



EMPOWERING INCARCERATED WOMEN THROUGH GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY: THE ROLE OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMS IN EFFECTIVE PRISON REHABILITATION

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Abstract

This paper examines the complex issues related to women in development (WiD), women for development (WfD), women and development (WaD) and the economic and social challenges encountered by women prisoners. Despite their significant contributions to economic growth, women's roles are frequently undervalued and overlooked. Frameworks such as WiD and WfD advocate for the inclusion of women in development programs, highlighting their active participation in self-help groups and small-scale industries, particularly within prison settings. Research shows a strong link between women's empowerment and economic development; however, systemic obstacles like discriminatory laws and limited access to resources hinder progress. In India, many incarcerated women come from marginalized backgrounds, facing socio-economic deprivation, domestic violence, and insufficient educational opportunities, all of which contribute to their criminalization. The National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners has suggested improvements in legal awareness, medical care, and the engagement of voluntary organizations to enhance the conditions for incarcerated women. The issue of women's incarceration underscores the pressing need for gender-sensitive reforms that prioritize rehabilitation over punishment, tackling underlying causes such as poverty and lack of education. The Gandhian Constructive Programs provide a comprehensive framework for empowering women in prison by concentrating on economic self-reliance, education, health, and social equality. By equipping women with essential skills and support, society can aid their successful reintegration, reduce recidivism, and promote community well-being. Ultimately, acknowledging and advocating for women's contributions and rights is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable society, paving the way for sustainable development and gender equality.

Keywords: Women Empowerment; Prison Reform; Economic Development; Social Justice; Gandhian Philosophy

I. Introduction

Women in Development (WiD), Women for Development (WfD), and Women and Development (WaD) are key topics discussed at international, national, regional, and local forums. Women's roles and voluntary contributions to development are vast, yet often unnoticed, undervalued, and unaccounted for. Economically, if the services provided by women were monetized and included in Gross National Product (GNP) calculations, many nations would surpass the GNP of developed countries. Socially, women fulfil multiple roles as mothers, wives, daughters, and caregivers, supporting family members from infancy to old age. (Ramaswamy and Kavitha, 2022). Many countries have implemented policies to improve women's employability, wages, social protection, and empowerment, aiming to reduce unemployment and enhance their influence at family, national, and regional levels. (Petra Todd, 2012). The WiD approach focuses on integrating women into existing development programs, emphasizing vocational training and rehabilitation for marginalized women prisoners. This training prepares them for productive reintegration into society. In contrast, the WfD approach views women as active agents of change, highlighting the importance of their participation in self-help groups (SHGs) and small-scale industries within prisons. The WaD perspective addresses the structural inequalities that impede women's contributions to development, advocating for systemic changes that enhance their participation. In India, women prisoners engage in various economic activities that hold value both inside and outside the prison system. Many participate in labour-intensive tasks, such as producing Khadi and handicrafts, which support the prison and national economy. Additionally, some women cultivate fruits and vegetables, contributing to the local food supply and reducing prison operational costs. Vocational training programs in Indian prisons teach valuable skills like tailoring, embroidery, and food processing, enabling women

to gain certifications that enhance their employability post-release. Many also join SHGs to manage small-scale ventures and support their families financially. Successful graduates often start businesses, such as tailoring shops or food stalls, creating job opportunities and contributing to the broader economy. These educational initiatives have been shown to reduce recidivism rates by equipping women with the skills necessary for financial stability, ultimately lessening their reliance on the criminal justice system and lowering state costs associated with re-incarceration. By recognizing and fostering the economic contributions of women prisoners, these programs empower them as active participants in their own rehabilitation and societal reintegration.

II. Women's Empowerment and Economical Development

Dufló (2012) reported that women's empowerment and economic development are deeply linked. Development can reduce gender inequality while empowering women can drive further development. However, this paper reviews the literature and suggests that these connections are not strong enough to create a self-sustaining cycle. As a result, continued policy efforts are necessary to achieve lasting gender equality. **Boserup et al. (2007)** explained that women's role in economic development was a pioneering work, being the first to analyze how economic and social progress affects women in developing nations. This seminal book became a cornerstone in gender and development studies, shaping theoretical and policy approaches. The updated edition, with a new introduction by Nazneen Kanji, Su Fei Tan, and Camilla Toulmin, highlights Boserup's lasting impact and the relevance of her research today. The introduction delves into pressing issues like gender inequality, migration, conflict, HIV/AIDS, employment, urbanization, and global initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals. Boserup's empirical approach and commitment to gender equality continue to inspire students, scholars, and activists. In a world still contending with women's rights, this text remains a vital resource for understanding the social and economic roles of women. **U.S. Department of State (n.d)** reported that gender equality has been recognized as "smart economics," with women's economic participation driving growth and development. Women's contributions enhance agricultural productivity, enterprise development, and business management, while their income is often reinvested in families and communities, creating a multiplier effect. However, obstacles such as discriminatory laws, and lack of access to property, finance, technology, and training hinder women's full economic participation. To address these barriers, key investments include expanding women's access to financial services, supporting female farmers, and advocating for reforms in discriminatory laws. Additionally, closing the gender gap in technology access, providing training and mentorship, and promoting women in leadership roles are crucial. Collecting gender-sensitive data can further inform policies that boost women's economic opportunities across all sectors.

Confederation of Indian Industry. (2022) expressed that women's empowerment and gender equality are crucial for advancing human rights and achieving a more peaceful, progressive, and sustainable world. Closing the gender divide is essential and is advancing through equal opportunities and representation. As noted by a wise thinker, "The best measure of a nation's progress is the way it treats its women." Despite enduring many challenges, women have shown remarkable resilience and significantly contributed to India's economic growth. Currently, India has 432 million working-age women, with 343 million employed in the informal sector. McKinsey Global Institute estimates that equal opportunities for women could boost India's GDP by \$770 billion by 2025, though their current GDP contribution is only 18 per cent. India ranks third globally in startups and unicorns, yet only 10 per cent are led by women. There is a pressing need to provide more support to women entrepreneurs to further their success. **Capri Global Capital Limited (2020)** opined that women drive both economic and social progress and could help prevent future global recessions. Integrating women into workplaces and marketplaces maximizes their impact. In India, women contribute around 17-18 per cent to the GDP and are strong in the agriculture and dairy sectors. Despite this, their participation in the labour force is only 25 per cent, one of the lowest globally. Increasing female workforce participation to 50.0 per cent could potentially boost India's growth rate from 1.5 per cent to 9.0 per cent annually. **Siddiqi (2023)** stated that gender norms and biases, along with disproportionate responsibilities for household chores, childcare, and elder care, significantly hinder women's workforce participation. These unpaid caregiving duties restrict their time and opportunities for formal employment, leading to a lower female labour force participation rate. In 2022, India's female workforce participation was only 24 per cent, a figure that hampers economic development and social welfare. This underscores the need for urgent policy reforms to enhance women's empowerment. **Kaul (2024)** reviewed the Global Gender Gap Report 2024 from the World Economic Forum and indicated that achieving full gender parity will require an estimated 134 years, not expected until 2158—five generations beyond the 2030 SDG target. The global gender gap score stands at 68.5 per cent for 2024, with only a minimal increase of 0.1 percentage points from the previous year. Although 97.0 per cent of economies have closed over 60.0 per cent of the gender gap, up from 85.0 per cent in 2006, global parity remains distant. India ranks third-lowest in Southern Asia for gender parity. The 2024 report shows that 31.5 per cent of the gender gap remains unaddressed, with particularly large gaps in Political Empowerment (77.5 per cent unaddressed) and Economic Participation and Opportunity (39.5 per cent unaddressed). Progress has been slow, with only a 0.1 percentage point improvement from 2023. India also figured among the group of nations to have one of the lowest levels of economic gender parity. India's economic parity stood at 39.8 per cent. This means that women in India on average earn Rs 39.8 for every Rs 100 that men earn.

World Bank (1979) reported that in many developing countries, women's economic contributions are often overlooked. Their domestic and child-rearing work is generally not included in national income accounting, and their roles in subsistence or cash agriculture as unpaid family workers are not separately recognized. This oversight means ignoring the factors affecting their work, the support they need, and whether they control the rewards from their efforts. Women

frequently perform household-related tasks and lack training to compete for higher-paying jobs, leading to their concentration in low-productivity, low-wage roles. This cycle of low skills and low wages keeps women at the lower end of the economic scale. **Salem (2020)** strongly felt that a woman is a selfless mother, a strong entrepreneur and a resourceful breadwinner. Ellen Goldstein, the World Bank country director of Bangladesh discusses the particular success of gender equality as a smart economics model in Bangladesh: those poor, illiterate women represent the world's most untapped resources and when they were supported with the appropriate legal reforms and provided with the necessary training they were able to break free from their religious and traditional barriers and join the labour market.

III. Why are Women in Prison? Some strategies for correction

Women have long been regarded as the foundation of every society. In a country like India, they are often constrained by traditional norms and are expected to fulfil roles as procreators, nurturers, and guardians of social customs, morality, and family cohesion. The social environment, particularly in patriarchal systems, plays a significant role in shaping female criminality. Scholars like **Otto Pollak, in The Criminality of Women (1950)**, argue that women often engage in concealed crimes, such as poisoning or offences against children, due to the cunning and deceitful behaviors they develop through sexual socialization. Women in prison often struggle with economic hardship and insecurity, with the majority coming from the lowest economic backgrounds (**Sonal (n.d.)**). Many crimes committed by women are driven by financial challenges (**Saxena, 1994**). However, greed for dowry also plays a prominent role in female criminality (**Cherukuri, 2008**). Various social factors, including rising divorce rates, illegitimacy, female-headed households, low-wage employment, unemployment, and childcare costs, contribute to women engaging in petty offences (**Steffensmeier in Renzetti and Goodstein, 2001**). Family dysfunction, particularly marital conflict stemming from alcoholism and infidelity, as well as challenges within joint or broken families, are significant contributors to female criminal behaviour (**Maniyar, 2004**). The pre-menstrual period is considered highly stressful for women, with nearly fifty per cent of those affected reportedly committing crimes during this time (**Maniyar, 2004**). Research has also indicated a link between menstruation and criminal behaviour (**William and Christopher, 2004**). Additionally, illiteracy is associated with criminality (**Bajpai and Bajpai, 2000**). Fear and insecurity, especially shame and fear surrounding an illegitimate child, have driven some women to commit infanticide (**Sethna, 1964**). Drug use, particularly for excitement, has been identified as an important factor in women's criminal behaviour, and sexual delinquency is also a notable aspect of female offending (**Addition in Tappan, 1951**). Prostitution remains one of the most common crimes committed by women (**Steffensmeier in Renzetti and Goodstein, 2001**). In India, a significant number of women are arrested for dowry-related murders (**Bajpai and Bajpai, 2000**). Additionally, women are involved in crimes against other women, with mothers-in-law, as representatives of patriarchal forces, being frequent perpetrators of violence. Kidnapping and abduction are other common causes of the arrest of women (**Bajpai and Bajpai, 2000**), and homicide is another significant category of crimes committed by women (**Maniyar, 2004**). Many female offenders are imprisoned for theft, handling stolen goods, shoplifting, welfare fraud, burglary, drug-related offences, and driving under the influence (**Steffensmeier in Renzetti and Goodstein, 2001**). Most women in prison are both educationally and economically disadvantaged, and the influence of patriarchal structures is evident in both the crimes women commit and the crimes committed against them.

According to **Pattanaik and Mishra (2001)**, female criminality arises from diverse socioeconomic and environmental factors linked to rapid industrialization, westernization, and urbanization. The rising rate of female crime has drawn the attention of psychologists, sociologists, and criminologists worldwide, challenging India's social and cultural structure.

Lombroso and Ferrero (1895) believed that female criminals are more dangerous than males due to their more "refined" cruelty. **Pollak (1950)** highlighted hormonal influences during menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause, suggesting that emotional instability and temporary impairment during these stages contribute to criminal behaviour. Female offenders often face emotional turmoil, harsh living conditions, and frustrations that manifest in criminal acts, driven by both medical imbalances and social instability. **Klein (1973)** pointed out that female crimes such as poisoning, theft, and sexual offences often remain hidden, influenced by both physiological traits and socioeconomic conditions. **Adler (1975)** attributed female criminality in areas like prostitution and drug addiction to the women's liberation movement and increased assertiveness. In India, **Sharma (1963)** found that strained family relationships and deprivation were key factors leading to female crime.

The incarceration of women in India is intricately linked to socio-economic deprivation, domestic violence, and gender inequality. Many women find themselves pushed into crime due to poverty, lack of education, or coercion by male family members. Economic hardship is a major factor, with a significant proportion of female offenders coming from marginalized backgrounds. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), over 40 per cent of women in Indian prisons were incarcerated for theft, burglary, and fraud, often driven by immediate financial need rather than habitual criminality. For example, a 2021 case from Kerala involved a single mother shoplifting essentials for her children after her husband abandoned them. This case underscores how poverty and lack of support force women into criminal activities for survival. Similarly, domestic violence plays a crucial role in women's involvement in crime. Women are often forced into illegal activities by abusive husbands or fathers, or they commit violent crimes in retaliation. The Prison Statistics India report from 2019 highlights that many incarcerated women were victims of domestic violence and lacked legal support or awareness of their rights. A 2020 case from Uttar Pradesh illustrates this: a woman who had endured years of abuse from her husband was convicted of his murder, despite clear evidence of self-defence. Her harsh sentencing highlights the failure of the justice system to protect women who act out of desperation. Illiteracy and lack of legal awareness also contribute to women's criminalization. More than 60.0 per cent of women in Indian prisons have not completed secondary education,

making them vulnerable to manipulation. For instance, a 2021 case from West Bengal involved a woman who unknowingly transported drugs for her husband, a member of a trafficking network. She was unaware of the legal consequences and lacked access to legal counsel, exemplifying how uneducated women are exploited. Trafficking and forced sex work are other significant issues. Many women incarcerated for prostitution or trafficking are victims of these crimes themselves, but the criminal justice system often treats them as offenders rather than victims. A 2022 study by the International Justice Mission found that many women involved in trafficking were coerced, yet they were imprisoned rather than rehabilitated. A 2023 raid on a brothel in Mumbai led to the arrest of trafficked women, who were treated as criminals despite clear evidence of their victimization. Drug-related crimes are another area where women are often coerced. Female drug couriers frequently come from rural areas and are lured or forced into trafficking by male relatives.

The NCRB 2021 report shows that drug-related offences account for a significant portion of female incarcerations. A 2022 case from Punjab highlighted this issue, where a woman was forced by her husband to smuggle drugs under threat of violence, showing how women in vulnerable situations are exploited by criminal networks. Crimes of passion, especially homicides related to domestic abuse, also account for a significant number of female prisoners. Women who have faced years of abuse sometimes resort to violence in self-defence but are treated harshly by the legal system. A 2021 case from Tamil Nadu involved a woman convicted for the murder of her abusive father-in-law. Despite evidence of long-term abuse, she was prosecuted without any recognition of the circumstances leading to the crime. Despite growing recognition of these gendered issues, India's criminal justice system remains largely punitive rather than rehabilitative. Rehabilitation programs for women are minimal, and prisons are ill-equipped to address their specific needs, such as mental health care, trauma support, or vocational training. A 2022 case from Delhi revealed that a woman convicted of drug offences relapsed after release due to the lack of support for her addiction, showing the urgent need for reforms. In conclusion, the incarceration of women in India is a complex issue rooted in socio-economic challenges, domestic violence, and exploitation. The justice system often fails to consider the unique circumstances leading women to commit crimes, resulting in harsh punishments. To break the cycle of female criminality, there is a pressing need for gender-sensitive reforms that focus on rehabilitation, legal protection, and addressing the root causes of crime, such as poverty and patriarchy. Women in prison often face a range of social, economic, and personal challenges that contribute to their incarceration. Common reasons include financial hardship, family instability, domestic violence, and involvement in drug-related offences. Many female offenders come from low-income backgrounds and commit crimes out of necessity or desperation. Domestic abuse, human trafficking, and mental health issues also play significant roles. A 2023 report by the Prison Reform Trust revealed that many women in UK prisons were involved in petty theft and fraud, driven by financial difficulties and the need to support their families. Similarly, the Sentencing Project in the U.S. found that a large number of incarcerated women had experienced domestic abuse, often committing crimes under coercion from abusive partners. In Brazil, a 2023 case saw several women arrested for drug trafficking, acting as couriers for male counterparts. As of August 5, 2022, (Fair and Walmsley, 2022) there are 740,627 women and girls in prisons worldwide. The United States has the highest number of female prisoners, with over 211,000, followed by China (about 145,000), Brazil (42,694), Russia (39,120), Thailand (32,952), and India (22,918). The rate of female prisoners per 100,000 people is highest in the USA (64), followed by Thailand (47), El Salvador (42), and Turkmenistan (38). In contrast, Africa has the lowest rate at just 3 per 100,000. Since 2000, the number of women and girls in prison has increased by nearly 60.0 per cent, from around 466,000. Women and girls make up 6.9 per cent of the global prison population. The proportions vary by region: 3.3 per cent in Africa, 5.9 per cent in Europe, 6.7 per cent in Oceania, 7.2 per cent in Asia, and 8.0 per cent in the Americas. In 17 regions, women and girls account for over 10.0 per cent of the prison population. The highest proportions are in Hong Kong (19.7 per cent), Qatar (14.7 per cent), and Macau (14.1 per cent).

Additionally, a 2023 report by the Vera Institute of Justice in the U.S. showed that many women in prison suffer from untreated mental health issues, which often lead to involvement in criminal activities like substance abuse or violent behaviour. These examples highlight the complex factors that drive women into the prison system, emphasizing the need for more supportive and rehabilitative approaches. Women are often seen as upholders of societal norms, yet over the past decade, many have engaged in criminal activities worldwide, including in India. Their crimes are not limited to petty offences; women are increasingly involved in serious and non-traditional crimes. Various economic, political, social, biological, and psychological factors contribute to women's criminality. For instance, biological issues like hormonal imbalances can influence behaviour, particularly during pregnancy and menopause, leading to emotional fluctuations and impulsive actions (Paranjape, 2006). Domestic abuse from spouses or relatives can also push women toward crime. Personal factors such as lack of affection, spouses' vices like drinking and gambling, and poverty significantly contribute to female criminality, especially in India. Difficult life circumstances, relationship conflicts, and family discord further exacerbate this issue (Ahuja, 1969). Additionally, lack of education, social instability, poor living conditions, and challenging family dynamics are rising factors in women's criminal behaviour. As women increasingly enter the workforce and social spheres from which they were previously excluded, they gain opportunities to engage in crime similar to men (Gillin, 2005). Traditionally, women were involved in petty crimes like shoplifting and prostitution. However, they are now engaged in a wider range of criminal activities, including adultery, blackmail, drug trafficking, forgery, kidnapping, marital crimes, murder, pickpocketing, smuggling, terrorism, and theft. (Snehal Asthana, 2020)

Some effective measures for preventing female criminality in India include amending existing laws and implementing community-based crime prevention programs. Establishing crime prevention institutions at the community level and promoting interdisciplinary research on female criminality can further address the issue. Efforts should be made to combat

gender discrimination in families, schools, and workplaces while learning and rehabilitation programs for female offenders can support their reformation. Reforming the criminal justice system and ensuring the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of women offenders are critical steps. Additionally, responsible media representation, comprehensive sex education, and promoting equal sharing of social and domestic responsibilities between men and women, rather than traditional role demarcation, are essential for long-term crime prevention. (**Snehal Asthana, 2020**). Preventing female crime in India is difficult because it can be hard to identify vulnerable women. It's important to raise awareness about women's rights, laws, and the value of legal education. Social services should teach women about illegal activities, and sex education can help prevent involvement in sex trafficking. Female prisoners should have opportunities to reform through activities like cooking, tailoring, and gardening, which can boost their self-esteem and confidence for life after prison. Rehabilitation should also support women in fulfilling their parental responsibilities and provide proper medical care. Mentally ill offenders need ongoing support after release to reduce the risk of reoffending. Children of imprisoned mothers should have access to care and maintain contact with their families. Additionally, women in prison should receive legal advice, as many may be incarcerated unjustly. The **National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners**, led by Justice Krishna Iyer, was established in 1986 to evaluate the conditions of women in prisons and put forth several key recommendations. These include: informing women prisoners of their legal rights; ensuring that only female constables conduct searches; requiring that medical examinations for women prisoners or undertrials be performed by female doctors upon their admission; allowing women prisoners to maintain contact with their families, lawyers, women social workers, and voluntary organizations; permitting women prisoners to keep their children with them; encouraging the involvement of women's voluntary organizations in prison matters; establishing separate facilities for women prisoners; and providing special prosecution officers to represent the cases of women prisoners.



IV. Empowering Women in Prison through Gandhian Constructive Programmes

S.No.		
1	<p>Khadi and Village Industries Promotion of handspun and handwoven cloth (Khadi) and support for small-scale rural industries to promote self-reliance and economic independence. Supporting the production and use of handspun and handwoven cloth to promote self-reliance and economic independence. Encouraging the establishment and growth of small-scale industries in rural areas to create jobs and enhance local economies.</p>	<p>Training women prisoners in handspun and handwoven cloth (Khadi) equips them with skills for employment or entrepreneurship, aiding their rehabilitation and fostering economic independence. By producing and selling Khadi, they can achieve financial stability, reducing reoffending risks. This training also supports smoother reintegration into society and provides a constructive focus during incarceration. Promoting small-scale rural industries creates jobs and strengthens local economies. Women skilled in Khadi production can start or join businesses, boosting rural development and supporting sustainability. Khadi production is environmentally friendly, aligns with global sustainability goals, and offers women a path to entrepreneurship and self-esteem post-release.</p>
2	<p>Education Basic education (Nai Talim) with a focus on practical skills and vocational training, integrating moral and ethical values. Implementing educational programs that combine academic learning with practical skills and vocational training. Offering literacy and continuing education programs for adults to improve their knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Basic education focused on practical skills enhances the employability of women in prison by providing valuable abilities that are directly applicable to the job market. Vocational training offers hands-on experience, boosting their chances of securing stable employment upon release. Literacy and continuing education programs further improve their knowledge and skills, making them more competitive for various job opportunities. Integrating moral and ethical values into education fosters personal development and accountability, helping women build self-worth and integrity essential for reintegration. Practical skills and vocational training prepare them for life outside prison, offering a constructive focus during incarceration and easing their transition back into society. This education not only builds confidence and a sense of purpose but also equips women to overcome post-release challenges, increasing their likelihood of becoming self-sufficient and reducing the chance of reoffending.</p>
3	<p>Health and Hygiene Improvement Improvement of sanitation, personal hygiene, and public health to prevent disease and promote well-being. Sanitation Campaigns: Promoting better sanitation practices, waste management, and access to clean water. Establishing health centres and mobile clinics in underserved areas to provide medical care and health education.</p>	<p>Improved sanitation and personal hygiene prevent disease spread and enhance physical health among women in prison, boosting their overall quality of life. Sanitation campaigns promote effective waste management and clean water access, reducing the risk of infections and supporting better health and rehabilitation. Health centres and mobile clinics provide timely medical care and health education, addressing health concerns and teaching self-care. This education improves sanitation practices and contributes to healthier living conditions during and after incarceration. A cleaner, healthier environment positively impacts mental health and morale, aiding rehabilitation and preparing women for successful reintegration into society. Access to medical care and education equips them to handle health challenges post-release, supporting a smoother transition and long-term well-being.</p>
4	<p>Social Equality Eradication of untouchability and caste discrimination, promoting social justice Working to eradicate untouchability and caste</p>	<p>Eradicating untouchability and caste discrimination ensures women in prison are treated with dignity and respect, fostering a humane environment that supports their emotional well-</p>

	discrimination, and promoting social inclusiveness. Supporting legal and social reforms to ensure equal rights for women, minorities, and marginalized groups.	being. Promoting social inclusiveness and addressing discrimination boosts the self-esteem and mental health of marginalized women. Legal and social reforms that ensure equal rights create a fairer prison system, offering better treatment and opportunities for all inmates. A prison environment that combats discrimination and supports social justice enhances rehabilitation, leading to better personal development and preparation for reintegration. Addressing caste discrimination and promoting social justice also provide women with equitable access to education, vocational training, and support services, helping them build skills and confidence for life after release. This fair and inclusive environment facilitates smoother reintegration by reducing stigma and biases.
5	Women's Upliftment Empowerment of women through education, health care, and opportunities for economic independence. Creating and supporting self-help groups for women to enhance their economic and social status. Providing educational and vocational training programs tailored for women to improve their skills and opportunities	Tailored educational and vocational training equips women with skills that boost their employment prospects and self-sufficiency upon release, supporting their reintegration. Comprehensive health care addresses their physical and mental needs, enabling better engagement in rehabilitation programs. Self-help groups and economic opportunities promote financial stability and self-reliance, helping women develop entrepreneurial skills and income-generating activities. These groups also provide emotional support and enhance social networks, reducing isolation and improving confidence. Combining education, health care, and economic support creates a holistic system that aids in rehabilitation and prepares women in prison for a stable, productive life after incarceration.
6	Economic Self-Reliance Promotion of cooperative farming and rural economic activities to enhance self-sufficiency and equitable resource distribution. Promoting cooperative farming and collective agriculture to increase productivity and improve livelihoods. Supporting microfinance initiatives to provide small loans to entrepreneurs and small business owners	Cooperative farming and collective agriculture provide women with hands-on skills in farming and rural businesses, enhancing their employability and entrepreneurial potential. Engaging in these activities, along with accessing microfinance, helps women achieve financial stability and self-sufficiency. These experiences increase productivity and improve livelihoods by equipping women with practical skills applicable in various economic settings. Microfinance offers small loans to start or expand businesses, overcoming financial barriers and supporting entrepreneurship. Cooperative farming also fosters teamwork and community, enhancing social support and confidence. This preparation with practical skills and financial knowledge helps women transition smoothly into society and achieve a stable life after release.
7	Village Reconstruction Comprehensive development of villages, including improvements in infrastructure, education, and health services. Implementing comprehensive development projects to improve infrastructure, education, and health in villages. Encouraging sustainable farming practices and organic farming to enhance agricultural productivity and environmental health.	Enhanced village infrastructure and education offer women better access to vocational training and educational programs, boosting their employability upon release. Improved health services contribute to better physical and mental well-being, aiding their engagement in rehabilitation. Sustainable and organic farming practices provide new economic opportunities, enabling women to contribute to rural economies through cooperative farming or entrepreneurship. These practices also foster environmental awareness, promoting responsible economic activities. Better village infrastructure and services create a supportive environment for reintegration, making transitions smoother. Overall, comprehensive village development

		empowers women by offering resources and support for personal growth and economic independence, helping them build a stable foundation for life after incarceration.
8	Environmental Conservation Promotion of tree planting, soil conservation, and sustainable practices to protect natural resources. Organizing tree planting campaigns to combat deforestation and improve environmental conditions. Promoting practices to prevent soil erosion and maintain soil fertility.	Participating in tree planting and soil conservation activities provides women in prison with practical skills in environmental management, which are valuable for future eco-friendly jobs or ventures. These activities improve physical health and mental well-being by fostering a sense of purpose. Learning sustainable methods raises awareness of environmental issues, which can be applied to personal and professional life, encouraging responsible behaviour. Engaging in environmental campaigns during incarceration helps build a positive identity and sense of community, aiding smoother reintegration into society. The skills and knowledge gained can be used to support environmental initiatives and sustainable practices in their communities after release.
9	Non-Violent Conflict Resolution Advocacy for non-violent methods (ahimsa) for resolving conflicts and achieving. Supporting programs that promote non-violent conflict resolution and reconciliation within communities. Conducting workshops and training on non-violence and conflict resolution techniques.	Workshops and training on non-violence and conflict resolution equip women with essential skills for peaceful conflict management. These skills foster personal growth, improve interactions within prison, and enhance future community relations. Practising non-violence helps women develop emotional control, reduce stress, and maintain a positive mindset. This improves relationships with inmates and staff, creating a harmonious environment that supports rehabilitation. Mastering conflict resolution techniques prepares women for effective dispute management in their future lives, aiding smoother reintegration and reducing reoffending. After release, trained women can contribute positively to their communities by promoting peaceful resolution and reconciliation.
10	Promotion of Indian Languages and Culture Support for the development and use of local languages to preserve cultural heritage and facilitate education. Supporting the preservation and promotion of traditional arts, crafts, and cultural heritage. Encouraging the use and development of local languages in education and daily life.	Promoting local languages and traditional arts helps women in prison stay connected to their cultural roots, boosting their identity and self-esteem. Integrating these languages into education makes learning more accessible and engaging, improving educational outcomes. Engaging in traditional crafts and cultural activities offers constructive outlets for creativity and personal growth. Knowledge of local languages and cultural practices aids smoother reintegration into communities by bridging cultural gaps and enhancing communication. Supporting cultural preservation allows women to contribute to their communities' cultural richness and continuity, potentially leading to community service opportunities after release.
11	Improvement of Agriculture Support for agricultural practices that enhance productivity and sustainability while benefiting small farmers.	Training in advanced and sustainable agricultural practices equips women with practical skills applicable to farming. These skills can improve their employability and entrepreneurial prospects upon release. Knowledge of efficient and sustainable farming can lead to opportunities for women to engage in agricultural ventures or cooperatives, fostering economic independence. Learning about sustainable practices promotes environmental awareness and responsibility, which can enhance women's sense of purpose and well-being.

		Agricultural training provides a productive focus during incarceration and prepares women for a smoother reintegration into rural or agricultural communities, where these skills are in demand. By supporting small farmers and sustainable practices, women can contribute positively to their communities after release, helping to advance local agricultural productivity and environmental health.
12	<p>Social Harmony Encouragement of mutual respect and cooperation among different communities Establishing and supporting cooperatives in various sectors to foster collective growth and mutual support. Creating cooperatives for consumers to ensure fair prices and quality goods.</p>	Participation in cooperatives equips women with practical skills in teamwork, management, and problem-solving, which are crucial for personal growth and future job prospects. Cooperatives offer opportunities for women to work across various sectors, promoting economic independence and supporting entrepreneurial goals upon release. Working in cooperative environments fosters mutual respect and cooperation, improving social interactions and emotional well-being, and preparing women for successful reintegration into society. Consumer cooperatives provide fair prices and quality goods, teaching women about financial management and business practices, which is useful for managing personal finances. Overall, experience in cooperatives offers a productive focus during incarceration, enhances skills in collaboration, and supports community engagement. Women with cooperative experience can positively impact their communities after release, contributing to collective growth and mutual support.
13	<p>Economic Justice Addressing economic disparities and promoting fair distribution of wealth and resources.</p>	Addressing economic disparities improves women's access to resources, training, and skill development, enhancing their prospects for economic independence upon release. Fair resource distribution ensures equal access to educational and vocational programs, leading to better job opportunities and personal growth. Programs targeting economic inequalities often include financial literacy and resource management training, helping women plan for a stable future. Promoting equity boosts emotional well-being and self-esteem, creating a supportive environment for rehabilitation. By addressing economic inequalities, women are better prepared for reintegration into society and can positively impact their communities by advocating for social equity and supporting efforts to reduce economic disparities.
14	<p>Self-Governance and Local Autonomy Promotion of self-governance at the village level, allowing communities to manage their affairs.</p>	Exposure to self-governance helps women develop leadership and administrative skills, aiding personal growth and future opportunities. It fosters empowerment, boosts self-esteem, and enhances confidence. Understanding community management facilitates smoother reintegration by improving connections with communities upon release. Experience in self-governance prepares women for leadership roles, allowing them to advocate for their needs and interests effectively. Overall, learning about self-governance provides a constructive focus during incarceration and equips women for active community participation after release.
15	<p>Cultural Revival</p>	Engaging in traditional arts and crafts helps women develop practical skills for future employment or

	Encouraging the revival and preservation of traditional arts, crafts, and cultural	entrepreneurship. It promotes mental stimulation and emotional healing, enhancing overall well-being. Reviving cultural practices fosters a sense of identity and boosts self-esteem. Learning these skills offers educational enrichment and personal growth. Experience in traditional arts prepares women for reintegration by providing a constructive outlet and potential career paths. After release, women can positively impact their communities by supporting cultural preservation and participating in local economic activities.
16	Youth Development Programs aimed at the education, training, and empowerment of youth to become active and responsible citizens. Implementing programs to engage and empower young people through education, skills training, and community service. Offering leadership training and opportunities for youth to become active contributors to societal development.	Educational and skills training programs enhance women's employability and self-sufficiency upon release. Leadership and community service opportunities foster responsibility, personal growth, and confidence. These programs offer a constructive focus during incarceration, improving mental well-being and providing purpose. Leadership training equips women for active roles in society and effective community contribution. Overall, these experiences support smoother reintegration by preparing women to be responsible, active contributors to societal development.
17	Cooperative Endeavors Encouragement of cooperative efforts in various sectors to foster collective growth and mutual support.	Participation in cooperatives helps women develop teamwork, leadership, and management skills, which are valuable for personal growth and future employment. Cooperative efforts foster a sense of responsibility and mutual support, boosting self-esteem and confidence through active collaboration. Engaging in cooperative activities provides a positive focus during incarceration, promoting mental well-being and a sense of purpose. Experience in cooperatives prepares women for reintegration by equipping them with skills for community involvement and potential entrepreneurial ventures. Working in cooperatives enhances social connections and collaboration skills, aiding smoother reintegration into society by fostering a sense of belonging.
18	Voluntary Simplicity Advocacy for a simple, self-sufficient lifestyle that avoids excess and promotes contentment with minimal material needs. Promoting a lifestyle of simplicity and minimalism to reduce materialism and enhance personal well-being. Encouraging practices that promote sustainability and environmental stewardship.	Teaching practical skills like gardening, cooking, and crafting can empower women in prison by making them more self-reliant and providing therapeutic benefits and job opportunities. Emphasizing resourcefulness fosters resilience, giving women a sense of control even in a restrictive environment. Shifting focus from materialism to personal growth and relationships promotes peace and satisfaction, particularly where material goods are scarce. Practices like meditation and mindfulness reduce psychological stress, while sustainability programs and eco-friendly habits instil a sense of purpose and responsibility. Communal living and peer-led groups strengthen community bonds, providing ongoing support. Adopting a simple, self-sufficient lifestyle can ease reintegration into society, making it easier for women to live within their means and avoid consumerism. Integrating these principles into rehabilitation programs offers a holistic approach, addressing behavioural, emotional, and spiritual needs.

VI. Conclusion

This paper examines the complex issues related to women in development (WiD, WfD, WaD) and the economic and social challenges faced by women prisoners. Despite their significant contributions to economic growth, the roles of women are frequently undervalued and overlooked. Frameworks like WiD and WfD advocate for the integration of women into development programs, emphasizing their active participation in self-help groups and small-scale industries, especially within prison settings. Research highlights a strong correlation between women's empowerment and economic development, but barriers such as discriminatory laws and limited access to resources hinder progress. While women's economic participation is vital for overall development, many remain stuck in low-wage, low-skill jobs due to systemic inequalities. In India, many incarcerated women come from marginalized backgrounds and experience socio-economic deprivation, domestic violence, and insufficient educational opportunities, all of which contribute to their involvement in crime. The National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners has put forward important recommendations aimed at improving conditions for incarcerated women, including enhancing legal awareness, providing appropriate medical care, and engaging voluntary organizations. The incarceration of women is a multifaceted issue deeply rooted in socio-economic challenges, domestic violence, and systemic inequalities. Often, women commit crimes out of desperation or coercion, underscoring the urgent need for gender-sensitive reforms that focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. To create a more equitable justice system, it is essential to address the root causes of female criminality—such as poverty, lack of education, and domestic abuse. Strengthening support systems, vocational training, and legal protections for women is crucial for their empowerment and successful reintegration into society. As society increasingly acknowledges the invaluable contributions of women, particularly those who are imprisoned, it is imperative to cultivate an environment that supports their rights and well-being, paving the way for sustainable development and gender equality. The Gandhian Constructive Programs provide a comprehensive framework for empowering women in prison, addressing their specific needs and facilitating their reintegration into society. By concentrating on key areas such as economic self-reliance, education, health, and social equality, these initiatives help cultivate essential skills for personal growth and independence. Through vocational training and cooperative efforts, women are empowered to enhance their employability and entrepreneurial prospects, while improvements in health and hygiene contribute to their overall well-being. Initiatives aimed at eradicating discrimination and fostering social justice create a more humane and equitable environment, which is vital for effective rehabilitation. Additionally, involving women in environmental conservation and cultural revival enriches their personal development and fosters a sense of community and responsibility. Programs that promote non-violent conflict resolution and self-governance further develop leadership skills, enabling women to make positive contributions to their communities. In summary, the holistic approach of these programs not only tackles the immediate challenges faced by women prisoners but also lays the groundwork for sustainable development and gender equality. By equipping them with the necessary skills and support, society can facilitate their successful reintegration, reduce recidivism, and enhance community well-being. Recognizing women's contributions and promoting their rights are crucial steps toward building a more inclusive and equitable society. Women are often seen as upholders of societal norms, yet over the past decade, many have engaged in criminal activities worldwide, including in India. Their crimes are not limited to petty offences; women are increasingly involved in serious and nontraditional crimes. Various economic, political, social, biological, and psychological factors contribute to women's criminality. For instance, biological issues like hormonal imbalances can influence behaviour, particularly during pregnancy and menopause, leading to emotional fluctuations and impulsive actions (Paranjape, 2006). Domestic abuse from spouses or relatives can also push women toward crime. Personal factors such as lack of affection, spouses' vices like drinking and gambling, and poverty significantly contribute to female criminality, especially in India. Difficult life circumstances, relationship conflicts, and family discord further exacerbate this issue (Ahuja, 1969). Additionally, lack of education, social instability, poor living conditions, and challenging family dynamics are rising factors in women's criminal behaviour. As women increasingly enter the workforce and social spheres from which they were previously excluded, they gain opportunities to engage in crime similar to men (Gillin, 2005). Traditionally, women were involved in petty crimes like shoplifting and prostitution. However, they are now engaged in a wider range of criminal activities, including adultery, blackmail, drug trafficking, forgery, kidnapping, marital crimes, murder, pickpocketing, smuggling, terrorism, and theft. (Snehal Asthana 2020) Some effective measures for preventing female criminality in India include amending existing laws and implementing community-based crime prevention programs. Establishing crime prevention institutions at the community level and promoting interdisciplinary research on female criminality can further address the issue. Efforts should be made to combat gender discrimination in families, schools, and workplaces while learning and rehabilitation programs for female offenders can support their reformation. Reforming the criminal justice system and ensuring the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of women offenders are critical steps. Additionally, responsible media representation, comprehensive sex education, and promoting equal sharing of social and domestic responsibilities between men and women, rather than traditional role demarcation, are essential for long-term crime prevention.

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