

Importance of Support System to Mitigate the Adversity of Parental Incarceration.

Ayush Priya¹, Stuti Sawarn²

^{1,2}B.A.LL.B.(Hons.), 3rd Year, Students of S.S. Khanna Girls' Degree College, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract -

The role of parents in children's lives can't be neglected. They are the guiding light for the children as they teach them how to live in a civilized society confidently. From parents, a child has a sense of belonging, which incarceration disrupts. It has been said that justice is punishing the guilty, but the cost of justice is also faced by innocents; children become the "victim of the justice." This paper delves into the hardships faced by the children whose parents are in prison and highlights how these hardships vary in the different developmental stages depending upon the child's age and his emotional quotient. This paper explores how the incarceration of parents affects the physical and mental health of the children in India mostly living outside the prison. These children are more prone to getting antisocial behaviour. Thus, there is a need for a support system to keep these children in the mainstream. The main objective of our paper is to show the importance of support systems to lessen these hardships by establishing connection, building trust, increasing positive influence, and helping with the basic necessities of life. The support system that works for child's development can either be formal or informal. Former includes NGOs, governmental policies, or childcare institutions, and later includes child carers/mentors, other family members, and communities, which help the child by understanding their complexities. Lastly, this paper concludes that if the formal and informal support systems work together, they will create a healthy environment for the children.

Keywords: Child, Hardships, Developmental Stages, Incarceration, Support system, Healthy environment.

Introduction-

An American activist Michelle Alexander, has said, "For children, the era of mass incarceration has meant a tremendous amount of family separation, broken homes, poverty, and a far greater level of hopelessness as they see so many of their loved ones cycling in and out of prison." Incarceration is a way of punishment that not only affects the life of the offender but also their families. Specifically, parental incarceration breaks up the building relationship between the parents and their child. If we look from the perspective of the victim, it is right to separate the offender from the society but what about the children of such parent? They become the "victim of such justice". Indian laws have given rights to provide basic facilities like education, shelter, clothing, etc. to both such parents and children, but somewhere it lacks emotional and mental support.

There is a saying in northern India "बाढ़े पूत पिता के धरमे और खेती उपजे अपने करमे" which means success of son depends upon father's good deeds. Because of such belief, society looks down upon the children whose parents are

in prison. The hardships of parental incarceration differ in different age groups. It is essential to consider the developmental stage depending upon the child's age and his emotional quotient to analyze the impact in the country. For this purpose, we need to compare such children with those who are not exposed to parental incarceration. In this paper we will deal with the effect and potential risk to a child's well-being. Thus, to mitigate the effects of the parental incarceration, it is necessary to build a support system and the objective of this paper is to show the importance of this support system for those children to create a healthy and happy environment around them. The support system will work as supportive units which help the children of incarcerated parents to grow and prosper like normal children.

Hardships of parental Incarceration on child's development -

Parents play an important role in upbringing of their child and when their shadow disappears from the child's life, it creates trouble. At certain age group children are enhanced by positive and supportive interactions with parents. Children of incarcerated parents living outside the prison live in dearth due to no such interactions and ultimately, they lack physical health and safety, emotional and behavioral competence and social competence. Now, we deal the above strands in detail-

1. Physical health and safety

Adults who as children grew up with incarcerated parents are less likely to get medical care when they need it and more likely to engage in risky behaviours compared with peers whose parents were not incarcerated, according to new research published in Pediatrics.¹

Malnourishment was a serious concern due to food shortages or the absence of any elder person to cook in the family. Children become dependent on others for the provision of a proper meal. Treatment of children having an illness requiring prolonged medication were often stopped after the mother's incarceration. At times, even essential medication was not provided on account of lack of attention or limitation of resources. Minor health concerns got aggravated due to lack of required medical attention.² In case of infants and Toddlers, mothers play vital role in health and nourishment so maternal incarceration affects them negatively. There are provisions for these age group to stay with their mother in prison but it is difficult to get proper health facilities inside there. In early childhood to adolescent's incarceration of both parents affects the health and safety of the child. Safety is necessary for these children as they get involved readily in anti-social behaviour, child labour, etc. than those children whose parents are not in prison.

2. Emotional and Behavioural Competence

Children need care that promotes positive emotional health and well-being and that supports their overall mental health, including a positive sense of self, as well as the ability to cope with stressful situations, temper emotional arousal, overcome fears, and accept disappointments and frustrations.³

It is one of the serious effects of parental incarceration as it is directly related to the mental well-being of the child. Mostly, from 10 to 17 years of age group children starts observing their surroundings and forms various perception of life and about people they meet. At this stage parents support the child by shaping their raw thoughts and ideas. They act as a resource for managing child's emotional well-being and

¹ *Tip Sheets for Mentors: Supporting Children who have Incarcerated Parents*, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents/federal-tools-resources/tip-sheet-mentors>

² Neelam Sukhramani, Shivangi Gupta, *Children of Incarcerated Parents*, INDIAN PEDITARICS (2020), <https://indianpediatrics.net/mar2020/mar-199-203.htm>

³ *Parenting Matters; Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8*, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE (Nov. 21, 2016), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK402020/#_sec_000034

behaviour. When the parents get incarcerated their child feels loneliness, sadness, insecurities and these feelings either constitute an aggressive behaviour or may lead to depression among them.

Davis and Shlafer examined children whose parents were serving a prison sentence at the time of the study, children of former prisoners, and children whose parents had not been imprisoned. The results showed that children of current and former prisoners scored lower on all indicators of mental health (i.e., internalizing symptoms, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts, acts of self-mutilation, mental disorders, emotional and behavioural problems, and the treatment of psychological problems) than children whose parents had no prison record.⁴

Child's emotional competence not only depends on parent's behavior but also depends on the environment in which he or she is living. The behavior of child at that period of age depends upon the behavior of their surroundings. Low self-esteem, low self-efficacy and low sense of coherence often constitute due to negative behavior of society towards the children of incarcerated parents.

For e.g. A child accepted that his father is incarcerated so the economic condition of his family will not be in a better position and the child have to earn by himself but the people around him pinpoints and mocks at the bad condition of his household. So, this type of behavior will lead negative effects on the mental peace of that child.

Symptoms such as extreme fearfulness, helplessness, hopelessness, apathy, depression, and withdrawal are indicators of emotional difficulty that have been observed among very young children who experience inadequate parental care.⁵

If the child is not fit mentally and emotionally then it is very much difficult for them to excel in other part of their live. The children of incarcerated parents need support, acceptance and encouragement in order to grow.

3. Social Competence

It is generally needed for successful social adaptation which reflects the ability of child to understand the perspective of others and take part in social interactions. In case of the children of incarcerated parent's emotional well-being is already disturbed and they want to cut out themselves from social gatherings and interactions. Due to this an anti-social behavior is developed in them. The most common consequence of parental incarceration appears to fall under the umbrella of antisocial behavior, which describes any number of behaviors that go against social norms, including criminal acts and persistent dishonesty. One meta-analysis of 40 studies on children of incarcerated parents found that antisocial behaviors were present more consistently than any other factors, including mental health issues and drug use.⁶

Here arise the duty of other family members of the child and the people living in the environment of that child to encourage them to take part in the society. These children require people which help them to open up, to express their feelings and needs a genuine concern which do welfare and upliftment to them.

Apart from these there are some effects of incarceration on child's education and economic well-being. Out of the total prison population of 5,54,034, 5,31,025 prisoners were male, 22,918 were female, and 91 were transgender.⁷ In Indian social scenario where mainly men are the primary bread earners, father

⁴ Domzalska, A., Skowroński, B., & Wolańczyk, T., *Behavioral and Emotional Problems of Prisoners' Children Based on the Children's Self-Report*, IJERPH, 561, (2022)

⁵ *Parenting Matters; Supra note at 3*

⁶ Joseph Murray, David Farrington, and Ivana Sekol, "Children's Antisocial Behavior, Mental Health, Drug Use, and Educational Performance After Parental Incarceration: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," 175-210 (2012)

⁷ *Hidden consequences: The impact of Incarceration on children*, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE, <https://nij.ojp.gov/>

incarceration can affect directly the economic lifestyle of the child. If father is not living with the child then maternal incarceration also affects and it restricts economic resources available to their support.

Importance of Support System -

According to Aristotle man is a social animal. They cannot live in isolation as societal interactions are important to shape the thinking and behavior of the individual. In case of the children where they are sensitive and incapable of living their life by own it is very much necessary for them to have a support of any kind which helps them to grow.

Children of incarcerated parents specially living outside the prison needs special support and care because they experience a void in their life and somehow the parental incarceration seen as a social stigma due to which these children carry the baggage of pressure and trauma. A protective environment with full off cooperation and support can reduce the negative impact of the incarceration which further make the childhood happy and can also help the children in long run.

Now, the question arises what is support system, why is it necessary and how it works?

A support system is a network of people who provide an individual with practical or emotional support. Support systems come in many different forms, but they are all built around the idea of love and care. Children need people who they can trust and rely on throughout their life.⁸

These system gives a sense of security to the children of incarcerated parents. They are like extended family for them who help them physically and mentally in their living. The development of child needs proper attention which are given by these support systems.

There are various reasons given below showing the role of the system⁹-

- **Connection:** In today's world, it can be very easy to isolate from others. Although independence is encouraged, too much isolation can be dangerous for young children. A support system offers easy access to social connections at any time.
- **Increased positive influence:** Having a circle of individuals who encourage positive behavior can benefit the child for a lifetime.
- **Healthy distractions:** When a child experiences a difficult situation, it can be difficult to focus on anything else. A strong community of support offers the child opportunities for healthy distractions which allows children to enjoy themselves for a while without having to talk about the tough situation at hand.
- **Increased resilience:** When a child is confident in the support they will receive, they are more likely to endure tougher situations. They are also able to tolerate an increased amount of stress with a strong support system behind them.
- **Encouragement of trust:** Trust is a pivotal point to building relationships. Having a circle of supportive people that allows open and honest communication also encourages trust.

Parental incarceration is recognized as an adverse childhood experience so it is important for the children to have happy memories which reduces the feelings like loneliness, confusion, shame, etc.

⁸ Emily Decker, *Why Your Child Needs a Support System and How to Build One*, NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S BLOG (Jan. 29, 2025, 10.07 P.M), <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/700childrens/2023/09/why-your-child-needs-a-support-system#:~:text=Support%20systems%20come%20in%20many,workers%2C%20neighbors%2C%20babysitters%20and%20caregivers>

⁹ *Id.*

Support system for children of incarcerated parents includes Child Caregiver/mentors, Other family members, Community which can be act as an informal system. Formal support system consists of NGOs, governmental policies or any childcare institutions.

Informal Support System

Community- They can help children grow into resilient adults. Because children with parents in prison usually experience stress and trauma from more than one marginalizing experience, they become worn down and often lack the skills to deal with negative situations. Helping these children build up their resiliency will equip them to overcome challenges both now and in the future. To become resilient, children first need to believe in their own value as people and to understand they are not responsible for the actions of others, in particular their family members. Supports that welcome children openly, treat them with respect, and encourage them to share thoughts and concerns in an environment where they feel ‘normal’ are valuable in building resiliency¹⁰.

Community can help in enhancing the children’s resiliency by¹¹:

Treating them with respect and dignity.

Creating age-appropriate opportunities for them to succeed: through recreation, learning skills, social activities, becoming leaders and supporting younger children.

Offering mentorship, guidance, counseling or mental health support services.

Accepting them and making sure they are not stigmatized, rejected or excluded.

They can also help by mitigating stigma which affect the behavior of the child and lessen the indifferent feeling in them.

They can take steps to ensure community programs and services offer safe, non-judgmental spaces for these children by including sensitivity training for staff and volunteers. Biases are often deeply ingrained, so training should include explicit discussion of how to respond to people who seem different and how to avoid marginalizing various people and groups. It should be made clear that it is unfair to blame, mistreat or exclude children because of the behaviour of their parents. People are often unaware of the hurt and damage that their attitudes, comments, and behaviour cause children with a parent in prison. Community leaders must help others understand how vulnerable these children are and intervene to stop comments or actions that may cause or trigger the stigmatization of these children.¹²

Community can help to reduce deprivation in a number of ways, such as¹³:

- Including nutritious snacks/meals in any programs or services aimed at children with incarcerated parents
- Ensure families know about medical and vaccination clinics in your community through schools, community centres and bulletin boards in public spaces
- Establish and/or participate in a volunteer-operated program that offers rides to children’s medical appointments
- Create or contribute to a clothing drive for cold weather clothing
- Support the building of low-income housing
- Support the establishment of family shelters.

¹⁰ *Supporting Children with Incarcerated Parents*, THE ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF GREAT VANCOUVER, 6, PDF (efry.com)

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Supporting, supra note at 10*

¹³ *Id.*

Child Caregiver- They create nurturing environment in which children get moral, mental and emotional support. They also help the child to create good experiences and build trusting relationship so they can recover from their trauma and take part in productive activities which increases their involvement and enhances their skills. Other than that, they assist them in the following aspects-

Cognitive Development¹⁴

A caregiver's involvement in cognitive activities like reading, singing, and playing educational games significantly impacts a child's mental growth. These interactions introduce new vocabulary, concepts, and problem-solving opportunities, laying the groundwork for intellectual curiosity and cognitive development.

Physical Growth¹⁵

Caregivers are responsible for ensuring a child's safety and well-being, which includes providing nutritious food, encouraging physical play, and fostering an environment conducive to active exploration.

Emotional Development and Security¹⁶

Beyond physical and cognitive support, caregivers provide emotional stability. A caregiver's loving and consistent presence fosters a sense of belonging and self-worth in the child.

This emotional security empowers children to explore the world with confidence, knowing they have a secure base to return to. When faced with stress or new experiences, caregivers offer comfort and reassurance, teaching children how to manage emotions and challenges.

Child caregivers have qualification proper educational and **considered it as job mostly in countries like U.S, U.K,** etc. but in **India the functions are mostly performed by the other family members** of the child or by any nonprofit organization or at individual level. They help the children out of genuine concern and due to love and affection.

Other family Members - They can help the children in a better way because they are somehow related to the prisoners and have an emotional connection with them. As a part of the family they connect with the child more and the child may also express their feelings easily since they know them already. So, the positive influence from the family members is needed which primarily includes emotional support, ensures the child's needs and supports them with resources.

Formal Support System

NGOs- The organisation majorly help in the development of the child and provide means which is essential for living. Here is the major role of NGOs¹⁷ -

Access to Education:

One of the primary roles of NGOs in child development is providing access to quality education. Many children in disadvantaged communities face barriers to education, such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, and limited resources. **NGO for child rights and education** steps in to bridge this gap by establishing schools, setting up after-school programs, and providing scholarships and learning materials. By promoting education, NGOs empower children to break free from the cycle of poverty and unlock new opportunities for their future.

Health and Nutrition:

¹⁴ *Enhancing Child Development: The role of caregiver support*, STEPPING STONES. BLOG (Jan. 24, 2025, 7.00 P.M)

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Enhancing Child Development, Supra note 15.*

¹⁷ *Importance of NGOs in Child Development- Save the Children*, MEDIUM (Aug. 9, 2023), <https://medium.com/@niwcyd1/importance-of-ngos-in-child-development-save-the-children-f24cdf1bbc9f>

NGOs play an essential role in addressing children's health and nutritional needs. Malnutrition and lack of access to proper healthcare can severely impede a child's physical and cognitive development. NGOs run health clinics, nutritional programs, and vaccination drives to ensure that children receive essential medical care and nutrition. In this way, they contribute to their well-being and enable them to thrive for good health.

Protection of Child:

Protecting children from exploitation, abuse, and neglect is another pivotal role NGOs undertake. They advocate for child rights, working to eliminate child labour, trafficking, and other forms of exploitation. NGOs also provide safe spaces for children who have experienced trauma or violence, offering counselling and support to help them heal emotionally and psychologically.

Skill Development and Empowerment:

NGOs focus on empowering children with life skills and vocational training to prepare them for adulthood. Children learn problem-solving, communication, and critical thinking skills through various workshops and programs. This training equips them to face challenges and make informed decisions as they grow older, fostering their independence and self-sufficiency.

Community Development:

NGOs recognize that child development is closely intertwined with community development. They work alongside local communities to identify needs and design targeted initiatives. By strengthening community structures, supporting families, and creating child-friendly environments, NGOs ensure a sustainable and positive impact on children's lives.

Advocacy and Policy Influence:

NGOs for child rights and education play an important role in advocating for child-friendly policies and influencing government decisions concerning children's welfare. By conducting research and collecting data, NGOs can present evidence-based arguments to policymakers, urging them to prioritize child development in their agendas.

Example of some NGOs supporting children of incarcerated parents-

1) Rainbows for all children.

How does Rainbows provide support¹⁸?

Rainbows for All Children has a specially designed curriculum for pre-school, K-8 and high school-aged youth experiencing parental incarceration.

These programs empower children in the following ways:

- Develop and strengthen problem-solving skills
- Prevent destructive behaviour's such as involvement with gangs, alcohol and substance abuse
- Improve school attendance and academic performance
- Alleviate depression and anxiety
- Enhance communications between children and their families and peers.

1) India Vision Foundation

Children of Vulnerable Families Program aims to mainstream & educate the children of incarcerated families after the age of 6 years; ensure their all-around well-being & development through the intervention of uninterrupted education and psychosocial well-being to help them

¹⁸About Us, RAINBOW ORGANISATION,

<https://rainbows.org/resources/incarceration/#:~:text=How%20does%20Rainbows%20provide%20support,aged%20youth%20experiencing%20parental%20incarceration.&text=Enhance%20communications%20between%20children%20and%20their%20families%20and%20peers>

accomplish their academic, social, and emotional goals, and save them from becoming a victim of their Parental Incarceration¹⁹.

Governmental policies- There are number of guidelines and directions are given for the children living within the prison in India along with parent but less attention given to children who are living in society. Due to limited information about this category it is difficult for the policymakers to address the challenges of these children.

Few years back, one study about these categories of children of prisoners were done by the West Bengal government, along with an assistance of Kolkata based NGO named 'OFFER'. The study titled as "Children of Prisoners Back Home Project" had observed that thousands of children between the age group of 4-18 are facing social discrimination and are considered as stigma in society for being the children of prisoners. Such a hostile perspective of society towards these children gives the latter an equal burden of punishment as is given to their parent. Having no care and protection of their childhood or even adulthood, would, by default, lead these children getting into anti-social behaviour, which essentially will throw them into the dark crime society full of neglect and deprivation.²⁰

However, certain efforts are made by the policy makers and by the apex court to curb the issue and to help these ignored children of prisoners.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 which is considered the comprehensive law on child care in India, initially did not include children whose parents are in jail under its scope at all. It is as recent as May, 2017 when the honourable Supreme court of India, in the judgment of Re: Exploitation of Children in Orphanages in the State of Tamil Nadu v. Union of India (UOI) interpreted the Act in as much as that these isolated Children are covered under this Act.²¹

Apart from the Juvenile Justice Act of 2000, few international provisions also mandate signatory states to take necessary precaution for child right protection. One amongst such provisions is article 9.4 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ('CRC'), which was ratified by India in 1992. Article 20 of the CRC summarises about those children who are deprived of family environment as "Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State."²²

State government of different states also bring some policies which will benefit the children of incarcerated parents by giving economic assistance, visitation or meet up with parents, by providing nutritious benefit, etc. Some of the examples are given below-

The child-friendly environment may be seen in the Maharashtra Prison Department. Here, the prison department organises the programme called "Close Meet" (Gala-Bhet) for convicted prisoners. In this, prisoner can take close meet with their children below the age of 16 years in the prison. Furthermore, few jails in Maharashtra have removed the mandate of wearing Dress Code for prisoners while they meet with their children. Other than this, Maharashtra prison department places less security checks while conducting body cavity searches of children.²³

Scheme for Financial Sustenance, Education & Welfare of Children of Incarcerated Parents, 2014 by Delhi Government. The Scheme allocates Rs.3,500 per month for the first child and additional assistance of

¹⁹ *Children of Vulnerable Families*, Highlights, INDIA VISION FOUNDATION, <https://indiavisionfoundation.org/causes/children-of-vulnerable-families-program-cvf/>

²⁰ Himanshu Dixit, *Child of Incarcerated Parents: A deemed criminal*, ILI Law Review, 4, 2023, PDF (www.ili.ac.in)

²¹ Himanshu Dixit, *supra note at 20*

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

Rs.3,000/- for the second child. In case of three or more children, the maximum amount granted shall not exceed Rs.6,500 per month. A child shall be entitled to receive assistance till she/he attains the age of 18 years or the parent is/are released from incarceration, whichever is earlier. However, if a child is placed with a fit institution, then such a child will not be entitled to receive financial assistance under the said Scheme. In addition to the financial assistance the Scheme also promises free education, protective environment, welfare measures including passing of orders for sending the child to a fit institution, free medical and legal aid.²⁴

The government of Andhra Pradesh, through its correctional departments, initiated a scheme in their state under which such children from the age of and onward are transported to local schools for their education. The government of Kerala has arranged a method by which the government pays a monthly fixed stipend to children of those prisoners who are serving at least a two-year sentence. In 2014, a Kerala High Court Division Bench of Justice Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan and Justice P. B. Suresh Kumar had “directed the State Government to devise a special scheme for the rehabilitation and protection of children whose parents are in jail, in conformation with child protective services in developed countries.”²⁵

Child-Care Institutions (CCIs)- "child care institution" means Children Home, open shelter, observation home, special home, place of safety, Specialised Adoption Agency and a fit facility recognised under this Act for providing care and protection to children, who need such services;²⁶ Children home and open shelter are suitable for children whose parents are living in prison.

Open shelter meant for children, irrespective of age, in need of residential support, on short term basis, with the objective of protecting them from abuse or weaning them or keeping them away from a life on the streets. (A child can be housed in an OS for not more than one year) and Children home meant for children aged between six and 18 years in need of care and protection for their care, treatment, education, training, development and rehabilitation.²⁷

Every child and young person should live in a supportive, protective and caring environment that promotes his/her full potential. Children with inadequate or no parental care are at special risk of being denied such a nurturing environment. Where the child’s own family is unable, even with appropriate support, to provide adequate care for the child, or abandons or relinquishes the child, the State is responsible for protecting the rights of the child and ensuring appropriate alternative care, with or through competent local authorities and duly authorised civil society organisations (CSOs). It is the role of the State, through its competent authorities, to ensure supervision of the safety, well-being and development of any child placed in alternative care and regular review of appropriateness of the care arrangement provided.²⁸

These institutions especially helpful for those children who don’t have a better financial situation. Most of the prisoners have low economic background so their condition of the family is also poor and when the children get basic necessities from these institutions it overall contributes to the well-being of the child. With the help of CCIs state secure the rights of the children of incarcerated parents and ensures the proper care and facilities which they are deprived of.

Conclusion -

²⁴ Ira Rana, *Delhi Government’s Scheme for the Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Critical Analysis*, ILI Law Review, 2, 2022, PDF (www.ili.ac.in)

²⁵ Himanshu Dixit, *supra note at 20*

²⁶ *Juvenile Justice Act, 2015*, § 2(21), No.2, Acts of Parliament, 2015 (India)

²⁷ 12 Chapter 4 CCI- *Functioning of Child Care Institutions in the State*, 47, 3, PDF (<https://cag.gov.in/hi>)

²⁸ *Child Care Institutions under JJ Act*, P R A C H I, Module 6- CCI PDF (<https://prachicp.com/>)

In light of the above discussion, we can conclude that parental incarceration leaves significant effects on children's lives. They need special care as they lack a basic support system. As access to justice is the right of every person, similarly, children also have the right to justice. Justice for one cannot result into the deprivation of another; that will not be the true justice. There is enough evidence that shows us, how much absence of parent's affects children physically, socially and psychologically. Such children are either more prone to get involved into unethical activities or become very isolated. Such effects are mostly seen into the adolescents as they start observing their surrounding and form various perceptions of life. And at that point in life, they need someone to guide them, but because of the absence of parents, they feel lonely and insecure which can lead to antisocial or aggressive behavior. Thus, the role of parents in children's lives cannot be overestimated and so their development and for this purpose, there is a need of support system.

The major problem with these children is lack of proper attention and guidance, especially at adolescence period, where they experience various emotional, social and physical change. An effective step to mitigate the adversities of parental incarceration in our country is by working on formal and informal support system together. As we always hear, unity is a strength that can result in more favorable outcomes. Therefore, these two systems must collaborate and work together for the welfare of the child. This can be done through various ways like, by providing training to other family members or agencies on parenting and development, sharing of information regarding child's need and circumstance by family members to NGO or govt. agencies so they can build their capacity and formal agencies raising awareness in community or society to help and deal with these children with love and affection. It is very much necessary to feel compassion for them so that we can break the social stigma attached to them.

References-

1. About Us, RAINBOW ORGANISATION, <https://rainbows.org/resources/incarceration/#:~:text=How%20does%20Rainbows%20provide%20support,aged%20youth%20experiencing%20parental%20incarceration.&text=Enhance%20communications%20between%20children%20and%20their%20families%20and%20peers>
2. Chapter 4 CCI- Functioning of Child Care Institutions in the State, 47, 3, PDF (<https://cag.gov.in/hi>)
3. Child Care Institutions under JJ Act, P R A C H I, Module 6- CCI PDF (<https://prachicp.com/>)
4. Children of Vulnerable Families, Highlights, INDIA VISION FOUNDATION, <https://indiavisionfoundation.org/causes/children-of-vulnerable-families-program-cvf/>
5. Domžalska, A., Skowroński, B., & Wolańczyk, T., Behavioral and Emotional Problems of Prisoners' Children Based on the Children's Self-Report, IJERPH, 561, (2022)
6. Emily Decker, Why Your Child Needs a Support System and How to Build One, NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S. BLOG (Jan. 29, 2025, 10.07 P.M), <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/700childrens/2023/09/why-your-child-needs-a-support-system#:~:text=Support%20systems%20come%20in%20many,workers%2C%20neighbors%2C%20babysitters%20and%20caregivers>
7. Enhancing Child Development: The role of caregiver support, STEPPING STONES. BLOG
8. Hidden consequences: The impact of Incarceration on children, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE, <https://nij.ojp.gov/>
9. Himanshu Dixit, Child of Incarcerated Parents: A deemed criminal, ILI Law Review, 4, 2023, PDF (www.ili.ac.in)

10. Importance of NGOs in Child Development- Save the Children, MEDIUM (Aug. 9, 2023), <https://medium.com/@niwcyd1/importance-of-ngos-in-child-development-save-the-children-f24cdf1bbc9f>
11. Ira Rana, Delhi Government's Scheme for the Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Critical Analysis, ILI Law Review, 2, 2022, PDF (www.ili.ac.in)
12. Joseph Murray, David Farrington, and Ivana Sekol, "Children's Antisocial Behavior, Mental Health, Drug Use, and Educational Performance After Parental Incarceration: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," 175-210 (2012)
13. Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, § 2(21), No.2, Acts of Parliament, 2015 (India)
14. Neelam Sukhramani, Shivangi Gupta, Children of Incarcerated Parents, INDIAN PEDITARICS (2020), <https://indianpediatrics.net/mar2020/mar-199-203.htm>
15. Parenting Matters; Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE (Nov. 21, 2016), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK402020/#_sec_000034
16. Tip Sheets for Mentors: Supporting Children who have Incarcerated Parents, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents/federal-tools-resources/tip-sheet-mentors>
17. Supporting Children with Incarcerated Parents, THE ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF GREAT VANCOUVER, 6, PDF (efry.com)