PREFACE

Every human being has certain fundamental rights which every individual and government must uphold and respect. This concept is rooted in most of the world's religions and cultures and is reflected in many legal systems. It can therefore be implied that in every community, despite cultural or traditional differences, people have the same basic aspirations and ideals of life. Human rights are Universal and apply to all persons without discrimination. Respect for individual rights needs to be upheld at all times, irrespective of circumstances or political systems. The rights of any particular individual or group in any particular circumstance can only be restricted if they threaten to curtail similar or comparable rights of other persons.

India is a parliamentary democracy with a free press, civilian controlled military, independent judiciary and active political and civic associations. Competitive elections produce regular changes of leadership at the national, state and municipal level. The state governments have primary responsibility for maintaining law and order. However the central government provide guidance and support through use of national paramilitary forces and in law has ultimate responsibility for protecting human rights. Despite extensive constitutional and statutory safeguards, significant human rights abuses persist throughout India. As in past years areas of abuse include; political killings, kidnapping and extortion by militants, torture, rape and deaths of suspects in police custody and other agents of government against women, infrequent prosecution of dowry deaths and widespread exploitation of indentured. The fourth United Nations Conference on women endorsed women's rights as human rights, yet the denial of basic human
rights of women and girls in our nation continues on every level.

The National Commission for women, since its inception, have undertaken manifold activities in the cause of women in our country. Of them, an important field of activity relates to custodial justice for women and gender justice in criminal law administration. Chairperson of National Commission for women observed that unfortunately exploitation of women were being carried even to the prisons. So problems of women prisoners in Human Rights perspective is of great concern. But no comprehensive work has been done so far in the state of Haryana. Hence a modest attempt has been made through the present study. In the present study an attempt has been made to explore the Human Rights perspective of women prisoners in Haryana. Focus of the present study is on socio-economic, environmental; civil and political human rights of women prisoners in Haryana. Borstal Institute Hisar is unique institute in the state of Haryana for women prisoners. Both categories of women prisoners, convicted and undertrials were incarcerated there. At the time of investigation there were ninety convicted women prisoners in the institute. We took all convicted women for the study. Therefore no problem of sampling arised. We took ninety undertrials to pace the number with convicted by random method. For the purpose of the collection of data both the primary and secondary sources of data were adopted. Interview of respondents was conducted through questionnaire with open ended and close ended questions. The information from respondents was taken on various aspects as: socio economic status of respondents; environmental rights; socio-economic rights; and civil and political rights of the respondents.

Findings of our study is that women prisoners of Haryana are middle aged, rural, illiterates married, Hindu, housewives of higher castes and from joint
families as well as from lower middle income groups. In Haryana women prisoners live in overcrowding atmosphere in the jails. Women prisoners were provided with insufficient physical facilities, which affects the personal hygiene. Women prisoners were not aware about their human rights and law enforcing officials did not inform them about their rights at any stage. Most of the women prisoners were having neutral/indifferent experience from police and jail authorities. Some women prisoners were having bitter experience of police behaviour towards them. Most of the women prisoners were incarcerated at distant places from their residences. They were not satisfied with jail authorities about listening and solution of their complaints. Almost all the women prisoners wanted to transfer themselves in the nearest district jails from their residences. Although jail authorities provide food and bedding according to prescribed norms, rather than women prisoners especially undertrials were not satisfied with such facilities. Women prisoners were provided with work in the jail and their work was not training oriented. Undertrial women prisoners were provided with work, which was not according to the body of principles for undertrials. Medical facilities for women prisoners in the jail were poor. Female doctor should be appointed for women prisoners.

Jail authorities should regard the human rights of women prisoners, according to the norm of United Nation's approval of prisoners rights body; from time to time. This study is exploratory one but it is helpful for policy makers and law enforcing authorities. It will be obvious to explain that universe of study is Haryana state only. To universalise any interpretation of the study, there should be same studies in different states of India. Human Rights concept is of global importance; so exploration of the study are of great importance.
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(Arun Kumar)