

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Mothers' Incarceration as a Threat to Children's Development in South Wollo Zone: The case of Dessie Correctional Center, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study was conducted at South Wollo Zone correctional center (Dessie City) aiming at examining the effects of mothers' incarceration on children to assess the possible ways of interventions by government and nongovernment bodies. The study used cross sectional design using qualitative inquiry. To this end, samples were taken from women prisoners, relatively young children and office workers at the correctional center. The data were collected via interview and focus group discussions. Then, the collected data were analyzed in thematic techniques involving data categorization, organization and summarization. The finding shows that children, who are left at home are exposed to loneliness due to social exclusion, fear of vengeance, school termination, economic difficulties, family disorganization and dislocations. On the other hand, children who accompanied their incarcerated mothers were exposed to crime driven socialization, maladaptation, unclean and crowded living room, poor toilet and sanitation, little access to recreation center and absence of medical follow ups. However, there is no institutional intervention to mitigate problems of children left at home, This study concluded that children are directly vulnerable to women's criminality and thus policies and strategies must be designed to reduce women criminality. Correctional centers should plan regarding the needs of children accompanying their mothers at prison cells. Government and nongovernment sectors ought to work to support susceptible children.

Keywords: Mother, Incarceration, Crime, Dessie, correction center and Children

Introduction

Children with difficult circumstance can be explained in different forms. For instance, children who lost their parents (orphanages), disabled children, children living on the street, trafficked children, and children of imprisoned parents are always taken as vulnerable children (FDRE, 2017, p.21). Children with all forms of vulnerabilities are exposed to difficult situations having impact on socio-economic development of their family and the country. Children of imprisoned parents easily face social and economic deprivations (ACPF, 2005).

The well-known international convention report, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, revealed that children have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standards including health, protection of physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development, the right to education, leisure and recreational activities (UNCRC,1991). However, the

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separation of children from their parent through imprisonment results in loss of their psychological wellbeing and social development. For instance, the Danish institute for human rights (2011) revealed that separated children experienced multiple problems such as sadness, confusion, depression, worry, anger, aggression, fear, sleep problems, eating disorders and hyperactivity.

In order to overcome these problems, various conventions and charter regarding the protection of children such as UNCRC, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1963), OAU (1990) have been ratified by Ethiopia. The conventions emphasized the rights of children to get adequate basic needs (food, cloth, and shelter), medical services, sound living conditions as well as protecting their wellbeing. For example, UNCRC agreement indicated that Ethiopia also approved that: the government should recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance and take essential measures to achieve full realization of this right in accordance with the nations law (Article 3). No child should be discriminated because of the status of their parents (Article 2). However, the realities at various regions are not as much as the declaration approved (ACPF, 2007).

The Ethiopian government has declared children's right on its constitution (art.36) (FDRE 1995) and children protection policies (FDRE, 2017). In cognizant of the national laws and policies, the Amhara national regional government designed its own guideline so as to mainstream issues of vulnerable children whose parents are incarcerated (ANRS, 2018). Yet, while children are looked as valued at policy level, their needs and rights do not seem to be given the appropriate attention. Studies indicate that children of incarcerated parents often feel ashamed (Miller, 2006), unsupported (African Child Policy Forum, 2007), lack basic facilities (Steve, 2009) and suffer from educational under attainment (Wintfeld, 2008). Again, because their mothers are in prison and have no caregiver, children are affected by subtle discrimination and social exclusion (Bowlby, 1969 and Perry, 2001) which make them suffer from depression, anxiety and mental related problems (Miller, 2006 and David, 2008). The worst impact on children appeared to be vulnerability to drug addiction and criminal activity (Anderson, 2005), and health risks (Stephanie and Leena, 2017).

Further, the challenges of children exacerbated if their parents are accused for involving in violent crime (Lind and Pasko, 2013) that forces them to stay at correctional center for long period of time (Criminal code of Ethiopia, 2004). Particularly, the 2004 criminal code of Ethiopia (art.540) declares that an individual will be exposed to rigorous imprisonment or life punishment if involved in violent crime or aggravated homicides. As well, a research conducted in Addis Abeba by Selamawit (2006) also confirmed that 56% of incarcerated women got to prison due to their involvement in homicide activities. This indicated that women would be incarcerated for long time in prison and their children would suffer from multidimensional problems. In other words, children are experiencing lack of attachment with others face distress that has largely to endanger their lives (Charles, 2007 and Levy & Orlans).

Despite the magnitude of children's problem, no recent study was found focusing on children's troubled experience resulting from mother incarceration in Ethiopia particularly in the Amhara region. The lived experience of children of incarcerated mothers, who are separated and/or accompanied their mothers to prison center, is not studied well. Hence, this research aimed at exploring challenges of mother imprisonment on children separated at home and accompanied at correctional centers. The study targeted inmates at Dessie correctional center and addressed questions like what are the lived experiences

of separated children who are left at home? What is the lived experience of children accompanying their mother at prison? And how is the institutional intervention mitigating problems of children arising from mothers' incarceration?

The author has focused on children of incarcerated mother than fathers. Since, women (mother) imprisonment involves more economic, social and practical changes on the families than fathers' (Wintfeld, 2008 and Bowlby, 1969). Likewise, Bloom et al, (2003) noted as children are more likely to live with their mothers following paternal imprisonment than they are to live with their father following maternal imprisonment. In Ethiopia, where patriarchal society is dominant (Nardos, 2017), women take the vital role in the family when their husbands detained. However, fathers likely fail taking responsibilities for children during mother incarceration (Sida, 2003) and consequently kids lack primary care giver if they have no extended families (FSCE, 2003).

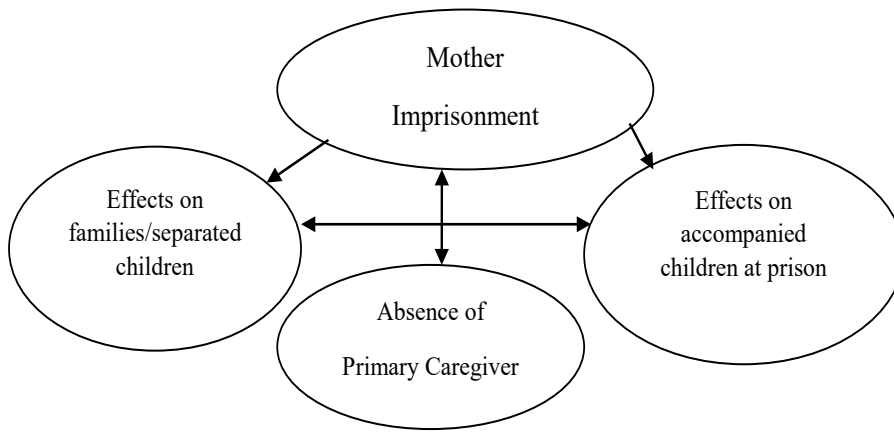
Theoretical Explanations

This study was guided by the three popular child development theories of sociology and psychology; Becker's labeling theory, Bowlby's attachment theory and Bandura's social learning theory. The labeling theory was formulated by Howard S. Becker in his book, "Outsider" (1963). He argues that people would label individuals or groups as an outsider that in turn makes the labeled people deviants. In this view, children of imprisoned parents will practice juvenile delinquent behavior as the result of their exclusion and stigmatization exercise, because labeling affects a person's social situation and self-image, which will leading them to criminal activities (Knutsson, 1977).

Another approach that has gained widespread attention is Bowlby's attachment theory; he asserted that much of child development is based on the innate need of children to form attachments. To him, attachment refers to the special bond and the lasting relationships that young children form with their mothers or primary care givers through which they develop sense of security and safety (Wittmer, 2011). These attachments may involve any number of people, places, or things and ultimately have a substantial effect on onward development patterns of children. According to Bowlby (1969), children need ties with a caregiver who is sensitive and responsive, who comforts them when distressed and enables them to feel safe enough to relax, play and learn which is relevant to their adolescence and later life (Charles,2007). It profoundly influences every component of the human condition (Levy & Orlans, 1998:1). And mother's attachment to their children is accompanied by the strongest feelings and emotions (Bowlby, 1969). However, such attachments are more likely to be disorganized when mothers are separated from children in occasions like incarceration (Perry, 2001). Such losses of primary caregiver make children of incarcerated mothers to experience deprivation, anxiety and stress which consequently affect their psychological and social development.

Social learning (Conditioning) theory states that every person's future behavior is conditioned by past experiences that people learn from lifetime events based on their decisions, perceptions and conduct on these events (Peter Doolittle, 2001 and Martin, 2005). According to conditioning theorists, these experiences or environmental stimuli underlie socially acceptable behavior as well as deviance, delinquency and criminality (Martin, 2005, Bandura, 1971). In the social learning system, children living in prison can acquire bad experience by observing the behavior of others (Bandura, 1971). Hence, the following conceptual framework shows the effect of mothers' criminality on their children.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework on effects of mother incarceration



Methods and Tools

This study is designed in cross sectional way and the researcher collected data in specified time and place (Abramson, et al, 1985). The study employed qualitative phenomenological inquiry as it helps to explore the experiences or everyday lives of children affected due to their mothers' incarceration (Creswell,2009), (Yvonne and Dorothy, 2002), (Neuman, 2000) and (Catherine, 2002).The researcher listened to participants and built an understanding based on their ideas since, it was better to study the lived experience of children both who are living alone at home and detained with their mothers to obtain subjective meaning, metaphors and description of their cases (Crswell,2009) and Neuman,(2000). To this end, primary qualitative data were collected through key informant interview, focus group discussion /FGD/ and in-depth interview. In addition, secondary data were collected from government documents, policies, strategies, plans and reports. A very critical and valuable data were obtained from community policing offices, and the administration of the correction center.

Interview allows researchers to explore the subjective experiences and attitudes of people (Perakyla, 2005). Accordingly, key informant interview was carried out with eight individuals who were found at the correctional center and community policing particularly with child caregivers, administrators, police, and inmate women with long time detention. Participants of key informant interview were selected based on their level of knowledge and experiences at correctional center who know a lot about the issues of child vulnerability due to women imprisonment. The researcher employed semi structured interview (Catherine, 2002) to maintain the information flow and allow the interviewee free and easy communication. The author also used in-depth interview (Yvonne and Dorothy, 2002) so that four mother inmates and six young children were interviewed concerning the lived experiences of vulnerable children at home and the correctional center. Young children were requested permission to carry out an interview with them regarding their education, food, and living condition that supported the information derived from their mother (ES-OMAR, 1999). Among children participants two of them were those who live alone and come to visit their incarcerated mother. It was very important to explore the challenges of

abandoned children after their mothers were incarcerated. The interview was followed-up by probing questions guiding the information flow of participants. Consequently, an isolated place (child playing room) were used for the interview to avoid any interruptions, noises and keep the feeling of interviewees so that they reflected their ideas in free and smooth manner.

Consequently, the author employed two focus group discussions /FGD/ sessions with seven members each (Michael et al, 2001.p.26) in which all participants of the FGD were involved willingly to share their knowledge and experiences. By raising essential guiding questions to the participants, the researcher played an active role in taking notes and recording voices through tape recorders (Perakyla, 2005 and Creswell, 2009). So, challenges of kids separated at home and access of interventions in mitigating the problem were among the main topics discussed by FGD participants.

Ethical Consideration

Denzin & Lincoln (1994), states that ethical issues should be given serious attention to participants of any data especially in qualitative research. Taking this into account, the author has discussed with participants about the purpose of questionnaires and interview before the beginning of data collections. It was vital to make the research participants well aware of the purpose of the research. Thus, participation in this research study were based on voluntary basis. Any information that are derived from participants have been secured and it was not be used for extra and unethical purposes. Their participation was completely voluntary where confidentiality and anonymity were seriously maintained.

Data processing and Analysis

The study chose thematic analysis techniques (Nowell et al. 2017). The data were categorized and summarized via different themes and then filtered and arranged as per the specific objectives of the study. The preferred qualitative data obtained from officials, incarcerated women, and children were processed and analyzed rigorously by different techniques. Primarily, the interviewed workers, mothers and children were coded by numbers with an acronym words like W, M, C respectively and was finally presented like W1, W2,...Wn M1, M2,...Mn- C1, C2,...Cn to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' personal and social identities. Then, the data were carefully translated and transcribed by keeping the original meanings and ideas of participants (Fernandez, 2018 and Nowell et al., 2017). Detail discussion followed by direct quotation was shown through consistent and correct flow of information. Secondary sources of data collected from documents in the correctional center were analyzed to capture appropriate data about challenges of children.

Results

Lived Experiences of Separated Children due to Mother Imprisonment

The impact of parental incarceration has been long recognized as adverse (Flynn et al., 2015). Mother imprisonment puts children at a higher risk for poverty, abuse, stigmatization, instability, trauma and various health problems (Harris, 2017, Johnson & East-erling, 2012). However, no clear and accurate data have been reported in Ethiopia. One of the main concerns of this paper was examined whether the separation of children from their mothers has negative effect during the interaction with communities. Accordingly, in Dessie correctional center, most women in prison have children that are separated,

stayed at the home and thereby subjected to disruptive lives and exposed to exclusion, vengeance, financial difficulties, school dropout and unstable lives.

Social Exclusion

As it was indicated by Bowlby (1969), children who are denied attachment with their mothers and primary care givers are loosely connected with other peoples. Since children lack the experience of strong emotional connections and attachments by their early lives. Children separated due to mothers' incarceration had been exposed to social and psychological problems, directly resulted from social segregation. For instance, FGD participants have reported that kids at home are living without legal and social guaranty. They also disclosed that children have low level of self-esteem and empathy as a result of mothers' imprisonment. Besides, key informants stated that kids separated from their mothers were stigmatized and discriminated by their neighbors. They had been excluded from their social relations that forced them to live alone and, consequently, was exposed to distress anxiety, and self-segregation. The inmate women informants expressed the problem that:

I left my home 9 years ago due to my unconscious involvement in criminal activity. I have six children of which two are here detained with me. My separated children faced several problems which impacted their social and financial standings. They are neglected, excluded and discriminated in every activity. they lack sense of security and safety. Sometimes my neighbors and their children beat my children and considering them delinquents since they merely are considered children of criminals. As a result, they prefer to live lonely which makes them depressed, confused and excluded. I really am worried and depressed due to the fate of my children. (Interviewee A, August 10, 2018)

Fear of vengeance/Revenge/

Most inmate mothers, who are arrested as a result of killing others, were scared of vengeance from the families of victims. According to study participants (interviewees and FGD discussants), although no child practically encountered revenge due to their mothers' criminal activities, inmates were worrying or afraid of vengeance on separated children. Again, children of mothers under control of law have unstable life caused by financial and social deprivations that consequently led them to psychological problems like distress, worry, and health complication. Besides, children of single (women) headed family have faced worst experiences compared to dual headed families. A 50-year-old woman who stayed for the last 13 years in the correction center and expected to stay 7 more years was sentenced for killing her husband conveyed that she was provoked to kill her husband due to deep-rooted abuses by her husband. She stated as follows:

"... My husband threatened me a number of times and once he tried to kill me after long and painful beating. But, accidentally, I killed him with emotional and unconscious feeling. I had two children, of which one died while I am here in the correction center. The other is alive and now he is responsible for controlling their farm with great psychological trauma. (Interviewee B, August 10, 2018)

Economic difficulties

Children of incarcerated mothers were subjected to multiple economic risks. both FGD participants and key informants confirmed that the imprisonment of mothers led to financial complications among their children and families. It adversely affected their income, resources and the living standards, especially the rural inmates whose base of economy is agriculture, the resources simply exploited by neighbors and anyone else.

Also, FGD participants demonstrated that families of women prisoners are busy visiting mother inmates and accompanied children instead of focusing on families' economy issues. A young child who came to visit his imprisoned mother presented that "our farming land is not properly cultivated; our cattle are not managed; and our living cost has been raised". Hence, from this witness, one can understand that mothers' imprisonment affects the whole economy whereby it exacerbates poverty for their families and children.

School Termination

Education termination is the other inevitably challenging issues which have intensive impact on children's development. Children of imprisoned mothers were forced to dropout from school due to financial difficulties, lack of caregivers and support from others. As the lived experience of children of detained mothers show, children terminate their education to focus on survival ties with high level of stigma and discrimination by the community.

Family disorganization and unstable life

The absence of mothers from home were resulted in family disorganization that most children, especially young girls, of incarcerated mother left to urban places and engaged in works such as waitress, housemaid, daily worker and other related activities which directly and indirectly impacted on their life and growth. Boys of convicted mothers were also used to migrate(dislocation) as a means of coping mechanism to their practical challenges. They moved to urban places and other rural area so as to help themselves and their siblings. A mother arrested for long time in the prison stated how her absence at home affected her families as follows.

I have six children two males and four females. After I came to the correctional center my husband married other woman and started his new life. Then, my children lack affection, care and support which forced them to leave their home. I heard that two of my girls moved to urban area and joined housemaid activities. I always fear and am afraid if my girls face problems like labor and sexual exploitations (interviewee C, August 19, 2018).

Thus, due to the fragile lives of families, mothers in prison fear and are afraid for their susceptible children as they suffer from emotional, physical, sexual and economic challenges.

Lived Experiences of accompanied Children due to mother imprisonment

Understanding the overall effects of mother incarceration on children has been difficult due to the inadequacy of clear data from prison center. According to the chief head of Dessie correctional center, children in different ages came to the prison compound accompanying their convicted mother or born after the pregnant women joined the prison. This is due to the appeal of incarcerated mothers as no relatives and interested agencies are taking care of children at home. The correctional center has regional guidelines which direct how to treat children coming with their mothers. Nonetheless, no special budgets were allocated from the government so that they tried to approach non-governmental organizations that provide psycho-social and mentorship activities.

Problem of Prison Adaptation

Children often exhibited signs of insecurity and are waiting for the time they will leave from prison compound. Most kids are avid for prison release to reintegrate to the separated siblings. They frequently ask their mother when they will leave from the compound

and when will they will meet with their siblings. These situations may have an association with poor health conditions of children, absence of children's sibling and restricted life of correctional center.

Crime socialization

Children of imprisoned parents, specifically mothers, are more likely to involve in criminal activities than the average children who are from non-imprisoned families (Rowland and Watts, 2007). Once children get the opportunity to live within the correctional center, key informants and women interviewees disclosed that, children came to adopt new behaviors and encountered various problems. One of the main behavioral changes that children adopt after they join the prison center is delinquent behavior (Bandura, 1971). The stories of all sorts of crime committed by convicted women are freely discussed at the living room and prison compound where children can easily share various types of criminalities (Matsueda, 1988). According to FGD participants, it is common that children talking bad (deviant) words and show wrong behaviors which may result in what they copy from inmate women. The discussants raised, for example, children's deviant words with peers like "beat him, take his property while he left, insult him" which will affect their future personal and social development.

Inadequate facilities

Key informants from the correctional center stated that children living with detained women were challenged by poor facilities of correctional center such as the lack of balanced diet, absence of accessible clean water, bad (poor) toilet and environment, unhygienic and crowded living room. No additional or special food was provided for children of incarcerated mother as no special budget was allocated for food elements like rice, sugar, milk, pepper, to prepare improved foods for their children. In Dessie correctional center, kids are living in the same room with convicted women for crime which affected both incarcerated women and the accompanied children. Further, what makes children's psychological challenge worsens the existence of some inmate women with mental illness. Such women frequently shout and talk for long times that disturbed children's wellbeing negatively. Even worse, no pre medical follow ups were undertaken by the correctional center that children sent to health centers and hospitals after they got sick. Even FGD discussants reported that children living in prison have no access to vaccination as other children outside the correctional center. This was because absence of information during vaccination and shortage of vaccine supply to address children's health at the correction center. Regarding recreation accessibilities the prison compound has little access to refreshment facilities and thus children were forced to play at small TV room or restricted to stay in prison compound.

Educational difficulties

Although children in prison have some access to education, there are also various difficulties that affected school enrolment and achievement. As the key informants from correctional center workers stated, some kids were sent to elementary school but still financial and material shortage are unresolved questions of the correctional center since no child affair budget was allocated from the government. Moreover, it was difficult to send children to school alone due to. mothers' fear for kids' security while children go to school by themselves since they are afraid of victims' families. Conversely, police officers were assigned as a care giver during regular transportation. However, children were discomforted to be escorted by the prison guards in their everyday moment to and from school;

distressed due to absence of family supervision at school while they see other children who are living out of the correctional center.

Institutional interventions in mitigating problems of children

After looking at the lived experience of children of imprisoned mothers, the next question of this study was whether institutional interventions are accessible to such children. Although there is most recent child protection policy in Ethiopia (that approved by 2018), less attention was given to children of detained parents. According to key informants from the workers of correctional center, there is no clear and comprehensive legal framework available to treat children of imprisoned inmates. FGD participants also confirmed that there are an increasing number of infants in the correctional center but no government budget or special considerations were given for detained children. Besides, the works of the correctional center regarding children of incarcerated mothers has not been integrated with other government institutions. The correctional center simply functions by asking charity from nongovernmental organizations working on women and children issues as well as individuals who are willing to provide humanitarian activities to reduce the problems of children. However, as the chief manager stated, there is only single local nongovernmental organization called AHARA which is actively involved in support of recidivists, inmate women and children with incarcerated mothers.

AHARA (Adis Hiwot Rehabilitation and Reintegration agency) is one of the local nonprofits and charity organizations operating in Dessie city. The organization works for rehabilitation and reintegration of incarcerated individuals particularly women. Hence, it tried to work with recidivists, women criminals and accompanied children who are living with mother inmates. The organization provided psycho-social, educational and financial support. However, the organization has a limitation while implementing such activities. Because, it has no potential to intervene with children of imprisoned mothers separated at home that need better financial power, security and suitable policies.

Red Cross- Ethiopia (Dessie branch) is another organization which helped the correctional center through facility provision and building of primary schools. The organization also involved in material provision for incarcerated peoples and their accompanied children. Yet, still no integration and planned activity was done regarding how to reduce the challenges of children and their incarcerated mothers, particularly for those kids who are living at home alone. This indicates that, separated children due to mother incarceration lack protection since the government has not taken extra measures beyond detaining women criminals. No plans found to safeguard the rights and interests of the child. In nutshell, both separated and accompanied children of imprisoned mothers suffered from lack of financial and educational complications, insecurity, and family disorganization induced migration and socializing criminal behaviors. However, they lack protection and essential support from government and other stakeholders.

Discussion

The study focused on examining the effects of mother imprisonment on children that are left at home; effects of mother imprisonment on accompanied children at prison; and lack institutional interventions to mitigate problems of children resulted from mothers' incarceration. The findings could be explained in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which focused on the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health, standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development, the right to education, the right to rest and leisure, the right to engage in play

and recreational activities (UNCRC, 1991). But this study found that mothers' confinement has multidimensional effects on holistic lives of children. Researchers report that parental incarceration is associated with the material hardship and family instability and risk full of experience of children (Steve, 2009 and Harris, 2017). Similarly, the African Child Policy Forum (2007) reported as children are deprived protection, and their rights to obtain shelter, meals and medical services which is also confirmed by Wintfeld, (2008) and Selamawit, (2006).

The impact of parental incarceration has been diverse (Flynn et al., 2015). Harris (2017), Johnson & Easterling (2012), Steve (2009) and Wintfeld (2008) reveal that mother imprisonment puts children at a higher risk for poverty, abuse, stigmatization, instability, trauma and various health problems. According to Stephanie and Leena (2017), children's stigmatization due to parental imprisonment was a widespread as children of imprisoned parents have two times greater risk of health problems than that of non-incarcerated families. As stated by Bowlby (1969) attachment perspective (Charles, 2007), this study also disclosed that kids are subjected to social exclusion, discrimination and deprived of resources as the result of mothers' incarceration. Wintfeld (2008) found that such situation primarily affects those children separated and forced to live alone at their homes and are excluded from the society. Beker's labeling theory confirmed that children of accused parents are susceptible to be discriminated and labeled as criminals like their parents. Their social situation and self-image are affected too (Knutsson, 1977). Hence, alienated children due to labeling may be forced to practice juvenile delinquencies as the result of exclusion and stigmatization exercises. This stigmatization can be reflected via attaching visible signs of moral inferiority to children or their close relatives, such as invidious labels, marks, brands or publicly disseminating information (Lamert, 1922 cited on Knutsson, 1977).

Also, children could develop delinquent behavior while they stay at prison center (Selamawit, 2006) so that they have the likelihood of higher risk of future incarceration (Stephanie, and Leena, 2017); since they simply imitate from the compound where detained women discuss their criminal stories with each other (Rowland and Watts, 2007). The social learning perspective is consistent with this finding since it argued that children's future behavior is conditioned by past experiences or events (Bandura, 1971, Peter, 2001 and Martin, 2005). Bandura demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors which they have observed from other people (Bandura, 1971). Besides, kids suffer more from the low and little facilities of the correctional center like inadequacy of balanced diet, poor sanitation, crowded living room and absence of refreshment center which were in line with other researches. Hence, the prison environment can be frightening and traumatic for children, both in the attitudes and behavior of prison staff and the physical setting which is very similar with the finding of Steve (2009).

Interventions have positive long-term effects in sustainable development of child well-being (Bruster and Foreman, 2012) through building impact recoveries such as stability, social and cognitive development, greater openness and more self-confidence (Laakso et al, 2012). Programs like mentorship and counseling are common ways of supporting mechanism to children of imprisoned parent (Miller, 2006, Raikes, 2013; and Bruster and Foreman, 2012). These strategies could help children to immediately feel better and to easily interact with the communities. For rehabilitating children whose parents imprisoned and attending education, schools are suggested to play a significant role in mentoring, guiding and supporting activities (Raikes, 2013). Nonetheless, the findings of this study were not consistent with such advised directions because there is little and nonintegrated intercession of government and nongovernmental organizations to alleviate

children problem. Some supporting engagements are made by non-government organizations, namely, AHRA and Red Cross engaged in psycho social support, material provision and income generation activities. However, Christian (2009) argued that an alternative childcare must be carried out to protect children from the harmful effects of parental incarceration through a collaborative effort of stakeholders.

Conclusion

This study illustrates the devastating impact of mother incarceration on the development of their children at home and at the Dessie Prison center. The study found that both separated and accompanied children of incarcerated mothers faced multidimensional problems like social, economic, educational, health, and personal problems which in turn affected numerous aspects of child's life, including emotional and behavioral well-being, family stability and financial circumstances. Children living with their detained mothers are forced to develop deviant behaviors that can be called crime socialization. They also suffered from the poor environment of correctional center and lack of adequate facilities. Nonetheless, no strategic and formal interventions were delivered by the government bodies so as to resolve the challenges of children. Children of incarcerated mothers are often overlooked as comprising group in its own right with special need. In nutshell, mothers' incarceration interrupts children's developmental trajectory as it forces children to have negative experience.

Recommendations

Upon the finding from the study the following recommendations are made. There should be an integrated work among the correctional centers police and security offices, higher education institutions and other related stakeholders to the prevention of female criminals which is root cause for separation and the best way of reducing children's suffering. Both federal and regional government should develop policies and strategies to the benefit of such susceptible children whose parents are at prison. The problem of children separated due to detained mothers can be reduced if an integrated work is done by the public, police and other stakeholders. Particularly, the south Wollo (Dessie) correctional center should design short and long term plans to ameliorate the condition of innocent children who are detained with their inmate mothers. To this effect,

- Provision of adequate funds and resources to prison or detention centers
- Special treatment of women and children in nutrition, hygiene, healthcare and education.
- Counselors, teachers, social workers are needed to keep the holistic wellbeing of children
- Regular health extension workers, mentors and advisories, special /isolated room to be placed with their own mother and avoid psychological problems.

The center should also provide an alternative child care facilities which can help children to develop healthy behaviors. Finally, further researches are needed to examine more about effects of criminality on families and communities in particular and the country in general.

Limitation of the study

The study used mother inmates for the very problems of separated children. Little data were gathered from separated children. So that, it may be difficult to say every problem

of detached children are explored. Besides, the method used for this study cannot show the level, magnitudes and prevalence of children of incarcerated parents. Hence, further research is needed to narrow the gaps and handle the problems of susceptible children of in inmates.

Acknowledgment

The author expresses his gratitude to South Wollo /Dessie/ correctional center office workers and inmate women for their cooperative and honest support during the field study.

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