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Impact of Custodial Violence among Kal Oddar Women and Children in Mottamalai, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract: *Kal Oddars have been identified and stigmatized as criminals. The stigmatization has an intricate effect in their daily life. Their fundamental and basic rights are constantly violated by the Government. Education, employment etc has been in the back of beyond for Kal Oddar community. The men are incessantly arrested by the police and are subjected to custodial violence which affects the women and children's well-being. The study, "Impact of Custodial Violence on Kal Oddar Women and Children in Mottamalai, Tamil Nadu " aims to bring out the effect of Custodial Violence on Women and children of the community. 10 case studies were discussed in this study. The respondents were selected based on Purposive Sampling technique to address the impact effectively. Analysis of the Case Study indicated that their everyday life is at stake. Women play the roles of both themselves and the men and are exhausted physically, emotionally and financially. Children drop out from schools and become involved in delinquent behaviour resulting in doubtful future. The prejudice held against them does not allow them to grow. The undefined social status of Kal Oddars should be redefined by the Government.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of India Custodial Violence is a "Dark Reality" in our Democratic Country governed by the Rule of Law. The term Custodial Violence includes all types of physical and mental torture inflicted upon a person in police custody. According to Justice B.P JEEVAN REDDY, "Custodial Violence includes torture, death, rape and excessive beating in Police Custody". There are many Sections in Indian Penal Code to eliminate the occurrence of custodial violence, but it still continues to happen in many parts of the world. It is the direct invasion on the RIGHT TO PERSONAL LIBERTY Guaranteed under ARTICLE 21 of the Indian Constitution. Hence, detailed procedure is given in the law to ensure that a person is taken into custody by a legal authority only for lawful purposes in a fair, reasonable and proportionate manner. The nature of custody can be judicial, police or under an institution obliged to take care of the inmates like hospitals, homes, etc. Even though the rate of custodial violence is increasing day by day, it is veiled by the people in power. Custodial violence is one of the most serious crimes committed by the State Officials against the civilians. They do so to bring out confession, or sometimes just to extract money and belongings of the arrestees. At times, the arrestees are tortured to death. This has evoked public outcry against the law enforcing agencies.

When a person undergoes custodial torture or violence, not only is he affected physically, but he's affected mentally and emotionally too. First of all, it is a violation of law and order, and the victim may face legal problems in future. Undergoing such torture may lead to permanent damage in body parts. The person might have extreme stress after experiencing such a traumatic event. His social life can also be affected due to this. It leads to death in extreme cases.

A. Types Of Custodial Violence

Primarily, there are three types of custodial violence, namely Physical, Psychological and Sexual Violence.

- 1) PHYSICAL VIOLENCE is the exertion of control over another person through the use of physical force. It includes beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming or killing, the use of objects of weapons against an individual, or any other act in an attempt to cause, or result in, pain and physical injury. The physical violence includes excessive beating, hanging, current shock etc.
- 2) PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE is an act done by an individual which causes impairment of another person's psychological integrity. It can be usually done in the form of coercion, defamation, verbal insult or harassment. This type of abuse is usually verbal, mental or emotional abuse intended to cause damage by undermining a person's well-being, self-esteem or mental health. This includes acts such as verbal aggression, threats, intimidation, control, harassment or insults, humiliation and defamation.
- 3) SEXUAL VIOLENCE refers to crimes like sexual assault, rape and sexual abuse. Sexual Violence is sexual activity when consent is not obtained or freely given.

B. Indian Penal Codes Against Custodial Violence

There are numerous codes in the law which speak of the punishments to be given if the person in custody is misconducted. Some of them are-

Section 41

Any police officer may without an order from a Magistrate and without a warrant, arrest any person,- who commits, in the presence of a police officer, a cognizable offence; against whom a reasonable complaint has been made, or credible information has been received, or a reasonable suspicion exists that he has committed a cognizable offence punishable with imprisonment for a term which may be less than seven years or which may extend to seven years whether with or without fine.

Section 55A

Health and safety of the arrested person -It shall be the duty of the person having the custody of an accused to take reasonable care of the health and safety of the accused.

Section 60A

Arrest to be made strictly according to the Code - No arrest shall be made except in accordance with the provisions of this Code or any other law for the time being in force providing for arrest.

Section 330 of Indian Penal Code

Voluntarily causing hurt to extort confession, or to compel restoration of property.—Whoever voluntarily causes hurt for the purpose of extorting from the sufferer or from any person interested in the sufferer, any confession or any information which may lead to the detection of an offence or misconduct, or for the purpose of constraining the sufferer or any person interested in the sufferer to restore or to cause the restoration of any property or valuable security or to satisfy any claim or demand, or to give information which may lead to the restoration of any property or valuable security, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Section 331 of Indian Penal Code

Voluntarily causing grievous hurt to extort confession, or to compel restoration of property. Whoever voluntarily causing grievous hurt for the purpose of extorting from the sufferer or from any person interested in the sufferer any confession or any information which may lead to the detection of an offence or misconduct, or for the purpose of constraining the sufferer or any person interested in the sufferer to restore or to cause the restoration of any property or valuable security, or to satisfy any claim or demand or to give information which may lead to the restoration of any property or valuable security, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Section 384 of the Indian Penal Code

Punishment for extortion. Whoever commits extortion shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

C. Custodial Violence In India

The Indian Evidence Act, 1872, provides that a judicial officer is supposed to draw the presumption that judicial and official acts have been performed in an appropriate manner. But since the record is not made clear and the laws are not firm, there is an increased number of custodial violence in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), between 2001 and 2018, only 26 policemen were convicted of custodial violence despite 1,727 such deaths being recorded in India. 4. 3% of the 70 deaths in 2018 were attributed to injuries during custody due to physical assault by Police. As per Human Rights Commission 2021 data, 151 people died in custody. Maharashtra reported the maximum number of deaths amongst all states. In the year 2020, 1, 569 cases were reported dead due to custodial violence. The National Campaign Against Torture recorded 55 deaths by suicide due to police torture. The National Campaign Against Torture also observed numerous cases towards Dalit and Tribal People in police custody. Custodial Rape, Torture of women and children in custody were also reported.

2014 onwards, physical assault by police has been recorded in only 6% of the cases. Between 2015-2019, 36% of deaths by suicide in police custody have been reported. In the last 10 years, 403 of 1,004 deaths (40%) in police custody are listed as due to "Hospitalisation/ Illness/ Natural deaths" – a majority of such deaths. As per the Crime in India Report 2019 released by the National Crime Records Bureau, the following have been the major reasons for custodial deaths in 2019: death due to illness in hospital, suicide, while escaping from custody, road accidents or journey, injuries sustained during or prior to the police, and others.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recorded a total of 914 deaths in police and judicial custody in the year 2020, while according to the India: Annual Report on Torture 2019. Nearly five persons were killed every day in police custody in the year 2019 with a total of 1731 people losing their life in custody. The Status of Policing in India Report 2019 showed that 427 persons died in police custody during the period (2016-2019). A report published by the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) in June 2018 claimed that around 1674 custodial deaths were witnessed from 1st April 2017 to 28th February 2018.

D. *The Criminal Tribes Act Of 1871*

Sleeman, a British Officer declares the Nomadic tribes (Ramoshi) as “Thugs.” Many Nomadic Tribes tagged as Thugs were hanged from 1840-1842. This eventually resulted in the emergence of The Criminal Tribes act of 1871. The British government enacted the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. The law was first implemented in northern India and later moved on to other states of the country. On June 5, 1918, the Madurai District Magistrate, under Government Ordinance No. 1331, criminalised many castes as thieves, strangers, criminals, etc. The people belonging to the caste who were declared criminals under this Act were kept under police surveillance most of the time, and frequently arrested under false allegations. Most of the time, they were not informed of the reason for their arrest. The nomads continued to oppose the British Colonial idea of civilised living, which involved settled agriculture and wage labour. Britishers accepted a theory that said that such non-conformational behaviour is hereditary. Thus, the crime which was a social determinism, the Criminal Tribes Act was formulated by Britishers. The entire set of communities were tagged as ‘habitual criminals’ and were declared as addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences. Restrictions were imposed on the movements of such habitual criminals and adult male members of the community were forced to report weekly to the local police station. The adult male members were not allowed to travel beyond the prescribed area. The act was introduced in North India at first and then was gradually introduced in Bengal and Madras Presidencies as well. By the time of Independence, 13 million people faced search and arrest warrants if any of them was found outside the prescribed area. The draconian act was repealed in August 1949 and ‘criminal tribes’ were ‘denotified’. But soon, another act was introduced in the name of Habitual Offender act and was included in the state list.

The government of Bombay set up a committee in January 1947 to look into the matter of Criminal Tribes. The committee repealed the act in August 1949, resulting in 2300000 tribes being decriminalised. The act was first repealed in Madras province, followed by other provinces. The committee appointed by the Central Government to study the utility of the existing law also concluded that the act was not in the spirit of Indian Constitution. But, unfortunately at the same time, there was a crime wave. The stigma about the criminal tribes haunted them, and the crime wave was attributed to the removal of the criminal act. The huge public outcry due to the removal of the criminal tribe act and the crime wave led to the formation of the Habitual Offenders Act. The law stated that a habitual offender is one who has been a victim of subjective and objective influences and has manifested a set practice in crime and presents a danger to the society.

This was, the habitual offender act re-stigmatized already marginalised criminal tribes. The National Human Rights Commission in February 2000 recommended repeal of the habitual offender act, 1952. In 2007, the United Nation’s anti discriminatory body committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CRED) noted that the alleged criminal tendencies in Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 continue to be stigmatized in the Habitual Offender Act had been derived from criminal Tribes Act had been derived from Criminal Tribes Act, and hence it does not show a marked departure in the intent of the Government apart from renaming the notified tribes as denotified tribes.

The Denotified Tribes are tribes, first listed under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. At present there are 315 Nomadic tribes and 198 denotified tribes in India. They constitute about 60 million of India’s population. 69 denotified tribes are there in Tamil Nadu.

E. *The KAL ODDARS*

Broadly speaking, the term tribe is used for a unit based on common descent as opposed to the term caste which is applied to a social unit founded on common occupation, common residence, common language or common political control.

The Oddars are classified as Man Oddars, Kal Oddars, Sunnaambu Oddars, Paai Oddars, Murasu Oddars, Uppu Oddars, Pandi Oddars, Mara Oddars based on their occupation. Tamil Nadu Government classified them as Oddar, Pandi, Boyar, Kalvadhila Boyaas, Korila Thotta Boya, Kondaa, Koliyan, Thonga Boyaa, Petha Boyaas, Sooramaari Oddars, Nellorepet Oddars.

Among these people, the Kal Oddars are people who break stones throughout the day. The Kal Oddars build huts near the place where they work. They shift to places where they find rocks, after finishing the work in one area. Oddars are specialised in digging up stones and rocks for construction purposes, digging wells and other such works. Oddar is the former name of Orissa. Oddars are people who originated from Ottam. They don’t have a particular dialect, and call their dialect as ‘thai’ dialect.

In Tamil Nadu, the Kal Oddars are settled at Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Virudhunagar, Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Pudukottai, Thanjavur, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Tiruchirappalli, Krur, Perambur, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Salem and Namakkal Districts. In Madurai, the Kal Oddars are found in Bethaniyapuram, Mottamalai, Muniyandipuram etc.

The so-called criminals were forced to post their fingerprints at the police station everyday. Compared to the other castes, Oddars and Kuravars' strength was very less. In 1952, the law was declared void by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, but still, there is not much improvement in the lives of Oddars and Kuravars.

In the Government Order dated 12-10-1938 issued for the occupation of Oddars, the list of occupation given included stone-breaking, rope-twisting, basket weaving, well-cutting and road construction work. They speak southern languages including Tamil and Telugu. These marginalised people have a poor socio-economic background, and are illiterate. Hence, they become highly vulnerable to abuse by the police. Mostly, men who have reached the age of 15 years are mostly registered in cases. They are falsely prosecuted and imprisoned for failing to find culprits in cases in different police stations. These people are mostly arrested at night time, when police break into their houses and take the men away. At times, even their belongings, savings and documents are nabbed by the police.

1) *Impact On Women*

To begin with, the fact that women suffer to a great extent is double the intensity among Kal oddar women. The National Policy for women 2016 had strived towards the objective to eliminate all forms of violence against women through strengthening of policies, legislation and programs institutions and community engagement. Despite the fact of being protected by the government, the police sector is accountable for the sufferings of the Kal oddar women. The illiterate women find it difficult to comprehend what is happening when their husband and other men are taken by the police. Most often, the policemen appear without uniform to hide their identity and to protect themselves from being seen while illegally arresting the people. To arrest the women in the family, no women police are accompanied which is against the protocols that have to be followed. The women in the community were not even informed about the basic information such as where their husband or father is, which police station they were taken to. This Pathetic condition continues to grow even today.

The women in the community are expected to play multiple roles like going after her husband, following up the case filed, taking care of the family and children, managing the financial crisis, balancing work life to satisfy the basic needs. The women in the community are not educated enough hence they work as a daily wage despite the circumstances. The place they live doesn't make their life easy. The woman has to walk long distances to fetch drinking water. The stigma associated with the certitude of being arrested by the police complicates their life. The woman's physical and mental health is also debatable and considerate with the given uncertain circumstances.

After Independence, the people categorised under the Criminal Tribes act were given many provisions for them to develop. Under, The first five year plan(1951-1956) 35 crore were allotted and during the second five year plan(1956-1961) 294 crore were allotted. Nevertheless, these purvey reached efficiently only to the northern states of India. Also, other provisions were not fully enjoyed by the kuravars and Kal oddars. They have been constantly being accused of crimes they haven't committed.

2) *Impact on Children:*

The children of Kal Oddars mostly have a traumatic childhood, because their parents and other relatives are frequently taken to custody, even in the age when children don't understand what's happening. They don't find a proper way to express their feelings. They mostly don't go to school due to the unavailability of resources, and also because the children are subject to torture by the police. Even if the students go to school, they are ostracised by their fellow classmates, hence becoming a reason for them to drop out from school. Children who go to school despite all these struggles don't get their caste certificates, hence have no proper identity. Such situations might lead to building of inferiority feelings in them. The uncertain situation around the children persuades them to lead their lives in a wrong way. The children in the community are also not aware of the consequences of their behaviours. When they see other people in the community being arrested and taking their life in the wrong path, the children tend to do it too. Such children end up doing criminal activities. Even if they don't indulge in such activities, false accusations are put on them after they reach 15 years of age. Willingly or unwillingly, children of Kal Oddars also fall into the vicious cycle of false accusations and torture. Rarely do they come up well-settled and successful. Even though positive changes are happening, it is happening at a very slow rate.

Kal Oddar Community is living in a state of insecurity, due to the ban of stone quarrying and not provided with the alternatives, they are working at low wages as construction labourers, without any job security.

The Continued Stigma, Police Atrocities, Denial of admission, Illiteracy, Lack of Financial Support is being a constant pressure point which serves as a hindering factor for their development and well being. The violence in custody doesn't affect not only the man himself but also the family, friends and the surrounding community.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the book *Thurathapadum Manithargal* written by M. Radhakrishnan. He discussed a case on custodial violence. On 16th September 2007, Ranjith and Co were beaten to death by Police. They are semi-nomadic Tribes of Bihar. Ranjith successfully survived and accepted the false accusation to protect himself. From this case, it is evident that the semi Nomadic Tribes are subjected to false accusations and violence if they contravene the police. He also explained a similar case about custodial violence faced by Otta Nayyakkans in Tamil Nadu. To begin with Krishnan, Rangan and Gurusamy were forcefully taken into custody by Police. The police invaded the residence at 2 A.M on 20th December 2006. When their relatives questioned the police for reason, they effrontery replied, "Otta naagaluku Kelvi Enna kedaku?" (Who dogs are you to question us?) and kicked them with boots. They also ceased their belongings and demanded an amount of Rs. 5000/- in order to get them released. From this case, the audacity of police to falsely accuse people is known. The ill legitimized behavior of the police is being put into light. Aarumugam, Pandi, Muniyandi, Perumal, Selvam, Murugapan and Vadivel were the victims of custodial violence in this case. On 4/11/2006, they were arrested illegally and were submitted to the Court on 26/11/2006. From Virudhunagar they were brought to Thiruparankundram, Parangi Hills where they were tortured in the Torture Camp by Police unlawfully. Their wives Savithiri, Rani, Valli and Panchavarnam were subjected to severe physical, verbal and emotional violence by the police in their house. Their children and mother in laws were also beaten black and blue by the police. Their saving, belongings were snatched by the policemen. The relative of their named Muthu was taken into custody and was beaten and tortured whilst he was under conditioned bail. Valli's dress was removed by the police and was beaten by the police in Aruppukottai. They were also subjected to verbal, sexual and emotional violence while in the other family members were arrested for the crime they didn't account for.

Kelly E. Moore, et-al (2015) did a study on *The Effect of Stigma on Criminal Offenders' Functioning: A Longitudinal Mediation Model*. The perceived and anticipated stigma were assessed prior to release from jail/prison ($N = 163$), and outcomes were assessed one year after release ($N = 371$). Perceived stigma prior to release can have serious implications for offenders' functioning once released from jail/prison. The dynamics of stigma and adjustment are complex and appear to vary by race/ethnicity. From this study, the stigma associated with race and ethnicity is evident.

Vijay Kumar Vohra, et-al (2019) did a study on *Custodial Torture: A Two Years Prospective Study in Amritsar*. The study investigated the various means of torture employed in the custody ($N = 21$). The results showed that the maximum no. of patients underwent custodial torture (33.3%) were in the age group of 21-30 years. 9.5% of the custodial patients suffered physical torture, 57.1% of the patients suffered mental torture and 33.3% of the patients were victims of both physical and mental torture.

Akra Khan (2013) did a study on *Custodial Violence: A study of the State of Bihar*. The study tried to look at the police custody process and custodial treatment of accused/ suspects in police custody. The study discussed about 15 cases. The study analysed and found that there is significantly higher level of custodial death, torture and rapes.

Pamini Kasera (2020) published a paper on *The rights of women prisoners in India*. The main purpose of this research paper is to highlight the problems of the women prisoners, violation of the human rights of the women prisoners. The analysis of the review implied that despite the various constitutional provisions providing a status of equality to the women in India, the condition of the poor women prisoners is not good. They are being ignored and tortured in the prisons. Women also lack knowledge about their basic rights.

The Contemporary Challenges to Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of Maharashtra in India: An Analysis is a paper published by Vinayak S. Lashkar in the year 2014. The paper discussed various challenges faced by the DNTs in Maharashtra. The paper analyzed various communities within the state and also within the tribe and expressed the sufferings. The women, children and everyone were included in the study. The paper also audaciously explained the label on DNTs as Habitual offenders and also discussed some cases related to custodial violence.

Psychological analysis of behaviour change towards torture and ill treatment of women in police custody was a study done by Razia Jaffer and Rafiq Jaffer in the year 2013. The project was implemented in Islamabad, 5 districts of Punjab and 6 districts of Sindh. The research design used was FGD, individual interviews, and administration of objective-type knowledge test and attitude scale. Instruments were pilot tested in Lahore. The sample size was 299, out of which 173 women and 126 men participated in FGDs, while 20 women and 9 men participated in interviews. The result indicated that there is a reduction in torture in a number of institutions targeted by the project.

But such reduction could not be verified. On the other hand, there was considerable evidence of the continuation of torture in a number of institutions

Johnson I.E et al performed a study on Parental Arrest and Child Behavior: Differential Role of Executive Functioning among Racial Subgroups in the year 2022 to understand how the arrest of the parent impacts the child. Participants ranged in age from 9 to 10 years, and almost half were girls (N=11,835). Brain cognitive development study was conducted. From the assessment, it was found that children who experienced parental arrest exhibited more internalizing and externalizing behaviors than comparison youth, particularly when their mother vs. father had been arrested. Also, racial stratification seems to affect the benefits of executive function for child behavior. This indicates that parental arrest has a huge impact on the mental health of the children.

Yvonne Humenay Roberts et.al., (2014) published an article called Children exposed to the arrest of a family member: Associations with mental health. In this study they examined the mental health of the children whose family members were arrested. Baseline data for children (birth to 11 years) was examined. Results indicate that the children who were exposed to the arrest of a family member are more likely to be subjected to different types potentially Traumatic events than the children who weren't exposed. This adverse effect on Mental health among the children will affect all of their developmental stages and will have an impact on their future growth and development.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Aim

To study the impact of Custodial Violence among Kal Oddar women and children in Mottamalai, Tamil Nadu.

B. Objectives

- 1) To study the impact of Custodial Violence on Women of Mottamalai
- 2) To study the impact of Custodial Violence on Children of Mottamalai

C. Research Design

The research method used in this study was Descriptive Research Design. This research design always focuses on the what of research design rather than the why of the research subject (Babbie, 1990). Since the research is qualitative, it gives in-depth details about the incidents that have taken place in the community's lives.

D. Area Of The Study

The study has been carried out in the area of Mottamalai in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. This locale has been chosen because almost everyone there has been arrested, and their problems have not been spoken out yet. The area is not much known by common people either. Hence, the required data can be attained with ease.

E. Research Approach

The research approach carried out for this study was qualitative. The researchers have used a qualitative method of research which includes non-numerical data, the case study method. Case study method exemplifies qualitative researchers' preference for depth, detail, and context (Racino, J. 1999). The reason for opting for a qualitative approach is that the focus of the study is to understand the experiences of the people and to see how it has impacted their lives.

F. Population Of The Study

The population for this study includes individuals and families of those who have experienced custodial violence in the area of Mottamalai in Madurai district, Tamil Nadu.

G. Sample Size

Among 35 families in Kal Oddars of Mottamalai, 10 people were included in the study.

Inclusion criteria:

The people who have children and were taken into custody were included in the study.

H. Sampling Technique

To obtain data, the method of purposiveness sampling was used. Victims of custodial violence and family members of the victims were chosen as respondents as it would provide an in-depth understanding of how custodial violence affects an individual and the people around him.

I. Sources Of Data

Primary data was obtained from the Mottamalai area in Madurai.

J. Data Collection Method

Case Study method was used to collect data.

IV. CASE STUDIES

1) Chandran as MV

MV is 38 years old. His wife Karthiga is 28 years old. MV is a daily wage worker and earns Rs.400/- per day. His wife is a homemaker. MV and family are converted Christians. MV has passed SSLC. They have three children, Ridhanya, Rishidha and Rishon. Ridhanya is 11 years old and studying 3rd grade. Rishidha is 6 years old and studying 1st grade. Rishon is a year old. Ridhanya and Rishidha are studying in Kallar Primary School. They don't face any problems in obtaining loans. The family has been a part of the Alaigudi Makkal Sangam since 2012.

MV has been arrested 5 times due to false accusations. The stations where he had cases were Melur, Sivagangai, Tirumangalam, Madurai and Aamathur. The police used to come to arrest him at midnight, without a proper arrest warrant. When he refused to go with the police, they threatened MV's children in order to make him surrender for the false accusation. In one such case, MV was taken to custody, beaten so much that his fingers broke. The police in-charge used red chilli powder, lathi and water to beat him. The false accusation cases mostly take place for 1-2 weeks. When he was in custody, he was not allowed to close the bathroom door while using it. He had to use it under police constables' supervision. He underwent physical and verbal violence, and it went to the extent that he was made to remove his dress and stand naked in front of the police in-charge. Only one of the four cases is closed, and the remaining four are still on-going.

MV and his family have debts up to Rs.50, 000/- due to frequent arrests of MV, for which they have to pay Usury interest, which rises to almost double the amount of loan taken. Karthiga has to take care of bringing her husband out of custody single-handedly, as police don't inform the family members as to where MV is being taken to. When MV is in custody, Karthiga has to go to petty jobs such as selling bangles to make ends meet. At this time, there is no one to take care of the children – only the neighbors have to look after them. The children live in constant fear as to when their parent(s) might be taken into custody again. The family faces humiliations in society due to the 'Kal Oddar' identity, but they refuse to hide this identity no matter what.

2) KayalVizhi as VV

VV is 35 years old. Her husband Velu C is 42 years old. Velu works as a daily wage worker. They have two sons – Deva and Sathish. Deva is 18 years old, and Sathish is 16 years old. Both have studied upto 5th standard in Kallar Primary School, after which they dropped out. Both of them were not interested in studies. All four of them are members of Alaigudi Makkal Sangam from 2012.

VV has been taken into custody once. She along with some members of the Kal Oddar community from Mottamalai visited Nagercoil once for work reasons. While she was in the bus stop, she was identified by the police as belonging to the Kal Oddar Community, and was accused of being accountable for the theft that happened in a house near the bus stop. VV and others were arrested, but were not taken to the police station. While arresting, there were no female constables. They were taken to a confined place instead, where they were beaten black and blue. VV underwent physical, verbal and sexual violence. She received rape threats from the police in-charge when she spoke against the police. She was touched in an inappropriate manner while in their custody. She experienced so much of torture, that her menstrual cycle was adversely affected. After three months, the women in custody were sent in a van to Madurai, and dropped in Goripalayam. They were bribed by the police - the police gave Rs.500/- for each woman - and warned them not to talk about the illegal custody to anyone.

Not only VV, but her children Sathish and Vijay, have experienced custodial violence too. Both of them had committed a petty crime once. Both of them stole a phone when VV refused to give money, for which they were arrested. After the police came to know that they belong to the Kal Oddar community, both of them were frequently arrested on false accusations. They have been arrested more than five times.

Recently, they were arrested again and taken to Thirunagar police station, filed on four different false cases.

The frequent arrests of VV and Velu has a great impact on the psychology of their children. When VV was arrested, Deva and Sathish were not being taken proper care. The family is under debt, due to the frequent arrests and the need to get them out in bail. The children, growing up with their parents, lost their desire to study at a very young age because of the happenings in the house. Even when they developed interest to study later, they couldn't due to the police accusations and reputation of the community. Hence they came to the mindset that they were forever tied to the label of Kal Oddars, and there is no scope of going to schools and colleges.

They started to exhibit socially deviant behavior. The family is also in huge debt due to the number of times the members of the family have been arrested, because they are taken out on bail after paying a certain amount of money which they can't afford with the daily wage job that they do. The assets that they own were also seized by the police, which was later retrieved with the help of known lawyers. They don't show their Kal Oddar identity in society due to the humiliations and ostracisation they would face. Currently, VV and Velu are working on getting their children out on bail, who still have pending false accusation cases.

3) KRISHNAN as RK

RK is 50 years old. His wife Rani is 33 years old. They have seven children, out of which three are married. The rest living with RK and Rani are Agumaniyam, Siva, Maduraiveeran and Maragadham. Agumaniyam is 23 years old and is physically handicapped. Siva is 17 years old. He dropped out of school, after completion of 7th standard in Kallar School. He is now doing daily wage work. Maragadham is 14 years old and is studying 9th standard. Maduraiveeran is 14 years old. He dropped out of school after completing 7th standard from Savita Bai school. Maduraiveeran is also doing daily wage work.

RK has been arrested many times, and has more than ten cases. All of the cases filed against him were false accusations. In one such case, he was taken to the police station where he was humiliated. His dress was removed and he was beaten very badly. He was verbally and physically abused. The police spoke to him in a degrading manner because of his caste and community. In almost all the cases, RK experienced such humiliations. The police didn't inform Rani as to where he was being taken. She had to find it out by herself, and take him out on bail.

Three out of the four children living with them are dropouts. Agumaniyam is physically challenged, but doesn't have the Unique Disability ID. All other family members have all the basic government IDs such as Aadhar card and Ration Card. RK has been arrested many times, due to which Rani had to spend money to get him out on bail, hence was in need to take loans. Due to the humongous money that had to be paid to the police and the debtors, there was just enough money to meet the basic requirements of the family, since there were six members in the family. Hence, the children had no choice but to drop out of school, and go to work to provide financial support to the family. RK finds it difficult to financially support the family as he is frequently arrested, but is the major reason for money's inadequacy instead. This shortage of money has a negative impact on the quality of life of all the four children, and their physical and mental well-being. Working at the age of 14 years, where Maduraiveeran's body won't be ready enough, would lead to problems in the future.

4) Raja as KS

KS is 22 years old and is married. His wife, Jerome, is 21 years old. KS has passed 6th grade. Jerome is a medical student who dropped out of college to marry KS. They don't have any children. Both of them are members of Alaigudi Makkal Sangam. They have all basic identity cards issued by the government.

KS was taken into police custody once. He had gone to Kerala for his daily wage work. Since the police there came to know that he is from Tamilnadu, he was taken by the police to impose false accusations. He was accused of taking marijuana (ganja), but in reality, he wasn't. He was beaten with his dress unremoved. He was made to accept the false accusation, for which he had no choice but to accept.

Selvaraj is the father of KS. Selvaraj is 45 years old. His wife Mini is 39 years old. Both of them are illiterates. They have a small fancy store. KS is the only child they have. Both have all the government identification cards.

Selvaraj was also arrested once, on false accusation. He was arrested along with other members of the community, namely Maduraiveeran, Gopal, Karamalayan, and Guruvar. They were taken to Sivagangai police station, where the case was filed on them. All of them were booked under a theft case, which was a false accusation. They experienced physical and verbal violence. The case was dragged on for a period of 12 years - 2010 to 2022. The case was closed very recently.

The arrest of Selvaraj has had a negative impact on the lives of KS, Jerome and Mini. Since he was arrested, Mini had to keep running to the police station, lawyers and had to try every possible way to get him released. For this, she had to spend a lot of money.

Since she was the only one at the house who was at the age to go for a job, she had to work extra hours and tried her best to keep the family running, and help her husband at the same time. Even though KS was interested in studying, he had to discontinue due to the financial situation of the family. Due to this, he is going for a daily wage job. His wife Jerome, a medical dropout student, has to survive only on whatever is earned by KS.

5) *Karthik as PV*

PV is 40 years old and is married. His wife is Panchammal. She is 35 years old. Both of them are uneducated. They have four children - two sons and two daughters. Both the daughters are married and have moved to another family. Pandian and Surya are the sons of PV. Pandian is 15 years old and didn't go to school. Surya studied upto 10th standard, after which his schooling stopped too. PV has been taken into police custody more than 10 times. He was arrested each time for a false petty theft case. He was always taken to either Thirumangalam, Paramakudi, Sevankulam or Madurai police station. Once when he was taken to the police station, it was midnight. He was taken to the police station without any dress. He was beaten up by the police incharge. When he was in the police custody, he was neither given food, nor water. He was simply made to starve, for the crime which he hadn't committed. Just because he had to accept the false accusation, he was mistreated in this manner. He was also abused verbally, where the police shouted at him in a belittling manner due to the community to which he belongs. He was saved with the help of lawyers and other known people.

The whole family has been affected due to the frequent arrests of PV. Pandian didn't go to school because of the psychological torture given by the police. Surya also had a similar issue. When he was on his way to write the 10th standard public exam, he was stopped by the police and asked where his father was. When Surya said he didn't know and had to go to write the exam, he was humiliated by the police, and taken away by them. The police said they will not leave him until he brings his father. Only after his father came to know about this and surrendered, was Surya let free. But by that time, the exam was over, hence leaving the exam unattended. Panchammal, throughout her married life, was mainly focused on saving her husband from being arrested by the police, and bringing him out from police custody when he was arrested. She didn't have enough money and time to take proper care of the children, due to which both the sons had to go to work at a small age for financial aid. Hence, the whole family was affected financially and psychologically. Both the sons would have been at a better place if their parents were able to afford money and time for them.

6) *Kumar as SP*

SP is 32 years old. His wife, Janaki, is 30 years old. SP works as a daily wage worker. Janaki is a housewife. They have two children - Sibi and Jeswin. Sibi is 5 years old and is studying LKG. Jeswin is 1 year old. They are members of Alaigudi Makkal Sangam, and have all the basic government identity cards.

SP has been arrested by the police more than 5 times. Once there was a quarrel happening near his locality, and he was standing in the crowd and watching what was happening. When the police came, they arrested him too, insisting that he was also a part of the fight that was happening, even though they knew very well that he was just a bystander. He was taken to the police station and the accusation was imposed on him too. After this incident, SP was frequently arrested for false accusations, and had to undergo physical, emotional and verbal violence.

SP was familiar with the torture given by police to the people of this community, as he has been seeing what and how it is right from his childhood. His father has been repeatedly arrested for the same reason as to why SP is being arrested. SP has already come to the mindset that this is not going to change, and is ready to be arrested again in future. He has children of a very young age, and being arrested over and over again will put their family in the same cycle just like how it was before he got married and living with his parents.

7) *Chinnathaayi as PA*

PA is 35 years old. She is a widow. She is uneducated, and is going for daily wage work. She has two children - Jeeva and Mahadevi. Jeeva is 17 years old and has completed 9th grade. Mahadevi is 15 years old and has completed 10th grade. Both of them dropped out of school. They have been a part of Alaigudi Makkal Sangam since 2012.

PA was arrested once. She was taken from her home by police. Female constables had not come to arrest her, only gents were present. When asked why she was being arrested, the police spoke to her in a belittling manner. She was taken to Aasanampatti police station, where she was filed on a murder case - a false accusation. She was later moved to Thirunagar police station, where she experienced custodial violence. She was beaten by gent constables. Her dress was removed. When she refused to accept the accusation, she was threatened by the police that she will be raped if she refuses to accept.

She had no other way but to accept it. The case has not been closed yet, and she still goes to the station to put her signature. PA has to take care of the children single-handedly. The physical, verbal and sexual violence that she experienced at the police station affected her mental health. Both of her children had to drop out of school due to financial conditions, and also because no one was there at home to take care of the children, as she had no other choice but to work overtime. The children went to Kerala when their mother was arrested, because no one was there to take care of them. Now Jeeva is working as a daily wage worker.

8) *Selvam as SR*

SR is 43 years old. His wife, Maradhaayi, is 38 years old. Both of them are daily wagers. They have three children - Vinoth, Vallarasu and Vicky. Vinoth is 10 years old, and is studying 5th grade. Vicky is 8 years old, and is studying 3rd grade. Vallarasu is 12 years old, and has not gone to school yet. Vinoth is deaf and dumb.

SR was arrested once, on a false accusation. He was taken from his house at midnight, and the police had not come in a police vehicle. He was dragged to the police station, and made to accept a false accusation, for which he was beaten and verbally abused. It didn't stop until he agreed to surrender for the case.

Not only SR, but his wife Maradhaayi was also arrested once in a similar manner. She was arrested in Nagercoil, as discussed in the case of VV above. In the station, she underwent physical, verbal and sexual violence. Her dress was removed and made to sit so until she agreed to accept that she was involved in the robbery. She along with others were kept in police custody for three months, and their family had no idea about their whereabouts. After three months, they were taken to Madurai and dropped off at Goripalayam. The police gave them Rs.500/-, asking them to keep their mouths shut regarding their illegal arrest.

SR and Maradhaayi's children are of a young age, and arresting both of them puts their children's safety at risk. Vallarasu didn't go to school because of this issue. One of them had to be at home to take care of the younger children. Both SR and Maradhaayi go to daily wage jobs to help their children go to school, hence the children don't get the love and attention they should receive at this age. If one of them stays at home, the money the other one would earn would lead to the other two children dropping out of school too.

9) *Ramasamy as MG*

MG is 42 years old. His wife Mary is 38 years old. Both of them are uneducated, and are daily wagers. They earn upto Rs.300/- per day. They have two children - Karthikeyan and Vijay. Karthikeyan is 13 years old and is studying 6th grade. Vijay is 6 years old and is in his 3rd grade.

Both MG and Mary were arrested in the Nagercoil case. Mary's dress was removed. Both experienced physical and verbal violence. They were beaten with lathi. During this time, both their children were left alone - in this very small age.

The children live in constant fear, not knowing when their parents might be arrested next. They must have been traumatised when both their parents were taken away from them at the same time, and kept away from them for a period of three months.

10) *Muthu as GP*

GP is 43 years old. His wife Paadhammariyaal is 33 years old. Both of them are uneducated. GP is a daily wager, and Paadhammariyaal is a homemaker. They have three children - Sekar, Anita and Suresh. Sekar is married. Anita is 15 years old and is studying 9th grade. Suresh is 17 years old. He has never gone to school, and is a herder. GP has been arrested three times.

He was taken to Nagercoil, Madurai and Sivagangai police stations. He was beaten up very badly, and made to accept the accusations. He had to stay for months in one police station for these false allegations. At times, he was left without being given food and water. He was verbally and emotionally abused too, where he was spoken to in a belittled manner because he is a Kal Oddar. Paadhammariyaal had to find out which station he was taken to by herself and with some legal aid, she brought him out. Their family was adversely affected in regards to financial condition, in this state. They had two children to take care of. Paadhammariyaal had to take out a loan to get her husband out on bail, but then had no money to repay. Hence, they had to take another loan to repay the previous one, and are hence stuck in this vicious cycle. Due to this, their son Suresh has never stepped foot in school. All three of them are trying their best to help Anita complete her schooling without dropping out. They still live in the fear of being arrested by the police.

V.] DISCUSSION

From the case studies discussed above, it is evident that Custodial Violence has a negative impact on Kal Oddar women and children. It affects various domains of their life including health, employment, education, and mental well-being.

It leaves them financially unstable with the stigmatisation of the community as criminals. Some of the prominent issues faced by the people of this community are discussed in this chapter.

1) *Reiterating Custodial Violence For Generations*

The people belonging to the Kal Oddar community have seen many police stations in their lifetime, for many generations. They were arrested frequently because the Britishers included this community into the list of criminal tribes, and that's where this never-ending cycle began. Even though they are denotified now, the police take advantage of these people as they are uneducated or poorly educated, and arrest them because people didn't know how to ask what was happening. At least one member from each family has been arrested at least once in their lifetime. Even if asked, the police suppressed their voice with beatings and rape threats. They are brutally treated in police custody, where at times their right to privacy is violated to the extent that they are not allowed to use washrooms without the supervision of constables. Sometimes, women are raped in front of their husbands. This has been continuing for many generations. Only recently have some of them started to ask questions, but still face custodial violence just for the cause of standing up for their rights.

2) *Incessant Debts*

People belonging to the Kal Oddar community find it difficult to get proper jobs due to their caste, and the label of belonging to a 'Criminal tribe'. Majority of them go for daily wage jobs and other petty jobs, where they earn a very low amount of money, just enough to meet their basic needs. This being the case, they take loans even for the education of their children. They find it very difficult to repay their debts, hence taking another loan. This puts them in a state of earning double or triple amounts of money to settle their debts. When they are arrested by the police, the family member has to spend money on court, police and at the police station to get the person out of jail. This leads to compounded debts. Inadequacy of money affects all aspects of their lives.

3) *Dropping Out Of School*

The people belonging to the community face innumerable cases and false accusations. This has a drastic negative impact on the children of the community. When the parents are taken into police custody, there is no one to take care of the children at home. Even if one of the parents is arrested, the other person has to run behind the arrested one to bring him/her out of police custody. Hence, there is neither time nor money to educate the children. In some cases, even though the parents afford to educate the children, the children lose interest in studies because they come to the mindset that they will be treated in the same way in the future, regardless of their education level. One of them reported that he is getting provoked to do criminal activities, because people of the community are arrested even if they have stopped exhibiting criminal behaviour; hence there is no difference between being innocent and being guilty of crimes. The children think that dropping out of schools will help the family - earning money and running the family is better than going to school and causing financial problems - is their mindset. Some have no choice but to drop out of schools as the family totally runs out of money. A person from the community gets to go up to college level in very rare cases. In Mottamalai, only 3-5 people have graduated or are studying in a college.

4) *Women Being The Breadwinner*

Most of the people who belong to this community never went to school. With the increased fight for opportunities, they are thrown out of race even before independence. The women in the community are not educated enough to go to jobs that ensure stable pay. They sell vessels in exchange for clothes and accessories during festival season which is not enough for their daily life's expenses. Also, women reported that their husbands would beat her to blue, asking money to consume alcohol. Given the situation, the employment opportunities are comparatively low for the women. Even if they work as a daily wage in a construction building they are paid less due to the gender stereotype. They are not paid enough for the work they do. This widely affects their well-being. Doing all the household chores and working industriously in their workplace has an effect on their physical health. This deteriorates their physical health eventually. Also the ego clash and the infidelity of their husband makes their lives even more difficult.

5) *Children Becoming Delinquents*

Due to the unstable and unhealthy growing environment. Children are more likely to be involved in delinquent behaviour. They steal and are taken into custody. They exhibit deviant behaviour like not going to school etc. Their childhood was adversely affected and now their future. The police sometimes take up the children to make the men in the community surrender. The children in the community sometimes miss their important exams due to the uninformed arrests of the police.

Father being in jail for most of the time, Mother working hard and trying to get her husband out of jail, friends isolating due to the stigma and threats. The primary, secondary and even sometimes the territory circle of the children is splattered. They fail to receive the attention, love, warmth and care starting from birth.

6) *Change In Identity To Escape And Lack Of Social Support*

The community of Kal Oddar was actually a part of those who helped India get rid of Britishers, but the history doesn't say so. They were labelled as 'Criminal Tribes' by the Britishers - the original criminals. Even though the tribe was denotified later, the label is still stuck on to them, making their daily lives miserable. The label they carry for generations inhibits all the opportunities that a human being gets. Right from their birth certificates to job opportunities, everything is made difficult for them just because of their label, which they aren't in real life. While some are ready to face the challenges and live with the identity, most of them change their identities. They have to change it even if they have to shift to a different area for residence, because people won't accept 'born criminals' to live amongst them. They do get legal and financial support from some people, but the social support they receive gets affected when they reveal their true identity.

7) *Inaccessibility To Basic Facilities*

Mottamalai is a remote area in Madurai. It is located atop a small hill. The pathway is full of stones, and is laid in a haphazard manner. Climbing up the hill is a big task for the people living there. There is no proper transportation facility to this area, and people have to walk for at least 2 kilometres to reach their house from the bus stop. This being the condition, they find it extremely difficult to reach the nearest hospital and school. Even during an emergency, they have to travel for up to 5 kilometres to reach a hospital. Due to the list of criminal accusations they have, they find it difficult to move to another place for residence. This further takes a toll on their physical health. As this is a remote area, the police find it easier to arrest the people as no one is present nearby to question them.

8) *Overall Well Being*

Considering all the issues discussed above, it is evident that their overall well-being is affected very badly. Their physical, economic, social, emotional, and psychological well-being is negatively affected due to their current state. They never get to have life satisfaction and mould themselves to lead a better life. Their financial situation isn't good either. Some of the people even start getting addicted to alcohol to get rid of the thoughts of their experience in custody. Hence the quality of life of men, women and children is very poor.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) New policies must be made which ensure the safety of the children when their parents are arrested.
- 2) The police must have a proper arrest warrant before arresting the people, and this must be supervised by a higher official.
- 3) The people belonging to this community should be given proper job opportunities based on their talent and not based on where they are from.
- 4) It should be seen that the Right to Education Act is allowed to be exercised by the people of this community too.
- 5) They should be given proper areas for residence, where they have comparatively easier access to basic amenities such as schools and hospitals.
- 6) The Government should see to it whether these people are really treated as 'denotified'. If not, stringent action must be taken on those who still treat them as criminals, even if it is a police officer.
- 7) A therapy or rehabilitation session should be held for each family of the community to help them overcome the thoughts of their traumatic experiences and grow.

VII. CONCLUSION

From the study on The Impact of Custodial Violence on Kal Oddar Women and Children, it is evident that the well-being of the people in the community is being affected by the custodial violence, especially, women and children. The development of this community is being hindered by the unlawful and unethical practices of the Government. Kal oddars are being accountable for the crime they did not even commit. The women of the Kal Oddar, given the fact that they are uneducated, find it very difficult to even communicate what happened. They find it difficult to manage the family with the expenses spent on jail, police men and the Court. On the other hand, children fail to pursue their education due to various reasons.

One of the many reasons is that the stigma associated with being in a family where one of the parents has been arrested. Some of them even do petty offenses. Even though the people are trying to get out of the label of 'Criminal Tribe', the frequent arrests prompt them to indulge in criminal behavior, because they feel being innocent or guilty leads to the same consequence. The community has seen police custody for many generations, and the same will continue for future generations if the attitude and thought of the police and the people do not change. Future implications of the study may benefit the Government in Policy Making, NGOs working for Tribal people, etc.

VIII. IMPACT OF CUSTODIAL VIOLENCE AMONG KAL ODDAR WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN MOTTAMALAI, TAMIL NADU

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Marital Status:

Educational Status:

Are you a part of Alai Kudi Makkal Sangam? If yes, since when

Occupation Wife/Husband's Name Occupation

No. of children Name(s) of the children Age of the children Current Status

Did any of them dropped out of school? If yes, specify why?

Do you have debt/loans? Reason for borrowing money Total. No. of. police cases Current status of the case Name of the Police Station

Have you experienced any kind of violence in the custody? If yes, please specify

Did your wife become the breadwinner of your family after you were taken into the custody?

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