

Mothers in Chains: Lived Experiences of Mothers Deprived of Liberty

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Abstract

Because mothers are more likely than fathers to be the primary parental figure for their children and more likely to experience financial strain before, during, and after incarceration, maternal incarceration is a distinct and amplifying risk factor. This paper summarizes the effects of incarceration to mothers deprived of liberty and their strategies in handling their lives inside the institutional corrections. This study used qualitative approach through phenomenology employing in-depth interview as the main gathering tool. It was revealed that mothers deprived of liberty experiences emotional problems especially on their motherhood role. They experienced discontentment of being a mother to their children. Further, they had anxieties that their children may experience because of the stigma of their incarceration. Moreover, having a strong support group from inside and outside jail greatly helped the mothers deprived of liberty in handling their lives inside the institutions. The findings of this study may motivate and empower mothers deprived of liberty to cope up with the challenges they are experiencing through understanding the effects of their incarceration and re-assume their motherhood identities. Finally, this study will help the readers to realize the situation of the mothers deprived of liberty and be of help in their recovery.

Keywords: *motherhood; family; experiences; incarceration; child*

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I. Introduction

Becoming a mother, a primary source of care and support in the life of a child, can undoubtedly be one of the most profound and defining moments in a woman's life. Research increasingly provides evidence of how the neurological changes women experience in pregnancy, childbirth, and in the course of child rearing are nothing short of a psychological transformation.

Moreover, studies on child development strengthened the fact that bonding between mother and child is crucial in all phases in development, however, unfortunate incidents such as incarceration of the mother in penal Institutions because forced separation of the mother and child as society strongly criticizes the idea of letting female inmates keep their children with them behind bars because it is widely believed that prison is not a safe place to raise children and the prison facilities could not enhance a child's life. (Villar, n.d). So far, if the mothers are incarcerated, they will face more stressors than other inmates, including separation from children, lack of confidence in parenting, custody and visitation, and lack of social and planning for reunification of children.

Meanwhile, the percentage of women in the prison population has greatly increased in recent decades. Women, specifically mothers, who are incarcerated face multiple hardships, including mental health problems, abuse, and lack of education and job skills prior to incarceration (Imber-Black, 2008).

On the other hand, with the growing population of women in prison, most of them being mothers, it is estimated that over 300,000 minor children have a mother in jail or prison and most of these mothers (estimates ranging from two-thirds to three-fifths) are custodial parents living with their children prior to incarceration (Young and Reviere, 2006). Thus, children with incarcerated mothers are more likely to experience disruption in living arrangements than are children with an incarcerated father (Dallaire, 2007). Such stress on the children has the potential to bring stress and mental anguish on the incarcerated mother, worrying about her children's well-being from behind bars.

Moreover, maternal incarceration is a unique case of parental incarceration (Dallaire, 2007). The mothers themselves experience guilt and other negative emotions and mental health problems when incarcerated (Arditti and Few, 2008; Imber-Black, 2008). Despite the negative consequences for mothers, many consider motherhood an impetus for survival and success during the incarceration period (Benedict, 2009; Shamai and Kochal, 2008).

Fewer child visits and negative feelings about family relationships result in rises in depression for incarcerated mothers. Mothers express the importance of contact, including visitation and frequent phone contact with older children (Poehlmann, 2005). Active parenting during the incarceration period can help to reduce other negative psychological consequences (Toch, 1975). Some mothers in prison consider motherhood their motive for survival, helping to alleviate negative outcomes for both parent and child (Benedict, 2009; Greenberg, 2007; Shamai and Kochal, 2008).

Furthermore, when difficulties in relationships between mothers and their children's caregivers arise, less mother-child contact occurs, creating further distress for mothers (Poehlmann, 2005b). Separation from children can result in problems adjusting to life during incarceration, leading to additional feelings of helplessness, anger, guilt, fear of the loss of attachment, and rejection (Young and Reviere, 2006).

Most mothers who become incarcerated (approximately 75 percent) lived with their children prior to incarceration (Johnson and Waldfoegel, 2002). These mothers often have intense distress at the initial separation from their children, though they are often eventually able to better balance their views and emotions over time. Still, more mental health services are needed for incarcerated mothers as they experience a great deal of stress throughout their incarceration (Poehlmann, 2005b). Mothers can feel lonely and confused from the isolation of incarceration (Imber-Black, 2008).

It is difficult to discern the independent effects of incarceration on families (Clear, 2007a) since many families experiencing incarceration face greater disadvantages than other segments of the population even before the parent is incarcerated (DeHart and Altschuler, 2009; Murray, 2007).

Difficulties in getting children to visit or otherwise maintaining contact and relationships with children can be detrimental to the incarcerated parent emotionally and psychologically (Maruna, LeBel, and Lanier, 2004). Parental incarceration has larger consequences for family life as a whole including stigma, marital strain, and the loss of family ties, particularly for minority families (Patillo, Weiman, and Western, 2004; Western and Wildeman, 2009).

Siegel (2011) echoes the findings of other researchers, such as Golden (2005), suggesting that the stigma accompanying a mother's incarceration stems not only from the same of having a mother who has acted in ways that defy conventional standards of motherhood and expectations of women more generally, but also from the profound sense of being outside the norm for children and their families. The stigma of being/having an incarcerated mother can result in negative feelings for individuals and families. For the mother who is incarcerated, she may find this stigma an additional hindrance to performing her motherly roles and a catalyst for negative emotions (Easterling, 2012).

Studies of parenting in prison tend to focus on how programs can help incarcerated mothers keep contact with their children. Prior research suggests that once parents enter prison, their definitions of family and their roles as parents must be redefined (Benedict, 2009; Enos, 2001; Owen, 1998; Poehlmann, 2005b; Young and Reviere, 2006). Yet, the current body of literature has yet to fully explain what it means to "parent" from prison. Active parenting may be impossible in an objective sense, requiring parents seeking to stay active in the lives of their children to redefine what it means to take part in parenting. Efforts to parent from prison can produce a variety of negative mental health outcomes for imprisonment (Arditti and Few, 2008; Poehlmann, 2005b; Wismont, 2000; Young and Reviere, 2006).

In Idaho, programs for incarcerated mothers include visitation, camp, and reading programs for incarcerated mothers and their children. These programs are like those offered in other states (Burns et al., 2003). Advocates for parenting programs in prison argue that imprisonment is deleterious to parent-child relationships and that the impact of separation can be lessened by efforts undertaken to strengthen communication between parents and children during this period (Barry, 1985; Fishman, 1982). They view such on-going communication as vital in maintaining parent-child attachment and in enabling mothers and fathers to maintain their parental roles and carry out their parental responsibilities and commitments.

II. Objectives

This research was conducted due to the growing problem the effects of incarceration to the mothers deprived of liberty and their families. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to determine the effects of incarceration to the mothers deprived of liberty. It will specifically uncover the lived experiences of these mothers. Through this study that it will raise awareness on the needs of these mothers and assist them in coping with the effects of incarceration.

III. Materials and Methods

This research utilized the Qualitative Approach of research. This is a type of research that focuses on “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). This utilized phenomenology because it focused on the lived experiences of the mothers. The incarceration of one’s family member is also considered as an intense and emotional challenging phenomenon that is experienced by the participants. To arrive with the needed data, an interview guide was designed and recording device was used. Rapport was established and informed consent was obtained, including the consent to record conversations. The participant was assured of the confidentiality of their answers and the anonymity of their identities.

The verbal data were transcribed into written form then initial codes were created. Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic organization or Synchronic organization was utilized in the treatment of data. This method was considered useful for understanding the major events in the narrative and the effect of those events on the individual constructing the narrative (Labov, 1972).

IV. Results and Discussions

The Effects of Incarceration to the Lives of Mothers Deprived of Liberty

Distress felt at the onset of incarceration

As experienced, most of the participants felt distress during the first few months of their incarceration. The sources of this are attributed to self-blaming, loneliness, anxieties and difficulty in adapting to their new situation.

Self-blaming is considered as a common reaction to stressful events like incarceration. They don’t have anybody to blame but themselves. And as a result, some participants recognize what they have done and express regrets as to what they have done. As participant A said, “*Wen, pirmi nga ag babawi ak. Tattak lang nga na realize no apay nga naaramid ko nga mangloko ti kapwak*” (Yes, I do regret about it. Its only now that I realize why I have done it). However, despite these, they consider this as a learning experience. One of the participants said, “*Pero daytoy nga na aramid ko addati naadal ko. Amin nga madi nga aramid adda ti kasukat na nga narigragat pay gayam ngem ti panpanunutem nga kasukat na*”. (But I have learned something from what I did. All bad things done will have consequences). From these statements, repentance and remorse have been observed as initial reaction to the incarceration.

Initially, their stay in the correctional institution is saddening. As further stated, *Nasakit adi nga maiadayu iti pamilyam* (It is very painful to be away from your family). A participant even mentioned that as if it is the end of the world. They experienced difficulty in adjusting in the situation especially for first time offenders. As Participant B said, “*Nung una, first to six months, mahirap talaga kasi meron yung stigma sa akin sa labas na pag balod ka, nakakatakot, ganun very bad ka, kamumuhian ka*” (During the first six months, it is difficult because of the stigma to me outside that if you are an inmate, you are scary, you are very bad and they hated you). This difficulty in adjusting to situation can also be attributed to their psychological state in which they have anxieties and fear of being stigmatized by people outside the jail.

Research has shown that individual and institutional differences can reduce or amplify the experience of distress during incarceration (Day, Casey, Vess, & Huisy, 2012; Liebling & Maruna, 2011). Liebling et al. (2011) concluded that the majority of prisoners involved in their research appeared to suffer in one way or another from “entry shock” into prison. Furthermore, in the study of Dezutter et al (2015) they revealed that inmates experienced incarceration as “hitting the bottom,” and once in prison, they felt shocked by what they had done. The experience of imprisonment led to a period of deep existential questioning, magnified by the fact that there was now so much time to reflect.

It is noted that distress is the result of experiencing incongruence between former meanings and purposes in life and new meanings that are experienced, for example, after committing an impulsive act of violence. As suggested by the qualitative studies, incarceration can create a dissonance between one’s former meanings and purposes in life and one’s experience of meaning in prison (Maruna et al., 2006; van Ginneken, 2014; Vanhooren et al., 2015).

Yet, despite the stress that they are suffering they still need to adapt in their current situation to survive. As mentioned by Participant B, “*Pero after six months, wala nakarecover ka na. Parang na adopt ko na yung sarili ko sa sitwasyon*” (But after six months, I have recovered already to the situation). The recovery from the situation could be credited by being with inmates with similar circumstances. This is done by sharing of problems and attending activities that helped them in their adaptation process. As Participant D said, “*han meten unay narigat agiyan dito ta han lang nga siyak ti agmaymaysa. Adu kami dita uneg. At least ada*

kabingbingay mo. Isu nga han unay nadagsen. (It is not already that difficult to live here because I am not alone. We are many here. At least, we have somebody to share with. That's why it is not that difficult).

Family's Struggle in Accepting the Situation

As incarceration rates increased, more number of families and children with imprisonment of a parent increases. Thus, they experience difficulty in accepting that the mother will be staying away from them. As mentioned, *"Of course, just as I have expected, uhh...syempre narigatan da karkaro dagijay uubing. Umiiyak sila. Sabi nila mawawala yung nanay nila"* Of course, just as I have expected. They had difficulty in accepting my situation especially the children. They are crying. They said that their mother will be gone). Another statement from Participant C, *"Jay anak ko nga 16 years old nasakit rikna na* (My 16-year-old child is upset). As gleaned from these experiences, the most affected here are the children especially that there is a special bond between mothers and children. There is also a denial on the part of the family members. Participant D said, *"han da nga ma-acceptar nga umunegak ditoy baludan"* (They could not accept that I am here at jail).

The incarceration of a mother has ramifications for the children she leaves behind, especially if she was the primary caregiver of those children prior to her imprisonment. Children of incarcerated mothers face unique challenges. Because of the mother's arrest, the child may have experienced distress from the unexpected separation from their mother and most children are at risk for feelings of fear, worry, resentment, sadness, depression and blame (Poehlmann, Shlafer, Maes, & Hanneman, 2008; Simmons, 2000).

One of the complications here was how they would be able to explain their situation to their child/children. Some participants were able to explain it to them but could not be able to answer the questions raised by their children. Like Participant A, she said, *"Di sinumrekak ditoy I explained to them ay kaya da ay maawatan. I explained to them that I have to fix a problem. Question da iman, how long? And hanakon nakasumbat.* (When I entered here, I explained to them in a way that they will understand. I explained to them that I have to fix a problem. Their question was for how long? That I cannot be able to answer). Usually, mothers would euphemize their situation to their children so that it would be easier for them to understand. This is considered as heart breaking especially if they will ask the mother when she will be coming back.

In some cases, some families gave up on their loved one inside the jail. They are willing that the mother will be incarcerated for her own sake. As Participant C said, *"Syempre kunan da natangken ti ulok, sige ta dita ka pay tanu ma restore ka. Makaadal ka kasjay* (Of course they say I am hard headed. You stay there for you to be restored and learned). Thus, this statement proves that families concern to their loved ones inside the jail or prison differs on how it is expressed. Basing from her statement, the family members believe that this situation would help the mother be reformed from the mistakes she made. Despite giving up, they still hope for resolving this problem. As mentioned, *"Syempre ada ti maibaga da nga narigat ngem syempre natiliwakon, nag give up dan. Di bale satayo ayusen* (Of course some will say it's difficult but I am already arrested. They give up. That's fine We will fix this).

Also, the incarceration creates distress to their family which caused problems like health problems. According to Participant D, *"Na stress da piman. Ni lakay ko lumaklakay gapu ti stress. Ni nanang ko pirmi ti sangit na. Ni tatang ko nastress, nag hypertension"* (They were stressed. My husband looks old because of stress. My mother keeps on crying. My Father suffered hypertension). Despite this, they were able to overcome this as days goes by. They have learned to accept that Participant D surrendered because she acknowledges her fault.

Some family members also helped them in preparing them for their incarceration. One participant who have a husband who is a law enforcer said, *"Dinamag dak ni lakay ko, kayam ba agiyan ditoy. Inadvisan dak nga narigat ti agbiyag ijay kulungan. Intrain dak. Physically, Emotionally, Spiritually Prepared"* (My husband asked me, will you be okay living here? He advised me that life inside the jail is difficult. He trained me. Physically, Emotionally, spiritually prepared). Family members play a great role in the adaptation process of the mother inside the jail. Their concern helped them to be stronger and face the challenges especially during the initial stages. Preparing them in their incarceration like how Participant D's husband did is a great help for her so she can remain strong and hope for the best. Therefore, families are still hoping that there will be solution for the release of their loved ones.

Discontentment of being a Mother

Most of the participants describe themselves as a not perfect but a good mother to their children. As mentioned by Participant A, *"Always tried to be a good mother to my children"*. She recognized the fact that she is not perfect but keeps on doing her best to be a good mother. Also, Participant B said, *"Isa akong mabuting ina, asawa. Gingawa ko ang lahat para sa ikakabuti ng anak ko, maitaguyod ko ang kanilang pag-aaral upang mabuti silang tao"* (I am a good mother. I do all I can for the betterment of my children, for their education and for them to be good people). As a mother, they are considered as the *Ilaw ng Tahanan* (Light of the Home). Their responsibilities include teaching them to be good people. Despite committing mistakes, it does not mean

to say that they are also bad in parenting. They may have been bad to other people but as to parenting, it would be different.

Thus, the incarceration made their role in the family as complicated. They feel discontentment of being a wife to their husband and as mothers to their children. Most of the participants mentioned about this challenge that they undergo. These are the statements of the mothers:

As of now, Syempre ada jay feeling mo a you are not performing as a mother. Who is to be blamed but me (Participant A). As of now, Of course I felt like I am not performing as a mother. Who is to be blamed but me?)

Uhh...syempre jay 2 years and 7 months nga ada ak ditoy, hanku naaramid ti responsibilidad ko as his wife. Hankun nga maisagan usar na, mailutuan, mailabaan. Hindi ko na siya madadamayan sa kanyang problema. (Uhh...Of course for 2 years and 7months that I am here, I can no longer accomplish my responsibility as a wife).

These statements alone can present that they were helpless. They were incapacitated of performing their roles in the family. As a mother, they feel anxiety of what will be happening to their children outside. There are What ifs that they cannot answer especially when they get sick. As Participant D said, *“hanmo pulos maidippel jay imam ijay ulo na, you feel pity on yourself kasi han mo nga matulungan ti pamilyam no time nga kasapulan daka. Nu agsakit jay pamilyam nu adda ti madi nga mapasamak kenyada ijay ruar nu adda eskwelat anak mo ket hanmu pulos maattendaran ti meeting da kasjay adda ti activities da maawardan suna ket sabali nga tao ti ag-award”* (You feel pity on yourself because you cannot help your family when they need you. If they get sick or if something wrong happens to them, if there are activities or meetings at school or if they will have awards other people will do it for them because you are not there). Self-pity have been observed from the statements presented. Some of them felt that they were useless.

Family role expectations of prisoners, therefore, center on demonstrations of caring and concern for children or other family members or participation in decision making about select family issues. Prisoners participate in family life by sending cards to acknowledge birthdays and other events of family relevance, calling home or the place where other family members have gathered on holidays, writing letters to inquire about and encourage childrens progress in school and giving advice on how to handle different problems (Hairston, 2001).

According to Participant D, “I pity my husband. I pity myself. My self-worth has gone low”. Self-pity have been observed from the statements presented. Some of them felt that they were useless. According to Participant D, “I pity my husband. I pity myself. My self-worth has gone low”.

This is something that they cannot control because of their situation. This further added to the stress that they are experiencing. Thus, some family members prefer not to inform them of the problems they are experiencing outside.

The loneliness of female incarcerated individuals is qualitatively different to the male inmates because their degree of attachment from their families is high than males and they are not used to the fact that their daily activities are controlled by the prison authorities (Rokach and Koledin, 1997). This suggests that measures need to be in place to maintain contact and visitation with family and friends, particularly because many prisoners are imprisoned a long distance away from home.

Further, one of the participants experienced fear of being replaced by the husband. She said, *“Ada jay time nga han tayo maiwasan agpanunit baka isukat dak or baka agbabae kasjay”* (At times, I cannot prevent myself from thinking maybe he will replace me or he will find another girl).

Another anxiety experienced by mothers is that their children will be subjected to ridicule. Some participants felt that their children may be bullied because of them-triggering stress they experience. Participant A said, *Mabutengak ta baka other people will make fun of them. Ada kanu agibaga, U ni mama na ada ejay baludan. Diay stigma. Nadadamay sila sa kasalanang hindi nila nagawa. Mabully da iman ejay school* (I am afraid because other people will make fun of them. Some were saying, his/her mother is in prison. The stigma they felt. They are being affected with the mistake that they did not commit. They are bullied in school). This is one of the effects of incarceration of a parent to the children. Thus, presenting unique challenges on their part. As mothers, they worry about how their mistake are also being suffered by the children. This is something that makes them also helpless-how they could fight for their children when they are the reason why they were bullied.

Moreover, mothers need to be a “good mother” and they expressed worry over their children during their separation and sought social support for their grief associated with being away from children (Owen, 1998, p.121).

A Change in the Family System

As mentioned earlier, the mother is the light of the home. She holds the family together since the husband usually is the one who goes to work. Thus, with the incarceration of the mother, there is a shift in the family system that created problems like difficulty in adjustment which was previously discussed. Aside from these, the role of being a mother has been transferred either to the husband or to other members of the family. This is because the father has to work and the children will be taken care of by other members of the family specifically. Participant Alpha said, *“Isuna ti marigatab unay ta agtatrabaho, kasi jay uubing handa mabaliin agiyan ditoy. So they have to stay with their grandparents”* (He (referring to the father) is having a hard time in working and the children cannot stay here so they have to stay with their grandparents). Most of the time, the caretaker of the children are the grandparents. Though they are the grandparents, there is still a difference when it is the mother who is taking care of the children especially on the attachment.

When fathers are incarcerated, the majority of their children remain in the care of their mothers (Codd, 2008). However, research suggests that when a mother is incarcerated, children often experience multiple placements. According to Snell (1994) approximately one-half of children whose mothers are incarcerated live with grandparents, one-quarter live with their fathers, and one quarter are placed in foster care or live with other relatives or family friends. The children in the latter group are often separated from siblings and may experience multiple shifts in living arrangements. Caregivers often have limited financial means and lack social

support (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993). While grandparents serving as caregivers may experience similar concerns as other caregivers, their difficulties may be compounded if they are elderly, in poor health, or have difficulty navigating social services in order to receive benefits (Codd, 2008).

However, in the case of Participant C, there are no other members to take care of the children so the father will have to take all the burden in working as well as taking care of the children. She said, *“Naitransfer ni lakay ko ti dayshift di awan ti ag-awir ijay anak ko. Tas kunana sino ag-awir jay anak ko, anusanen a nga awiren ti kaaruba* (My husband was transferred to day shift so nobody will take care of our child. Then he said, who will take care of our child, then we have to entrust them to our neighbors). This, perhaps is one of the challenges encountered by the father in taking care of the child especially if no other family members are present. The risk to let the child be entrusted to other people (not blood related) is high. It would affect the father’s job.

The Coping Mechanisms Applied by the Mothers to Face their Challenges

Self-Reliance

Nobody can help them but themselves. This statement was taken from all of the interviews to the incarcerated mothers. Since they are already away from their families, they cannot just rely to others. They have to be strong and rely to themselves. As one participant said, *“Walang ibang makakatulong say o kundi yang sarili mo. If you give up, wala na.* (Nobody can help you but yourself. If you give up, then it is over).

One of the reasons on how they become stronger in relying to themselves is being optimistic. This is quite difficult to achieve especially during the initial phases of incarceration when they felt helpless and hopeless. However, as time goes by they start to develop this optimistic attitude. Participant C said, *“Yan. Positive Thinking. Positive attitude, Positive amin amin kasi nu negative, awanen* (That. Positive Thinking. Positive attitude, Positive in everything because if it’s negative, its over). One can be able to start being positive by accepting their situation. They have to learn that the process they are undergoing are all part of making them renewed people. This is further explained by Participant B, *“Acceptarem ti napasamak. Kailangan nga acceptarek nga I’m on the process of healing nga maagasanak. That this is for my own sake.* (You have to accept what happened. I have to accept that I’m on the process of healing that I will be cured). They start to be hopeful that someday they could be with their family again. These are their motivations to go on with their lives inside the jail.

Attendance to Activities provided by Jail

As part of the rehabilitation program, jails offer programs and activities like Interfaith, Therapeutic Community Modality Program, Skills related programs, and Health and Fitness Programs.

Interfaith Programs helped them in knowing God and having a strong faith to Him. This is one of the most common response from the participants. Since they don’t have anybody to cling on especially when they felt that they were alone, introducing God to them ease the loneliness they felt and making them hopeful. They consider God as their teacher on how they will live their life after incarceration. Participant B said, *“Maamamwak ni Apo Diyos nga nu rumwarak ammokon ti ikastak ti biag ko nga nasayaat kasjay* (I get to know about God and if I get out, I already know how to live my life). Part of the Interfaith Program is the Devotional Study. Participant D mentioned, *“Uhhh...Kwa devotional study. No awan talek moo kini Apo hanka nga maka survive. Isunga ikikan dakami ti oras panggep iti dayta* (Uhhh...Devotional Study. If you have no faith to God then you cannot survive. That is the reason why we are given time for that).

Faith in God eased their worries and anxieties about their family. They lift up their problems to God and even used it as a way of extending their concerns for their family. As said, "*Ahh, kwa...Prayer. Isu laeng ti mang babind kadakami ti pamilyak kasi awan ti cellphone ditoy. Awan ti pangkontakak kenyada sunga idaldalan ko ti prayer*" (Prayer. This is the only thing that binds me with my family because we don't have cellphone here. I don't have contact with them so I just pray for them).

A very important reason why inmates become involved with religion is to improve their own self-concept. Lack of a positive self-concept is a common problem with correctional inmates who may suffer from guilt related to failures in life, remorse from criminal acts, or, from the pain of a dysfunctional family background. Because the core of many religious beliefs includes acceptance and love from a higher being, and from members of the faith group, inmates often feel better about themselves if they practice religion while incarcerated.

Seeman (1996) showed that religious coping mechanisms, when compared to other coping mechanisms, help individuals to better react to stressful situations.

Another identified program is the Therapeutic Community Modality Program which is one of the factors why the participants became self-reliant and having a positive outlook in life. Accordingly, The Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP) is an approach that focuses on the learning and relearning of behavioural skills, attitudes and values, associated with socialized living for the clientele in a community setting (BJMP Manual).

Participant A said, "*We have TCMP. Diyay ngay ti learning tools mi ditoy tapno makacope-up kai jay kakadwam ta sabali ti ugali ditoy. Ta siyempre sabasabali ti nagapwan mi nga pamilya ditoy, sabasabali ti culture, isunga nu awan siguro diyay nga behavioural shaping tools mi ket baka agaapa kami* (We have TCMP. These learning tools help us to cope up with our co-inmates because we have different attitudes, different cultures, that's why without those behavioural shaping tools we might be quarrelling). Hence, TCMP is perceived to be helpful in blending in and being sociable to their co-PDLs. This program binds the PDLs and to help avoid disturbances that results from their differences. This is corroborated by Day et al., 2012; Liebling et al. (2011) that different factor(s) like therapeutic climate, size, open vs. closed regime, low-medium risk vs. medium-high risk prisoners, personal relationship with prisoners vs. maintaining a more distant relationship are known to have an important effect on the prison climate and on the level of distress among inmates.

This is further corroborated with Participant C statement, "*Uhhmm...kasjay... nagbalin kami nga alert, nagbalin kami nga aware. Nagbalin kami nga concern. Natrain kami.*" (We are trained. We became alert, aware and concern). Livelihood Programs help the PDLs to enhance their skills that they may be able to use as a form of income. This could be utilized to help their families outside.

Further, health related and fitness activities were also mentioned like playing sports and dancing Zumba. These activities help the participants overcome the challenges they have especially boredom. This kind of activity has sought to engage prisoners in actively developing their physical beings. Through this, the PDL mothers were able to overcome their boredom as it strikes their fine zones. It also improves their mind and body as well as their functioning. Staying healthy is one of the things they're considering because they should always be in good condition to pursue on their different activities each day.

The provision of sport and recreation programs to inmates within the prison system provides a unique context to investigate the role of sport in enacting social change. Certainly, Participant A have denote, "*...agzumzumba kami every morning to get fit.*" (We do zumba every morning to get fit). Also participant D included, "*Physical exercises, agzumzumba kami, agtae-taebo kami.*" (We do physical exercises, zumba, and taebo.). In addition, there were also other sports which they can play such that they can roll strength in basketball or play with their minds through chess.

Recreation can lead to increased self-esteem, which is another psychological benefit provided. To some inmates, playing sports can be an important factor in what it means to be masculine. Therefore, playing sports develops and maintains self-esteem. One PDL said, "Through sports you learn how to interact with other people and learn how to obey the rules and, you know, good self-image and I think there's a lot of a positive aspect of it. With anything you know, there's going to be positive and negative but I think the positive outweighs the negative".

The phenomena of recreation and leisure are a powerful rehabilitative tool. Understood and applied in the corrections situation, leisure pursuits can provide the inmate with identity, inner satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment and necessary socially acceptable outlets as possible deterrents to antisocial behavior.

The "official" ideology of prison sports is that it involves more than just allowing inmates to escape the monotony of prison life. Correctional recreation allows prisoners to make changes to their attitudes and behaviors. Recreation programs can help reduce stress, conquer social weaknesses, and encourage physical wellness. These programs allow inmates to relieve the pressure of life in prison while also promoting healthy physical, mental, and social abilities. An ideal prison recreation program should also focus on the overall health

of the individual. Additionally, recreation would help to teach pro-social values, educate inmates, and promote good sportsmanship practices (Caplan, 1996)

Encouragement from Inside and Outside Forces

Outside forces refer to the people who are at the community providing support to the PDL mothers. On the other hand, inside forces are those inside the jail that helped them. Among these are families and friends.

Among these, the most influential is the family. The bond they have with their family could be a factor why they could easily encourage and influence them. Visiting the PDL mothers is already an encouragement for them. It gives them hope and motivation so they could survive the hurdles that they have. Family members find time to visit the PDL mother to strengthen the bond. As Participant A, "*As one family, they come to visit, nu adda ti bakasyon umay da agbisita. Ni lakay ko ag-ininawid every weekend*" (As one family, they come to visit. If it is vacation time they come to visit. My husband visits every weekend). Even distance cannot hinder the family from visiting. Though, this is also a problem. Therefore, both the PDL and her family adjust to the visitation. As stated by a Participant, "*Uhhmmm...agsipod ta ti parents ko ket adayo ayan da ijay Aurora Province ket ijay almost 3 years nga adda ak ditoy, 3 or 4 times dak nga binisita. Ni lakay ko, awan ti problem ta twice a week na siyak nga bisbisitaen.*"

Fewer child visits and negative feelings about family relationships result in rises in depression for incarcerated mothers. Mothers express the importance of contact, including visitation and frequent phone contact with older children (Poehlmann, 2005). Active parenting during the incarceration period can help to reduce other negative psychological consequences (Toch, 1975). Some mothers in prison consider motherhood their motive for survival, helping to alleviate negative outcomes for both parent and child (Benedict, 2009; Greenberg, 2007; Shamai and Kochal, 2008).

One of the changes they encounter is the losing of old friends. Thus, to cope up, they build friendship to their co-PDLs, Participant D said, "*Wen, friends ...friends inside the jail.ahaha... kasi awanen dagijay friends mi ijay ruar... Isu ti kashe-share mo...familyam...diyay lang.* (Yes, friends. Friends inside the jail. Ahaha... Because our friends outside are no longer around. So we share problems to each other)". Having similar circumstances create circle of friends among the PDLs. They share problems and seek solution together. Thus, lessening the tensions and worries experienced inside.

In general, the PDL mothers and their families are both affected with the effects of incarceration. Among these are distress, family's difficulty in adjusting, anxieties, and discontentment of being a mother. However, these are overcome through self-reliance, encouragement from inside and outside forces, and attendance to different activities provided by jail and service providers.

V. Conclusion

Mothers play a role in the maintenance of a family. They act as a binder of the family since they are dubbed as the *Ilaw ng Tahanan*. Hence, when removed from home due to incarceration, there is a great loss to the family. Since mothers are used to living their lives as supporter for their husband and caretakers for their children, the incarceration placed them in great distress which includes helplessness. Therefore, they have needs that are distinctive from that of other female PDLs. They are not just female PDLs, they are mothers.

As gleaned from the findings, children are the most affected victims of this circumstance. The change of family structure made it difficult for them to adjust in the new situation. Thus, PDL mothers still have with them their maternal instinct. They want to be there with their children even if they are not always present.

It may not be that easy for PDL mothers to stay away from their family but some of them remain strong. Starting with the acceptance of their fate helps them with their coping mechanisms. As mentioned, it all starts with a positive mindset. Further, they start to hope for the better with the help of God, family, friends and jail programs and activities.

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