

Why Not Us? Experiences of Incarcerated Women on Education Access in Malawi Prisons

Samson C. R. KAJAWO*, Lineo R. JOHNSON

Adult Education & Youth Development, University of South Africa, P. O. Box 392, Pretoria, 0003, South Africa

*Corresponding author's email: samsonkajawo@gmail.com

Received: 19 December 2023 / Revised: 13 March 2024 / Accepted: 26 March 2024 / Published: 02 April 2024

ABSTRACT

Many incarcerated women worldwide have low education profiles that cause them to commit petty criminal offences among others. Thus, education access to incarcerated people, including women can be undoubtedly an indispensable strategy for their rehabilitation. However, education access could still be patriarchal and not accessible to women in prisons. Guided by radical feminist theory, this study employed a qualitative narrative research approach to explore from incarcerated women and correctional officers how education was made accessible at two prison facilities in Malawi. The key finding was that there was social injustice in the provision of education to offenders. Education access was monopolised by male inmates. Women were denied access to education even though they needed and demanded it since authorities preferred to use the available inadequate educational resources to provide education to only male inmates. It was recommended that gender equality needed to be exercised in the provision of education opportunities in prisons. Where resources are scarce, at least similar educational resources should be made equally and equitably accessible to both male and female inmates.

Keywords: Education access; Female offenders; Social injustice

1 Introduction

There has been a dramatic increase in the population of women and girls in prisons all over the world in recent years. More than 700,000 women and girls are incarcerated in correctional facilities worldwide, contributing to 7% of the global prison population (Penal Reform International, 2021; Walmsley, 2017). Just like their male counterparts, incarcerated women and girls need to enjoy their right to education (United Nations, 2015). This article, guided by radical feminist theory, is aimed at exploring the narratives and experiences of incarcerated women and girls as triangulated by the correctional officers' views regarding female offenders' access to education in Malawi.

1.1 Incarcerated women and girls access to education

Education is an indisputable strategy that provides unlimited opportunities in life. Since the world adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the affirmation of several international human rights conventions, education has been formally recognised as a basic human right for everyone (UNICEF, 2007). All people regardless of gender and social status have the right to education which is accessible without discrimination (Government of Malawi, 2018a; 2018b; Jäggi & Kliwer, 2020; Vandala, 2019; Ryder, 2020).

Education is especially relevant to people incarcerated in penitentiaries (Jäggi & Kliwer, 2020; Kajawo & Johnson, 2023a; 2023b; Korzh, 2021). The United Nations (UN) standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules) state that education must be made accessible to all incarcerated people, especially the illiterate and the youth (UN, 2015). Thus, the UN rules for the treatment

of women prisoners (the Bangkok Rules) oblige member states to provide appropriate resources for the educational needs of both male and female offenders incarcerated in their prisons (UN, 2011). The logic is that many incarcerated people including women and girls have histories of illiteracy or low education which often caused their criminal activities (Jäggi & Kliever, 2020). This is because studies worldwide indicate that women incarcerated for offences related to socioeconomic factors often commit them for their families' survival. For example, in Sierra Leone, Vance (2020) reports that 30% of incarcerated women and girls committed petty offences of theft of small sums to feed their children due to a lack of self-reliance mostly caused by illiteracy and low education. In South Africa, most black women who were incarcerated after committing economic offences such as shoplifting were also found to have low education levels and no proper forms of income (Dastile & Agozino, 2019). Huber (2015) also reports that many uneducated and illiterate women are incarcerated for sex-related crimes such as prostitution which penalize women as service providers leaving out men who assume the role of clients.

If these women and girls are incarcerated and, in the words of Cullen and Gilbert (2013), “warehoused” (p. 9) in the “custodial warehouses” (p. 65) or “...stored until released back into society” (Simpkins, 2015, p. 26) without accessing educational programmes for their rehabilitation, their stay in the penitentiary is likely to have a lifelong negative effect on their lives. Thus, illiteracy or inadequacy of education can have negative effects on the individual’s dignity, self-reliance and socioeconomic independence after their release (Maguire, 2021; Ryder, 2020; UN, 2011). Ryder (2020) argues that low education profiles combined with the criminal record stigma make it difficult for women to reintegrate. They risk getting caught up in a vicious cycle of incarceration, release and reoffending (Maguire, 2021). This entails that female inmates, just like their male counterparts, should not just be “warehoused” in penitentiaries without any meaningful rehabilitation that includes quality education (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013, p. 9).

However, studies worldwide report that significant numbers of women and girls are denied access to education programmes in many penitentiary facilities (Huber, 2015; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020). Thus, gender inequality in education is still an issue in many institutions in many countries (Ghaempanah & Khapova, 2023). The situation is even worse in some African countries where huge disparities between male and female offenders’ educational provision have been reported (e.g. Allen & Overy LLP, 2019; Ryder, 2020). In a study conducted by an organisation called Allen & Overy LLP (2019) covering Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria and the Gambia, it was reported that many countries were not providing similar education and skills training opportunities to both men and women. Correctional programmes seldom take care of the gender-specific needs of female offenders (Huber, 2015). This is because, compared to those opportunities accessible to men, few academic and vocational skills opportunities were accessible to women (Korzh, 2021). Worse still, those few existing programmes were usually poorly resourced compared to those offered to male offenders (Huber 2015).

In Malawi, section 25(1) of the Republic Constitution provides that every person has the right to education (Government of Malawi, 2018b). In line with this provision, section 163 mandates the Malawi Prisons Service (MPS) to, not only house and detain offenders, but also engage them in activities including education that can rehabilitate them (Government of Malawi, 2018c). Moreover, in line with the Bangkok Rules (UN, 2011), the Malawi Gender Equality Act adds that education opportunities accessed by men should also be equitably accessible to women (Government of Malawi, 2018a). Thus, any refusal or non-provision of education to any group of incarcerated people is a *prima facie* violation of their constitutional right to education. The non-provision is also contrary to Malawi’s national education policy which included improving access, relevance, quality and equity of adult literacy and education opportunities as one of the objectives (Ministry of Education, 2020; Republic of Malawi, 2019).

Consequently, studies report that education opportunities were accessible to inmates at various prison facilities in Malawi (Kajawo, 2019; 2022; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Kajawo & Johnson, 2023a; 2023b). In 2020, there were 15 prison facilities offering educational programmes out of 30 in the country (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). Still, studies report that less than 20% of inmates were engaged in education

programmes in 2018; in a population where more than 90% did not reach or complete secondary school education level (Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Kajawo & Johnson, 2023b). This could be worse when considering the education access of incarcerated women offenders who are usually educationally disadvantaged (Huber, 2015; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020).

Notwithstanding an extensive body of research on education in correctional facilities worldwide, there are still gaps in the literature on incarcerated women's access to education in correctional facilities, especially in African countries. As observed by Chigwada in 1989 regarding research on the educational experiences of black people, most African studies focus on the whole prison population or only male offenders (Vandala, 2019; Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Johnson, 2023a); and a few specifically on female offenders (Allen & Overy, 2019; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Johnson, 2015). Gunnison *et al.* (2017) argue that data on incarcerated female young offenders is limited partly due to the researchers' failure to report disaggregated data by gender. Thus, the experiences of incarcerated women in correctional education have always been ignored and marginalised (Chigwada, 1989).

This article, therefore, explores the narratives and experiences of incarcerated women and girls and correctional officers regarding female offenders' access to education in Malawi. Thus, the article utilises the qualitative narrative research approach to assess the rehabilitation needs of women and girls incarcerated at two correctional facilities in Malawi before determining if they had access to education. The paper also reveals factors contributing to hindrances of access to educational opportunities for female inmates.

1.2 Radical Feminist Theory as the Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the radical feminist theory. Feminism generally advocates for the recognition of women by exposing the social reality of male domination and supremacy in all sectors of society (Dikshit, 2022; Pomerantz & Raby 2011; Thompson, 2001). Radical feminists specifically claim that male supremacy is the oldest basic form of oppression and exploitation. They claim that women were the first social group in history to experience oppression and exploitation (Redstockings, 1970). Thus, societies learned from male supremacy that oppression needed to be an essential ingredient of all political constructs (Atkinson, 1974; Redstockings, 1970; Thompson 2001). Male domination "provided the model for all other forms of oppression" (Thompson, 2001, p. 133). Hence, imperialism, capitalism and racism were modelled from the oppression of women (Atkinson, 1974; Redstockings, 1970; Thompson, 2001).

Regarding education, radical feminists contend that the education system is still profoundly patriarchal and continues to marginalise and oppress women (Dikshit, 2022). While liberal feminists acknowledge the significant progress that the world has made towards gender equality and meritocracy in the education system, radical feminists claim that gender injustices or inequality still exist in society and are reproduced through various practices and institutions (Dikshit, 2022). There is still male monopolisation of education opportunities despite the significant strides made. Radical feminists agree with the Marxists that education is still unequally accessed by various social groups including women in some sectors of society (Armstrong, 2020; Pomerantz & Raby, 2011). Unfortunately, this status quo is legitimised in many societies (Althusser, 1971; Armstrong, 2020). Thus, radical feminists concur with the Marxists that education inequality against women is legitimised in the process of interpellation and internalisation of cultural or religious fundamentalist values that discriminate women from accessing the educational opportunities that are accessible to men (Althusser, 1971). Often, women do not fight this oppression in those societies because they are taught or forced to accept that they are second-class citizens (Althusser, 1971; Odinye, 2011; Thompson, 2001). Thompson (2001) argues that women are forced to accept and embrace male supremacy and dominance as normal and unalterable because of the efficient functioning of their social conditions.

Gender inequality in education could be worse in closed systems such as prisons. The incarcerated women often experience double oppression. Thus, apart from the general challenges that are faced by all prisoners in the state-controlled repressive environments of penitentiaries (Althusser, 1971), incarcerated women are likely to be looked down upon for being female due to societal unequal distribution of resources

and opportunities (Armstrong, 2020). Therefore, educational inequality in correctional facilities can be legitimated if female offenders are not provided with education or are accessing low-quality education compared to those enjoyed by their male counterparts.

Thus, radical feminist theory assisted in exposing the reality of education inequality against women in Malawi prisons. Even though the post-feminists downplay the contemporary influence of structural inequalities as they argue that power and success are readily available to all women with determination and commitment regardless of their circumstances (Pomerantz & Raby, 2011), closed institutions such as prisons are still prone to gendered oppression (Huber, 2015; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020). Thus, the theory guided the researchers in identifying factors likely to affect women's rights and their access to education, by providing the rare opportunity for incarcerated women to narrate their lived experiences. Educational programmes need to be among the crucial programmes for all inmates including women. If female inmates are engaged in education and other rehabilitation programmes just like their male counterparts, they are likely to have meaningful lives after release (Jäggi & Kliever, 2020; Simpkins, 2015). Consequently, they are less likely to re-offend.

2 Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach within the interpretivist paradigm in which reality is ontologically understood as socially or personally constructed by individuals, and knowledge is epistemologically assumed as personal, subjective and unique (Cohen *et al.*, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Within the interpretivist paradigm, the study employed a narrative research approach in which incarcerated women and correctional officers were interviewed to share stories of their subjective lived experiences socially constructed within the incarceration spaces regarding the accessibility of education to female inmates (Flick, 2014). The researchers had a "phenomenological curiosity" about the female inmates' lived experiences through an "empathic interpretative position" (Flick 2014, p. 147). The narrative approach enabled the researchers to triangulate data from inmates and correctional officers to come up with a collaborated story of female offenders' education access.

2.1 Study setting and participants

This study was conducted at two facilities in Malawi; an adults' prison and a young offenders' rehabilitation facility. At the time of the study (October 2022), all 30 prison facilities in Malawi incarcerated a total of 17,400 inmates. Within these facilities, only five had female offenders' sections lodging a total of 252 female inmates. This study purposively involved 20 female inmates (10 from each of the two facilities) of the age range between 18 and 51 (mean=28). The selection of female inmates at each facility was based on predetermined key characteristics such as educational attainment and age variations (Cohen *et al.*, 2018; Flick, 2014; Yin, 2016). Twenty female inmates were included as participants in this study to provide as many experiences as possible of incarcerated women in Malawi as recommended by Flowers (2015) in her review of Suniti Sharma's 2013 book *Girls behind bars: reclaiming education in transformative spaces*. The study also involved purposively selected six correctional officers (three from each facility) to triangulate the narrated women's experiences. Their selection was based on their roles at their respective facilities. The study involved a total of 26 participants.

2.2 Data collection procedures

The study generated data from the participants using two different semi-structured interview guides. The interviews for female offenders had questions that sought to collect data on their age, levels of education before incarceration, the offences they committed, their correctional activities, and their life goals. For the correctional officers, the interviews focused on generating data on their views on education availability and accessibility to female offenders at their facilities. Ethical permission and clearance were sought from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Malawi Prisons Service authorities before embarking on the data collection exercise (Cohen *et al.*, 2018). In all the interviews, the researcher took

notes and audio-recorded the narratives (after obtaining consent from each participant). Interviews were generally conducted in Chichewa (Malawi's national language). The use of the Chichewa language allowed participants especially female offenders for whom the majority were illiterate (who could not communicate in the English language) to also have their voices and lived experiences contributed to and used in this study.

2.3 Data analysis

The study used a constructionist narrative approach in analysing incarcerated women and correctional officers' narratives of their lived experiences (Esin *et al.*, 2014). The constructionist approach draws on the assumption that narratives are social phenomena produced from individuals' expressions (Esin *et al.*, 2014). The data analysis process started with the transcription of inmates' and correctional officers' narratives, which followed the translation of the Chichewa transcripts into English. In translating, the researchers were sensitive to some Chichewa language's nuances that could not adequately be translated into English. An effort was made to understand the participants' lived socio-cultural and spoken language contexts to secure the narratives' original and intended meanings (Esin *et al.*, 2014; Flick, 2014). The interviews were manually analysed to ensure that the narratives were all captured. Themes, codes and categories were organised manually using different colours and highlights.

3 Findings

Discussing education access as regards incarcerated women in the correctional context is inextricably entwined with issues relating to the oppression and vulnerability of women and girls that results in their high rates of school drop-outs even in the communities outside prisons (Armstrong, 2020; Jäggi & Kliever, 2020; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020). Thus, issues of educational access for incarcerated women and girls cannot be well discussed without first discussing the social circumstances that led to their incarceration. This section, therefore, presents the research participants' perceptions regarding the incarcerated women's access to education. The issues shaping the interview discourse and narratives in this study were centred on three main themes, namely that (1) the incarcerated women have educational needs; (2) there are inequalities regarding education access in penitentiaries; and (3) three factors contributed to the inaccessibility.

3.1 The incarcerated women have educational needs

In this study, 26 respondents concurred that education was essential to women and girls incarcerated in correctional facilities. The narratives of both correctional officers and incarcerated women indicated that most female offenders were illiterate and had not gone far with their education before their incarceration. Thus, accessibility of education could contribute to their emancipation and socio-economic empowerment thereby reducing their likely post-release challenges. According to one correctional officer at the young offenders' facility:

Education is essential and can benefit them; at least they can usefully utilise their imprisonment time to learn so that when they are released, they can look back and realise that they did not just waste the time here, but they acquired life skills that would help them later. You know, most of these female inmates are illiterate and have low education, so education can benefit them.

The assertion that most female inmates were illiterate and had low education profiles was the common perception among correctional officers. These findings were validated by the researchers' experience when they tried to identify women for inclusion in this study. It was found that out of the population of 70 female inmates at both facilities, 74% reported having dropped out of school at the primary education level, while 12% never entered any formal education classroom door. These findings are consistent with various studies which reported that the majority of female offenders have low education levels in many countries (Dastile & Agozino, 2019; de Araújo *et al.*, 2020; Huber, 2015). For example, in Brazil, de Araújo *et al.* (2020) report that at least 3% of female offenders registered as illiterates in their

study which was conducted in 15 penitentiaries, while 45% were primary school drop-outs and 17% dropped out before completing secondary school education level. These statistics point to the need for education and literacy programmes for incarcerated women in correctional facilities.

Furthermore, the offences that caused the incarceration of the majority of female offenders at these two facilities showed that they needed education for their self-reliance. From their narratives, most girls and women got married at a tender age due to poverty mainly caused by their illiteracy and low education. However, the marriages often turned abusive leading to their emotional, sexual and physical abuse and victimisation. These victimisations often led to offending and their eventual incarceration, as narrated by one 25-year-old woman at the young offenders' facility. She was impregnated at the age of 16 by a man who later married her.

After passing the national primary school examinations, I dropped out of school after discovering that I was pregnant. My parents negotiated with the man responsible that I should give birth and then go back to school later. But after some months the man took me and married me. After giving birth, I enrolled in Form 1 as agreed at a [low-cost] private school. However, my husband was a jealous man. He would stalk me even at school. Once he finds me with other males, he would start fights, or we would argue, he would even beat me. He always suspected me of cheating on him. I just decided to drop out of school.

The girl dropped out of school because of the insecurities of her husband. This is exactly what feminists have been fighting against for many years as depicted in the Redstockings Manifesto of 1970 in which women bemoaned that "our oppression is totally affecting every facet of our lives... we are considered inferior beings, whose only purpose is to enhance men's lives. Our humanity is denied" (Redstockings, 1970, p. 533). This girl had to drop out of school to please her husband in this toxic relationship. Just like it was stated in the Redstockings Manifesto (1970, 533), the "threat of physical violence" partly derailed her life plans. To make matters worse, the marriage did not work due to gender-based violence, as she further narrated:

He was always jealous and too controlling. He was beating me and always shouting at me. This was after I gave birth to two more children... I then left him and went back to my parents' home. I left him with all the kids. But my family chased me from the house. They insisted that I go back to my marriage and just persevere. But thinking of the harsh treatment I was facing, I decided that I was not going there. I moved to Mwanza [another district] and joined sex work for some time. But later I realised that it was not the life I wanted to live. I quit and went back to my parents' house. My husband heard that I was in sex work. He was furious. He went to the police and reported that I had dumped my children for prostitution. They arrested me, and I was sentenced to five years.

Ironically, this 25-year-old woman claimed she lodged many gender-based violence complaints against her husband at the police before she left him but she was never assisted. However, the first complaint by her husband landed her in prison. Another 30-year-old woman at the adult offenders' facility had a similar story to tell.

I dropped out of Standard 7. My parents died when I was very young, and I grew up in poverty, so I had to start working at the age of 12. I decided to get married to alleviate my poverty. I, later on, got married to a certain man for nine years. We had two children. But I divorced him because of domestic violence. He used to beat me every time. I have been single for five years, surviving on small businesses. But I eventually found myself in a tight money situation. I had to do what I could to feed my children; I joined sex work. So with the nature of sex work, you work during the night. So I was leaving my children with someone to go and look for money in the nightclubs. However, some jealous friends reported me to the police that I had abandoned my children for prostitution. The police came and arrested me. It pains me because, even though I was doing the sex work, I was able to take care of my kids. But I am now here completely abandoning them.

The above narratives were the reported common realities of many female inmates at the two facilities. The trends of their offences were almost the same as they often started by dropping out of school due to poverty, which resulted in getting entangled in dependent abusive relationships, and consequently, ending up convicted for their actions triggered by their emotional abuse. These findings resonate with radical feminist's view that society through culture and traditions expects women not to fight any oppression perpetuated by men (Althusser, 1971; Thompson, 2001). Oppression affects all aspects of women's lives (Redstockings, 1970). The findings also concur with the findings from many studies carried out in African countries that revealed that women are incarcerated for engaging in criminalised socio-economic activities such as sex work which they do for their economic survival (Huber, 2015; Mallicoat, 2019; Ryder, 2020), necessitating rehabilitation including education for self-reliance.

3.2 Education access inequalities in correctional facilities

This study revealed that education (whether formal, informal or non-formal) was not accessible to all female inmates at both facilities during the time of this study. All 20 female inmates involved in this study indicated that, despite education being available and accessible in the male sections, no such programmes were offered in the female sections for their access. According to a 43-year-old female offender who did not know how to read and write, education was not accessible to female offenders:

In this female section, we don't have a school where we can access formal education and adult literacy skills. We don't know why there is no school for women. We tried to request for school so that we could enrol, but they just told us that they would introduce it in the future. Our male counterparts have a school. But why not us? Is it because we are female?

Inaccessibility of education negatively affected this 43-year-old lady and many other women and girls since they claimed that they were seriously looking forward to enrolling in education or literacy skills classes during their incarceration periods. Many women and girls had high expectations regarding their stay at the correctional facilities though faced with the bitter reality of the non-provision of education. According to a 37-year-old woman at the adult offenders' facility who dropped out in Standard 3, "*...we do nothing here. We just stay idle. When we ask for school, there is nothing they tell us.*" According to her and many other participants, it was painful to see that their male counterparts were accessing education. Male inmates were even using the assembly hall located in the female section to write their national examinations.

According to another 23-year-old lady who dropped out of school in Standard 8 (the final primary education grade in Malawi) due to poverty and pregnancy, she had high expectations that she would benefit from her incarceration:

When I was convicted, my family consoled me that going to prison is not the end of life since it could be a chance for a good life since, according to them, inmates do not just stay idle. They are involved in many activities that become helpful to them after their release. They said that I might even have a chance of continuing with my education or being trained in technical skills. So, I thought this was the chance that I never had. However, when I came here, I saw that perhaps those people were right, but all those opportunities are only for male inmates, not females. When I came here, I saw that our male colleagues are indeed involved in formal education and technical and vocational skills training which are not accessible to female inmates. What I have noticed is that we are oppressed here. It is not that the opportunities do not come for ladies, but the opportunities are discriminatory; and are blocked to women.

When she was asked to explain what she meant by the statement that the opportunities were coming but they were being blocked, this is what she said;

Many well-wishers have been interested in supporting us in education and other activities such as tailoring when they come to visit us. But it does not happen. It seems they are not allowed. We are told the authorities discourage them. Instead, their donations are diverted to benefit the male inmates.

Other incarcerated women at the adult offenders' facility concurred with the above 23-year-old lady's assertions. According to female inmates, prison authorities favoured male offenders when it came to the provision of rehabilitation programmes such as education. Thus, education opportunities were still monopolised by men in the 21st Century thereby marginalising and oppressing women (Dikshit, 2022). When the participants were asked how they felt about the inaccessibility of educational opportunities to female offenders, female offenders and correctional officers said it was not right. According to a 20-year-old young woman who dropped out of school in Standard 8 to get married due to household poverty and was looking forward to enrolling in the correctional school:

It is not right at all. They should have been engaging us in various activities such as education because at least *sukulu ya kwacha* (literacy education classes) would have been better, as we just stay idle here doing nothing. We would have taken advantage of this time to educate ourselves. There are many women here who do not know how to write. They would have known how to write and be able to read and write after their release from here.

Another 19-year-old who dropped out of school in Standard 5 said it was wrong and unfair for female inmates not to have access to education programmes at the correctional facilities where the same services were accessible to male inmates.

It is very wrong; they are denying us our right to education. If the school was introduced, I would have joined. Poverty and ignorance made me not continue with school. I have now understood the importance of school. I would have joined. But they only provide education to males, very unfair.

This was also expressed by several other participants. This could be the reason that made almost all female offenders interviewed in this study to strongly recommend the introduction of educational programmes in the female sections for their access. These findings concur with what many studies reported in other jurisdictions around the world (e.g., Allen & Overy, 2019; Huber, 2015; Johnson, 2015; Korzh 2021; Ryder, 2020). A significant portion of women is denied access to education programmes in many penitentiary facilities (Huber, 2015; Ryder, 2020). Compared to those opportunities accessible to men, few academic and vocational skills opportunities are accessible to women. Many female inmates in the current study even confessed that it was painful to see that their male counterparts were accessing education that they could not. The unequal access to education opportunities signalled a huge disparity in the male and female offenders' treatment.

3.3 Factors contributing to the inaccessibility of education to female inmates

From the narratives and stories of the participants of this study, the researchers were able to identify three main factors contributing to the inaccessibility of education opportunities for female offenders at the two correctional facilities, namely (1) lack of female offenders' interest in education, (2) inadequacy of resources and (3) prison authorities not concerned with female offenders' rehabilitation wellbeing.

3.3.1 Lack of female offenders' interest in education

Some correctional officers interviewed in this study indicated that the unavailability of education programmes in the female sections was partly due to a lack of educational interest by the incarcerated women. The argument was that if they seriously demanded, insisted and showed interest, the authorities would have been pushed to do something. According to one correctional officer at the adult offenders' facility:

Women inmates are not serious about education. Most of them don't have interest. You will find that it is only very few women who show interest in enrolling. So this discourages us from putting more effort towards their education.

According to another officer at the same facility, their obvious lack of interest in education also made well-wishers who were supporting education in the male sections not invest in the female section.

Every time we try to introduce education, only two to five students would enrol and register out of more than 50 inmates' population. This is both time and resource wasting which discourages us. Moreover, due to this lack of interest, it is difficult for well-wishers to construct more classrooms on that side; hence, there is only one small hall which could be used for classes.

This was also partly observed in the narratives of some incarcerated women. Even though the majority showed interest in education and complained of its inaccessibility, some still showed that they were unlikely to enrol even if the education programmes were available. The oldest lady in this study (51-year-old), who self-reported that she had never been in class, blatantly said she was too old for school. Another 26-year-old Standard 6 drop-out said that even if education was accessible, she could not have enrolled in the correctional facility since she knew that she could not manage to continue schooling after release due to a lack of resources. According to her, she dropped out of Standard 6 because of poverty. She said that joining the school in the correctional facility for two years of her incarceration would not have any significance in her life since she would still fail to continue after her release.

However, some incarcerated women observed that some of the incarcerated women's disinterest in education was due to a lack of proper guidance and counselling programmes to open their eyes to realise that they needed to use their time in prison to reduce their illiteracy or to upgrade their education levels. Moreover, the unavailability of the education programme on its own was not motivating. This is part of what a 24-year-old young offender, who was among very few incarcerated women who reported to have completed secondary school education before their incarceration said:

Incarcerations do much damage to women. We usually accept that we are failures and that there is nothing good we can do for our future. But women also need activities like those provided to male inmates. They need to be made available and accessible. All of us are offenders, so why is it that it is only male inmates who are given access to education and many other activities while we are just dumped here? There should be a way to ensure that women are provided with comprehensive rehabilitation programmes that include psycho-social counselling activities. Counselling and guidance would make them realise that they need education as a foundation for whatever they want to do in this life.

In the words of radical feminists, this is the sign of the efficient functioning of "male supremacy" and domination since "women (and men) accept the reality of their position, embrace it as natural and unalterable, desire its continuation and fear its destruction, and believe it is their own meaningful existence" (Thompson, 2001, p. 22). The incarcerated women wished that education and other rehabilitation programmes were made available to female offenders' sections as much as they were made accessible in the male sections to trigger the interest of women in education. However, they were limited by the social conditions thereby forcing them to just accept the reality.

3.3.2 Inadequacy of resources

All respondents in this study indicated that inadequacy of resources was another contributor to the inaccessibility of education and literacy programmes for women in the two correctional facilities. According to the female inmates, the facilities' authorities have been giving them excuses for lack of resources and for not introducing education programmes to female sections every time they requested for education.

They usually say that it would be difficult to introduce education because they lack resources. So, introducing school in the female section might overstretch the already small resources available on the male side. It is said that most of those available resources used in the male section are donated by well-wishers. But we are only promised that one day we shall have the school opened.

According to one of the educators at the young offenders' facility, it was difficult to start classes in the female section of their facility.

Resources are not enough for us to extend the school to the female section. Even though we are providing education programmes in the male section, we are already struggling to resource this school. Moreover, with the current financial problems that the country is experiencing, it is challenging to have resources from well-wishers. That is why, with the few resources we normally have, we just focus on the school that is in the male section.

The inadequacy of resources finding concurs with previous studies conducted in many countries including Malawi (e.g. Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022; Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Johnson, 2023a; 2023b; Johnson, 2015; Korzh, 2021). Kajawo and Nyirongo (2022), based on their study conducted at 17 correctional facilities in Malawi, revealed that education was faced with several problems, including shortages of proper classrooms, libraries, laboratories and adequate learning materials such as notebooks, prescribed textbooks and pens. Malawi was failing to implement the educational activities included in the MPS strategic plan (Kajawo & Johnson, 2023b). Nonetheless, women needed to be given their fair share of those inadequate resources. Correctional officers indicated that it could have been easy to mix female and male learners to learn together using the meagre resources available. However, prison laws did not allow the mixing of male and female offenders. For example, one of the female offenders interviewed was an auto-electrical engineering student before her incarceration. She reported that she applied to be attached to the motor vehicle workshop just like her fellow male colleagues. However, her application was rejected. One of the correctional officers explained that it was because of offenders' classification and segregation laws:

I should be honest here. Our hands are tied on that issue. This prison only has one workshop where we engage only male inmates. I have heard a couple of times that some women were interested in being attached to our workshop. But the problem is the law. The law does not allow the mixing of male and female inmates. If we allow them to come and join other male colleagues here, we will be in contravention of that law. Moreover, we cannot manage to have separate workshops for males and females because we already have a huge problem with resources. We don't have enough tools already for this single workshop.

This is the double oppression that women are likely to face in the 'state-controlled repressive' penitentiary environments (Althusser, 1971; Armstrong, 2020). The authorities preferred to use the few available resources to provide educational opportunities to male inmates leaving out their female counterparts. This is a clear manifestation of the institutionalised conditions of male supremacy as resources were monopolised through confining their access to only male inmates which radical feminists have always advocated against (Acker, 1987; Thompson, 2001). Studies in many African countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, the Gambia and South Africa concur with these findings that women receive fewer education opportunities than their male offenders in correctional facilities (Agboola, 2016; Allen & Overy, 2019; Johnson, 2015). In South Africa, Agboola (2016) and Johnson (2015) concur that female offenders are usually not highly prioritised even in educational provisions because they are considered a minority group. These findings show that inadequacy of resources affected women more than male offenders since it resulted in their complete inaccessibility to education.

3.3.3 Prison authorities not concerned with female offenders' rehabilitation wellbeing

Apart from the inadequacy of resources, many incarcerated women and girls narrated that the correctional regime generally did not have any concerns regarding their education. According to them, the correctional authorities favoured male inmates since they gave them access to education programmes that were scarce in the female sections. Ten ladies used the term "oppression" to refer to what was happening to incarcerated women. A 31-year-old lady at the adult offenders' facility narrated her story.

I can say that there is too much oppression of women as regards education at this facility. I don't know if we should call it a mere noninterest to provide education to women... At a certain point, after being sympathetic with some women at this facility who cannot read and write, I asked the authorities if they could allow me to teach women to avoid just staying idle the way we do. Before we were given the go-ahead, I started teaching them. I can tell you that

the women were so interested in these classes. But unfortunately, there were no books, no notebooks, no pens, and even no chalk. We asked for the resources from the authorities, but they did not provide us ... I stopped after a week. At a certain point, some well-wishers brought some notebooks for the women, but they were diverted and given to the male inmates. So as I said, the authorities here do not think women have the right to activities capable of transforming their lives... They oppress women.

The correctional officers partially confirmed these male-biased tendencies in some of their responses. According to them, women's populations in correctional facilities were too small, which made the provision of those educational services unnecessarily inconvenient and expensive, especially when considering the inadequacy of resources available. Thus, they focused on male inmates who were always in good numbers. These findings were in contrast to the Bangkok Rule number 37, which obliges correctional services authorities to provide equal educational access to male and female offenders at every correctional facility (UN, 2011). This rule puts the male standards as the measure to use for the education accessible to women and girls. If this rule is read together with the United Nations Education 2030 declaration that advocates for "gender equality in achieving the right to education for all" (Ryder, 2020, p. 145), and section 25 of the Malawi Constitution that does not discriminate against the right to education (Government of Malawi, 2018b), the expectation would be that education was to be equitably and equally accessible to both the incarcerated women and men. Going by UNICEF's (2007) human rights-based approach to education, every individual, even those in the minority, has the right to education.

From the feminists' viewpoint, this is a system-legitimated oppression of powerless women and girls being reduced to "second-class citizens" (Althusser, 1971; Seely *et al.*, 2013, p. 431) because the priority on little resources available was given to male offenders. This does not make sense in this era of equality in which it is generally assumed that the "gendered oppressions that once plagued the school, the workplace, the home, and the wider social world have evaporated" (Pomerantz & Raby, 2011, p. 549). This is the capitalistic class relations prescribing gender hierarchies in resource distribution, which often results in oppressing women and girls (Armstrong, 2020). Education equality is necessary for all genders whether inside or outside correctional facilities (Chigwada, 1989). Incarcerated women also need to have an equal access to the correctional education services.

Generally, this qualitative study revealed gross inequality in the access to education opportunities against women and girls incarcerated at two correctional facilities in Malawi. These findings point to the importance of education programmes such as basic, adult literacy, university as well as technical and vocational skills training as activities preparing women for their release.

4 Discussion

In the analysis of the narratives of the incarcerated women and correctional officers, no significant differences were found among the responses regarding the education access of female offenders at the adult and young offenders' facilities in Malawi. This study concurred with findings from many studies carried out in African countries which revealed that women are incarcerated for their involvement in criminalised socio-economic activities such as sex work which they engage in for their economic survival (Mallicoat, 2019; Ryder, 2020). Regarding their schooling background, the study revealed that many incarcerated women were primary school drop-outs generally due to household poverty. From the narratives of incarcerated women and girls, it was observed that women, regardless of their ages, viewed education as an essential tool for their emancipation and social justice. From their narratives, many women's illiteracy and low education status were among the contributing factors to their incarceration, thus, they expected the government to make various education programmes accessible.

However, the study revealed that there were gender inequalities in the provision of education opportunities at the two facilities. Despite education being available and accessible to the male offenders, no such programmes were offered in the female sections for access by illiterate and uneducated incarcerated women and girls even though they showed desperation for education opportunities. This was in contrast

to Rule 37 of the Bangkok Rules which obliges member states' correctional services' authorities to provide equal access to education and vocational training programmes to male and female offenders at every correctional facility (United Nations, 2011). This rule put the male standards as the measure to use for the education provision in the female sections for the access of the incarcerated women and girls. If this rule is read together with the United Nations Education 2030 declaration that advocates for "gender equality in achieving the right to education for all" (Ryder, 2020, p. 145), and Section 25 of the Malawi Constitution that does not discriminate the right to education based on anything (Government of Malawi, 2018a), the expectation would be that education had to be accessible to the incarcerated women and girls.

Regardless of the reasons provided, it is the manifestation of social injustice to find those female inmates who desperately needed education were denied access to the same education that their male counterparts on the other side of the same facility were freely accessing and enjoying. This is a 'system legitimated oppression' of powerless women and girls (Althusser, 1971; Seely *et al.*, 2013). Once again, women were reduced to "second-class citizens" (Seely *et al.*, 2013, p. 431) since the priority on little resources available was given to male offenders. To the Marxists, this is the capitalistic class relations prescribing gender hierarchies in resource distribution which often results in oppressing women (Armstrong, 2020). The social injustice in public institutions such as prisons can be attributed to the inherent traditional cultural belief systems that have a way of influencing the mindset and the decisions that public officials make in their offices. If public officials are still influenced by educationally deep-rooted cultural biases that tend to denigrate the potential and capabilities of women (Kalipeni, 1997), they would not see any importance in making education accessible to incarcerated women and girls. This is because culture unknowingly guides people on what to consider essential or a priority.

Nonetheless, the findings that incarcerated women and girls often suffer social injustice related to education access concur with what many studies reported in other jurisdictions around the world (Achakzai *et al.*, 2015; Allen & Overy, 2019; Huber, 2015; Johnson, 2015; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020). A significant portion of women is denied access to education programmes in many penitentiary facilities (Huber, 2015; Ryder, 2020). Huber (2015) narrates that correctional programmes hardly take care of the gender-specific needs of female offenders. This is because, as compared to those opportunities accessible to men, few academic and vocational skills opportunities are accessible to women. Worse still, Huber argues that the already few existing programmes are usually poorly resourced than those offered to male offenders (Huber, 2015). Just like in the present study, Achakzai *et al.* (2015) also found that the Balochistan penitentiary facilities in Pakistan did not provide education programmes to incarcerated women and girls despite the fact that the majority of incarcerated women in the Balochistan province were illiterate and had less education. Studies in African countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Gambia and South Africa also concurred with the present study regarding the presence of disparities in the provision of education to male and female offenders in correctional facilities (Allen & Overy, 2019; Johnson, 2015). This just shows that women and girls are provided with fewer opportunities than men during their incarcerations in many African countries.

5 Implications for Policy and Practice

This study has important implications for policy and practice in African correctional spaces. Firstly, correctional services needed to provide education programmes without gender discrimination to both male and female inmates. It was not right and acceptable to find women and girls asking the question "Why not us?" since their male counterparts on the other side of the same correctional facilities had access to education. The correctional authorities need to treat women with the same respect they treat men by making all essential services that are available and accessible in the male section are also accessible in the female section. Correctional authorities were not justified in the unequal provision of those education services even on the grounds that women and girls populations in correctional facilities were too small which made the provision of those educational services unnecessarily inconvenient and expensive (Mallicoat, 2019). According to UNICEF's (2007) human rights-based approach to education, every individual has the right

to education. Therefore, women and girls should not just be warehoused or "...stored until released back into society" without any rehabilitation programme (Simpkins, 2015, p. 26).

Furthermore, this study found that one of the reasons that contributed to the inaccessibility of education in the female sections of correctional facilities in Malawi was the inadequacy of resources, including materials and qualified teachers. This was mainly because the MPS was not collaborating with the Ministry of Education in supporting the correctional schools. Even though the correctional authorities have the primary responsibility of providing education to inmates as part of their rehabilitation process (UN, 2015), prisons in developing countries are usually provided with meagre resources that are not even enough for other basic amenities (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). Thus, allocating adequate funds to education is usually a challenge. However, incarcerated people especially school-aged girls in this case do not stop being citizens of the country by virtue of their incarceration. There is no doubt that they are statistically included in the Ministry of Education budgets as people who need free public education (Ministry of Education, 2020). The Ministry of Education needs to take the leading role in establishing and managing schools for both male and female offenders in correctional facilities by providing resources and deploying teachers to work as educators just like they do for community schools. Non-provision of educational resources and support to incarcerated school-aged girls is a social injustice.

6 Conclusion

From the results and discussion of the findings above, it can be concluded that access to education as provided in the UN Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules), as well as in the Bangkok Rules, needs to be considered as the basic right of all people. This is regardless of the gender of persons incarcerated in correctional facilities for their successful rehabilitation and eventual reintegration into their communities. In Malawi, this right to education is also constitutionally guaranteed under Section 25 of the Malawi Constitution which does not discriminate based on anything, including incarceration. Thus, education inequality was unacceptable in the twenty-first century. Both male and female offenders incarcerated at adult and young offenders' facilities deserve access to quality education. Thus, equality and equity need to be exercised in the provision of education opportunities in penitentiaries. Where resources are scarce, at least similar educational resources accessed by male offenders should be equally made accessible to female offenders. The efforts should be towards making education the primary activity at every facility for both males and females.

7 Declarations

7.1 Informed Consent

All study participants voluntarily took part in this study. They were informed of their right to participate or not or stop participating at any time. They also signed the research consent forms.

7.2 Competing Interests

There is no competing interest regarding the current study.

7.3 Publisher's Note

AIJR remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in institutional affiliations.

How to Cite this Article:

Kajawo, S. C. R., & Johnson, L. R. (2024). Why Not Us? Experiences of Incarcerated Women on Education Access in Malawi Prisons. *Advanced Journal of Social Science*, 13(1), 25–39. <https://doi.org/10.21467/ajss.13.1.25-39>

References

Acker, S. (1987). Feminist theory and the study of gender and education. *International Review of Education*, 33(4), 419–435. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00615157>

- Agboola, C. (2016). Memories of the 'inside'. Conditions in South African women's prisons. *SA Crime Quarterly*, 56, 19-26. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2016/v0n56a43>
- Allen & Overy LLP. (2019). *Women in prison. Africa regional initiative*. https://www.vancecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/WIP_ARI_Report-Final-10-15-2019-compressed.pdf
- Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and ideological state apparatuses. In *Lenin and philosophy and other essays* (p. 127-188). New Left Books.
- Armstrong, E. (2020). Marxist and socialist feminism. *Study of Women and Gender*. https://scholarworks.smith.edu/swg_facpubs/15
- Atkinson, T. (1974). *Amazon odyssey*. Links Books.
- Chigwada, R. (1989). Black women's unequal experiences of prison education. *Gender and Education*, 1(2), 199-201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0954025890010208>
- Cohen L, Manion, L., & Marrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge Press.
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Cullen, F. T., & Gilbert, K. E. (2013). *Reaffirming rehabilitation* (30th ann. ed.). Anderson Publishing.
- Dastile, N. P., & Agozino, B. (2019). Decolonising incarcerated women's identities: Looking through the lens of prison abolitionism. *SA Crime Quarterly*, 68, 21-32. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2019/v0n68a5622>
- de Araújo P. F., Kerr, L., Kendall, C., Rutherford, G. W., Seal, D. W., Neto, R., Pinheiro, P., Galvão, M., Araújo, L. F., Pinheiro, F., & da Silva, A. Z. (2020). Behind bars: the burden of being a woman in Brazilian prisons. *BMC International Health and Human Rights*, 20(28), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12914-020-00247-7>
- Dikshit, V. T. (2022). Feminists' perspectives on gender gap in education. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(3), 24-35. <https://doi.org/gqg9b9>
- Esin, C., Fathi, M., & Squire, C., (2014). Narrative analysis: The constructionist approach. In U Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (p. 203-216). SAGE.
- Flick, U. (2014). Mapping the field. In *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 3-18). SAGE Publications.
- Flowers, A. (2015). Girls behind bars: Reclaiming education in transformative spaces, by Suniti Sharma. *Gender and Education*, 27(4), 466-468. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2015.1019986>
- Ghaempanah, B., & Khapova, S. N. (2023). Gender inequality in academia from the perspective of the dialogical self: Beyond 'autonomous men' and 'relational women.' *Gender and Education*, 35(6-7), 605-622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2023.2242367>
- Government of Malawi. (2018a). Gender Equality Act. In *The Laws of Malawi* (5th ed.), (pp. 4253-4262). Blackhall Publishing.
- Government of Malawi. (2018b). Constitution. In *The Laws of Malawi* (5th ed.), (pp. 17-118). Blackhall Publishing.
- Government of Malawi. (2018c). Prisons Act. In *The Laws of Malawi* (5th ed.), (pp. 1887-1991). Blackhall Publishing.
- Gunnison, E., Bernat, F. P., & Goodstein, L. (2017). *Women, crime and justice: Balancing the scales*. Wiley.
- Huber, A. (2015). Women in criminal justice systems and the added value of the UN Bangkok Rules. In H. Kury, S. Redo & E. Shea (Eds.), *Women and children as victims and offenders: Background, prevention, reintegration. suggestions for succeeding generations* (pp. 35-84). Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28424-8>
- Jäggi, L., & Kliewer, W. (2020). Reentry of incarcerated juveniles: Correctional education as a turning point across juvenile and adult facilities. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 47(11), 1348-1370. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854820934139>
- Johnson, L. R. (2015). *Offenders' perceptions of correctional education programmes in the correctional facilities of Tshwane*. (Doctoral thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa). <https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/19958>
- Kajawo, S. C. R. (2019). Examining the effectiveness of the management of education programme in Malawi prisons. *Mediterranean Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 3(2), 203-213. <http://mjbas.com/data/uploads/66218.pdf>
- Kajawo, S. C. R., & Johnson, L. R. (2023a). The right to education: Is it a reality or a pipe dream for incarcerated young prisoners in Malawi? *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, 7(3), 267-289. <https://doi.org/10.25771/dzyv-7c36>
- Kajawo, S. C. R., & Johnson, L. R. (2023b). Education of incarcerated young people in Malawi: Strategic plan versus reality. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 18(2), 7-26. <https://doi.org/10.29329/epasr.2023.548.1>
- Kajawo, S. C. R., & Johnson, L. R. (2023c). Exploring the perspectives of young offenders and correctional officers on rehabilitation programmes in Malawi: A mixed methods study. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2276123>
- Kajawo, S. C. R., & Nyirongo, R. (2022). Education of people behind bars in Malawi. In L. R. Johnson & K. P. Quan-Baffour (Eds), *Correctional (prison) education: An African panopticon*. UNISA Press.
- Kalipeni, E. (1997). Gender and regional differences in schooling between boys and girls in Malawi. *East African Geographical Review*, 19(1), 14-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00707961.1997.9756234>
- Korzh, A. (2021). Education behind bars and beyond prison: incarcerated women's education aspirations and barriers in Ukraine. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. 53(4). 636-653. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2021.1941775>
- Maguire, M. (2021). Male, failed, jailed masculinities and 'revolving door' imprisonment in the UK. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61059-3>
- Mallicoat, S. L. (2019). *Women, gender, and crime: Core concepts*. SAGE Publications.
- Ministry of Education. (2020). *National Education Sector Investment Plan 2020-2030*. <https://www.unicef.org/malawi/media/4561/file/National%20education%20sector%20investment%20plan%20.pdf>
- Odinye, I. E. (2011). Feminism and self-assertion of female characters in Buchi Emecheta's 'Second Class Citizen' and Zaynab Alkalis' 'The Stillborn'. *UJAH Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 11(1), 40-53. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v11i1.66306>
- Penal Reform International. (2021). *Global prison trends 2021. Special focus 2021: Prisons in crises*. Penal Reform International. <https://www.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Global-prison-trends-2021.pdf>
- Pomerantz, S., & Raby, R. (2011). 'Oh, she's so smart': Girls' complex engagements with post/feminist narratives of academic success. *Gender and Education*, 23(5), 549-564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2010.538014>
- Redstockings. (1970). Redstockings Manifesto. In R. Morgan (Ed.), *Sisterhood is powerful: An anthology of writing from the women's liberation movement* (pp. 533-536). Vintage Press.

- Republic of Malawi. (2019). National adult literacy and education policy. *National Planning Commission*. https://npc.mw/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Adult_literacy.pdf
- Ryder, J. A. (2020). Enhancing female prisoners' access to education. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 9(1), 139-149. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i1.1468>
- Seely, J. C., Diouf, E. D., Malischewski, C. A., Vaikath, M., & Young-Burns, K. (2013). Second-class citizens? Gender in African citizenship law. *Citizenship Studies*, 17(3-4), 429-446. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2013.793071>
- Simpkins, B. (2015). College inside: A case study of the design and implementation of a successful prison college program. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 170, 19-29. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20140>
- Thompson, D. (2001). *Radical feminism today*. SAGE Publications.
- UNICEF. (2007). *A human rights-based approach to education for all. A framework for the realization of children's right to education and rights within education*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000154861>
- United Nations. (2011). *United Nations rules for the treatment of women prisoners and non-custodial measures for women offenders (the Bangkok Rules)*. A/RES/65/229. UNODC. https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Bangkok_Rules_ENG_22032015.pdf
- United Nations. (2015). *United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners (The Nelson Mandela Rules)*. <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/175>
- Vance, C. R. (2020). *Woman wahala na prison – Causes and consequences of women's imprisonment in Sierra Leone*. Center for International Justice and AdvocAid. <https://advocaidsl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Final-Woman-wahala-na-prison-web-version-.pdf>
- Vandala, N. G. (2019). The transformative effect of correctional education: A global perspective. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1677122>
- Walmsley, R. (2017). *World female imprisonment list* (4th ed.). Institute for Criminal Policy Research. <https://www.prisonstudies.org/news/world-female-imprisonment-list-fourth-edition>
- Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Publish your research article in AIJR journals-

- ✓ Online Submission and Tracking
- ✓ Peer-Reviewed
- ✓ Rapid decision
- ✓ Immediate Publication after acceptance
- ✓ Articles freely available online
- ✓ Retain full copyright of your article.

Submit your article at journals.aijr.org

Publish your books with AIJR publisher-

- ✓ Publish with ISBN and DOI.
- ✓ Publish Thesis/Dissertation as Monograph.
- ✓ Publish Book Monograph.
- ✓ Publish Edited Volume/ Book.
- ✓ Publish Conference Proceedings
- ✓ Retain full copyright of your books.

Submit your manuscript at books.aijr.org