stay in separate enclosures situated inside the male prisons which may not address all their needs
- Absence of comprehensive policy guidelines and legislations with regard to body searches exposing women to physical, sexual and psychological abuse
- Increased restrictions due to insufficient prison staff, especially women staff
- Lack of sensitised trainings for prison officials on women centered issues
- Lack of adequate pre and post-natal care for pregnant women
- Absence of trained counsellors and social workers
- Longer periods of incarceration due to inability to furnish bail bonds/surety, by women from marginalized backgrounds
- Limited rehabilitation avenues available for women once they get released

D. RESEARCH/GOVERNMENT REPORTS ON WOMEN PRISONERS:

i. Law Commission Reports

- [135th Law Commission Report: Women in Custody](#)

ii. Committee Reports

- [Committee on Empowerment of Women \(2016-2017\) \(Sixteenth Lok Sabha\) tenth report 'Women in Detention and Access to Justice](#)
- [Committee on Empowerment of Women \(2001-2002\) \(Thirteenth Lok Sabha\) 'Women in Detention'](#)
- National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners - Justice Krishna Iyer Committee (1987)
- [Planning Commission of India's report: 'Children of Women Prisoners in Jails: A Study in Uttar Pradesh'](#)
- [National Commission of Women: 'A Study of Condition of Women Prisoners & their Children in Eastern UP Jails'](#)

E. STANDARDS

- [The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners \(Mandela Rules\) - Rules - 11,28,45,48,58,74,81.](#)
- [United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non - Custodial Measures for Women Offenders \(Bangkok Rules\)](#)
- [Model Prison Manual- Chapter XXVI](#)
- [Handbook on Women and Imprisonment](#)
- [Human Rights and Prisoners - A Pocketbook of International Human Rights Standards for Prison Officials - Chapter IX - B.](#)