



Woman in Development and Politics

Exploration of the Lived Experience of Imprisoned Women: From the Regret of Childhood to the Continuation of Crimes

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received: 12 April 2023 Received in revised form: 22 June 2023 Accepted: 22 July 2023 Published online: 20 March 2024</p> <p>Keywords: childhood experiences, continuation of crime, imprisoned women, regret and frustratio, tense family.</p>	<p>Introduction Children are the most vulnerable group in society, and their experiences, mentality, and quality of childhood interactions have a significant impact on their adult status. Studies of incarcerated women's childhood experiences indicate that negative experiences such as misbehavior, enduring adversities, family quarrels, poverty, emotional neglect, and violence are associated with mental, family, and social health problems in adulthood. Due to the fact that nowadays women make up a significant share of prisoners and the statistics of criminal behavior among them has increased. Thus, the present study aims to investigate the childhood experiences of female prisoners and how those experiences continue to affect them in their current situation.</p> <p>Studying and understanding the childhood of imprisoned women and the conditions in which children live can provide enough information for policy makers and social planners. Using this information, they can design and implement appropriate policies, programs and interventions to protect children from risk factors and sensitize families and other social institutions to better care of children and meet their needs. In the importance of this issue, it is enough that the imprisonment and perversion of women are among the issues that have undeniable consequences at all individual, family and social levels. With the vulnerability of women and their importance in raising the next generation in the society, the need to address their issues and problems, especially examining the process of analyzing childhood experiences and the continuation of these experiences in women's adulthood can be effective in clarifying its hidden angles - as it is - and in During this investigation, the family, social and cultural barriers of Hoyda and the community should be mobilized and equipped to solve this social problem.</p> <p>Methodology The current study is a qualitative research that utilizes the phenomenology method. Phenomenology is concerned with the basic element of experience in people's daily life. For this purpose, the present research has used this method to gain the meaning of the lived experiences of the childhood of imprisoned women and to interpret its effects in their adult lives, and experience is at its center; Therefore, experience is intertwined with human life. The data and information was collected through in-depth interviews. In conducting the interview process, the researcher was not allowed to record the voice and only the researcher was able to write down the key words that were used for data analysis. According to the interest and quality of the answers of the participants, the interview time lasted between one and one and a half hours.</p> <p>The fieldwork of this research includes all female inmates in Fardis Penitentiary, which is located in the south of Karaj. The samples were selected using purposeful sampling and theoretical sampling techniques. In selecting the sample, various factors such as age, type of crime committed (e.g., murder, theft, drug sales, prostitution), level of education, marital status (married or single), number of times imprisoned, economic status, and number of children were considered to achieve maximum variance. However, to ensure saturation, more than two interviews were conducted with 25 female prisoners. By analyzing the collected data, after conducting the interview, the words noted down by the researcher in the written text, sentences and phrases that indicated the understanding of women's experience of the phenomenon were identified. In the next step, the researcher used important phrases to categorize the meanings which lead to sub-themes, and these sub-themes appeared in the cover of the theme to write what the women experienced.</p> <p>Based on the research questions and analysis of the collected data, six themes were identified after merging similar codes. Women mentioned that their childhood memories continued to affect them in adulthood. The interviewees perceived their lost childhood as an insecure,</p>

regretful, and helpless experience, which fell under three main themes and 11 sub-themes. Additionally, the study found that the effects of childhood trauma continued into adulthood, which could be categorized into three main themes and 10 sub-themes. Thus, all these concepts are interrelated and reveal a pattern of how women's lived experiences since childhood continue to impact them in adulthood.

Results

The research findings indicate that imprisoned women experienced childhood in a state of insecurity, helplessness, regret, and loss. They faced various threats, humiliations, repressions, and failures during their formative years. The participants believed that their negative childhood experiences played a significant role in their imprisonment and that they did not receive the same opportunities or advantages as others had. The incarcerated women also expressed that family insecurity often affects children, who are forced to endure unfavorable conditions due to their inability to defend themselves against physical and sexual insecurity during childhood. They recognize that the cause of their deviant behavior and psychological injuries in adulthood is the result of external factors imposed on them by the people around them.

Conclusion

According to some participants, they have learned and internalized inappropriate and deviant behavior patterns in their families. They experienced poverty, material and emotional deprivation, physical, sexual, and identity abuses within their family. In fact, they are victims of the inappropriate and inefficient family structure. The incarcerated women explained that they were trained in various crimes and non-normative sexual behaviors, drug buying, selling, and use, as well as theft within their families. Thus, these unfavorable family conditions led to psychological adversities, deprived interactions, feelings of loneliness, depression, and lowered self-esteem for the imprisoned women.

Throughout their childhood, it has had irreparable effects on the mental and emotional well-being of imprisoned women and has caused the destruction of their performance, incompatible relationships and risky behaviors at present. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the childhood experiences of incarcerated women be considered as a crucial factor in their treatment and retraining programs.

In order to reduce psychological problems, loneliness, failure and despair, special attention should be paid to their education. Increasing the awareness of imprisoned women to improve interactions and remove family opacity in order to strengthen their sense of worth, self-esteem and reduce their psychological tensions should be emphasized. Proper transfer of parenting skills to imprisoned women is one of the other suggestions that can be very effective in breaking the cycle of their deviations and crimes. Trying to reabsorb imprisoned women into the socio-cultural system of the society by recognizing their value priorities, beliefs and strengthening their norms and morals is one of the other basic priorities that the social and cultural trustees can be very effective by emphasizing.

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