

SOCIAL IMPACTS ON FAMILIES OF THE IMPRISONED PERSONS

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Abstract

Imprisonment is needed for regulating the offenders who commit any type of illegal activity which is not in favor of the society and its members. When a person is imprisoned in jail he is not only one who gets the punishment, but there are also hidden victims of the punishment. These hidden victims are family members of the punished persons, who left outside after confinement of the person. They not only face the economic problems but also the social stigma as well. Society treats criminal person's family as offenders. Many social pressures are to be faced by the imprisoned person.

KEYWORDS: Imprisonment, confined person, family, hidden victims.

Crime exists everywhere. Way of crime committing and crime frequency may vary from place to place and time to time, but no nation can deny from it. When an offender goes to jail for the illegal act he / she did it not only is a way to punish the person but also it comes with many other impacts not only the individual who is imprisoned but also the family of the imprisoned person. The impact can be measured as economic, social and psychological. The present research paper is based upon as secondary data collected through review of literature related to the topic.

The Review of literature shows that most of the studies focus on the economic as well as psychological impact of imprisonment on the families of the imprisoned person. Whereas the economic impact includes the effect on income, living standard and pattern of expenditure in the family, especially when if the key earner gets the imprisonment. The psychological impacts can be measured through the stress and anxiety faced by the family members of the prisoners... 3

In addition to it, there are some social impacts on the people left behind in the families of the prisoners. These impacts can be estimated in terms of impact on social institutions such as family, and marriage. In family institution the imprisoned person's family can face the change in family structure, whereas in marriage institution the divorce that may occur due to the

imprisonment of a family member. Moreover, conflicts may emerge within the family left behind due to the changes raised in the family. Some of the main social impacts can be seen on the families of the confined persons are discussed below: Changed Behavior of Society Offenders

are stigmatized for their offence and their families often are too. According to one of the study conducted by the University of Glasgow, mentioned "family are seen a guilty by association even though they are legally innocent and generally had no involvement in the offence. This stigma is sometime referred to as courtesy stigma or stigma by association. This stigma even makes the imprisonment more difficult for family members and it can also mean that families are treated negatively by other members of their community or face negative treatment from the colleagues, peers, the media and even friends and family". People around the imprisoned person's family do not show trust on them as before. The family members said that the whole family bears the tag of a criminal always. Society's behavior is changed toward the families of the prisoners. The change is of both types; positive and negative. Where the families get the positive attitude by the society members toward the imprisoned family, they face the critical time with more power and even do not lose hope for good time. On the other side, where these families bear the negative attitude of society members, may not able to face the situation in better way. They not only bear the loss of separation of a family member but also the allegations from the other people of society. People easily targeted the family members of the incarcerated person, mostly the children of the person.

Change in the Structure of Family Imprisonment causes the change in the structure of the family. In Indian Patriarchal values, many families are living in joint family structure. When a family faces the imprisonment of a family 4 member the extended family members sometimes do not want to live with the immediate family members of the

confined person. For instance if a male member of the family is imprisoned then other married siblings of the person do not want to live with the parents or the spouse and children of that person. As they do not want to bring defame for their own family and children. This sometimes causes a separation in the family structure as a joint family is broken to the nuclear one.

In addition to it, sometimes a nuclear family turns to a joint family after the imprisonment of a family member. In such cases where a married son earlier lived separately from their parents after his marriage, if his wife go to jail in any reason, then in many cases, the son go back to his parents so that he and even his children get good care and support from the other family members. Conflicts in Family Imprisonment of a family member from the family might cause changes in the role of the members so clashes due to these roles and status change is quiet common. Moreover, spending more money on the imprisoned person may also cause the conflict in family too. In addition to it, the imprisonment brings defame for the family and the family members left outside may suffer from the insult and this cause a conflict among the family members. Moreover, lack of money and economic resources create the conflicts in family after the confinement of a family member as more money is spent on the court's legal proceedings and even in the prison to provide the necessary things to the prisoner. This economic burden causes the issues among the family members.

In spite of it, the other family members do not want to share their resources with the instant family of the imprisoned person and they demanded for their share in property. It is seen in many cases that after the imprisonment of a family member mostly the property disputes are emerged more in the family. In addition to it, separation in family and extra burden of work on family members also create problems among the family members.

Divorce due to the Imprisonment of Family Member 5

Due to the incarceration not only the families suffered with separation of family member but also result as divorce in the family. It is observed that not only the imprisoned person but also his/ her belonged persons may face the divorce i.e., daughter, son, sister of the confined person etc.

also got divorce after the imprisonment of a family member. The main reason that found behind this notion is that the people (relative) do not want to defame their family name because of being in any relationship with the imprisoned person. So, mostly the female relatives of the imprisoned person suffered with divorce. Likewise, the imprisoned person also faces the problems in his/ her marital relation.

Feeling Socially Isolated

It is found that after the imprisonment members of the confined persons' family make a distance from the others. They stop to go outside to attend the public gatherings and the relatives' functions. They prefer to live in their own house without meeting to the society's members. In the other words, they become socially isolated. The imprisoned person's family members generally think that people are talked about them and this may the reason to limit them in the house only. They do not want to face the people and the main reason is that people ask them about the confined person and about his/ her illegal activity. His may seems them more embarrassing and insulting. Imprisonment Effected Health of the Family Members It is observed that imprisonment affected the individuals in many ways. It is clear that when a person goes to jail the family faces social isolation and dishonor. It seems that not only social life of a person impacted with the incarceration of a family member but also it impacted on the health of the people. The family members of the imprisoned person suffered from many diseases after the confinement of their loved one. It results tension, stress depression to the family members from minor to intolerable level. Moreover, heart problems, paralyzing attacks, other major health problems are also faced by these persons.

6 The drastic outcome of the imprisonment on the family members faced is when they have to bear the grief of the death of a family member due to the incarceration of his/ her loved one, and even some of the incidents when a family member commit suicide after the imprisonment of the family member. There are also some other social impact like children of the confined person left his studies due to the guilt or insult in the society. In spite of it, people stop talking to them and taunt them for the mishap in their family. Conclusion Family is an important social institution an individual spends major part of lifespan in this

institution taking various social roles for instance as a child, young, elderly etc.

Thus an individual is an integral part of the family. Society from time immemorial has devised various social mechanisms to punish the deviants. Imprisonment of the offenders is being practiced as a strategy for reformation these days though it was part of the retributive justice system earlier. However, confinement is not only a punishment for the individual who has committed but for the whole family. The family face the social deprivation and defame after the imprisonment of the family member along with other social repercussions.

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