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STATE OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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**Review of Department of Correctional Services
Research on Female Commitments**

Updated, 1993

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REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES RESEARCH ON FEMALE COMMITMENTS

The Department receives numerous questions on female offender issues. These questions include:

- How have the demographic characteristics of female inmates changes over time?
- What crimes did the female inmates commit? In particular:
 1. What is the proportion of female inmates committed for drug offenses? Who is the female drug offender?
 2. What is the profile of the female inmate committed for a homicide offense?
- How do women undercustody compare to men undercustody?
- How do women differ from men in their adjustment to prison?
- How many women participate in the Department's prison nursery programs? What becomes of the infants and mothers after they leave the program?

The Division of Program Planning, Research and Evaluation has addressed these issues in a series of reports on women committed to the Department of Correctional Services. Most of these reports were written during the past five years, however, several earlier reports of special interest are included. In addition to the reports discussed below, a number of historical reports are available upon request.

This review briefly discusses the reports offered on the attached checklist to facilitate readers' requests for the actual reports. The review also provides a general picture of the kind of research the Department has done in the area of the female offender.

A. TRENDS IN THE FEMALE INMATE POPULATION

These reports contain extensive information designed to reflect changes which have occurred in the female inmate population over several years.

1. Female Offenders Committed to State Prison

This report provides a demographic and legal profile of female offenders committed to the New York State Department of Correctional Services. The report presents data on three different segments of the female offender population: (1) female offenders admitted to the Department as new court commitments from January 1, 1988 through December 31, 1991; (2) female offenders under custody on December 31, 1991 and (3) female offenders released to parole from 1988 through 1991.

2. Female New Court Commitments, 1976 through 1987

This report examines trends in the demographic and legal history characteristics of female offenders committed to the New York State Department of Correctional Services for the period 1976 through 1987. The study also presents comparative data on commitment offense type for male and female admissions.

3. Characteristics of Female Inmates Held Under Custody, 1975 through 1985

This report provides a statistical profile of the changes in the Department's female inmate population during the 11 year period 1975 through 1985. Information is provided on variables such as crime of commitment, first and second felony offender status, prior adult record, minimum and maximum sentence length, age, ethnic status, years of education, marital status, region of commitment and occupational status.

B. COMPARISON REPORTS

4. Comparison of Male and Female Inmates Under the Department's Custody: December 31, 1990

This report compares males and females under the Department's custody in terms of country of commitment, ethnic background, education, commitment age, conviction crime, and prior record.

5. **A Comparison of Women Under Custody: 1912 and 1982**

This report concerns women under custody in 1912 and 1982. The 1912 information was obtained from the Annual Report of the Superintendent of State Prisons, a publication put out yearly as part of the budget request to the state legislature. The women under custody in 1912 were housed at the State Prison at Auburn, comprising two percent of the under custody population as opposed to three percent in 1982.

C. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

6. **Domestic Violence and Incarcerated Women: Survey Results**

In July of 1985, a survey on domestic violence was administered to the female inmate population at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The purpose of this survey was to gather information on the issue of domestic violence and incarcerated women. This report presents the data from the survey results.

D. DRUGS

7. **Female Drug Commitment Population 1987-1989**

This report shows the dramatic increase in female commitments to state prison in recent years. The type of commitment offense for males and females is compared and the substantial increase in drug offenders among females committed to state prison is presented. The report goes on to present information on legal and demographic characteristics of female drug offenders committed to state prison.

8. **Sample of 1986 Female New Commitments for Controlled Substance Convictions Involving "Crack"**

In response to legislative, law enforcement, and public inquiries, this brief survey examined a sample of 1986 female new commitments for drug crimes to determine the percentage involving cocaine, especially in the crystalline form known as "crack."

E. INMATE DISCIPLINE

9. Review of Literature on Female Security Issues

This report, originally part of the Department's ongoing Classification Improvement Project, presents the results of systematic literature review regarding the adjustment of the female inmate to prison. Areas covered by the report include the response of the female inmate to the prison environment, various demographic and legal characteristics associated with institutional adjustment, correlates of self-injury, escape and recidivism.

F. REPORTS ON WOMEN COMMITTED FOR HOMICIDE

1986 Female Homicide Commitments

10. This report presents information on the characteristics of 78 female offenders committed to the Department of Correctional Services during 1986 for a homicide offense. This study is based on the analysis of information in individual case file folders includes data on such factors as prior criminal involvement, accomplice involvement, victim characteristics and evidence of domestic violence.

G. INMATE MOTHERS

11. Bedford Hills Nursery Mothers Follow-Up

This report is a follow-up study of the 28 women who had babies born in 1981 and 1982 and participated in the Nursery Program at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The focus is on the custody of the infant and other children following release.

12. Profile of Participants: The Bedford Hills and Taconic Nursery Programs in 1992

This report presents a statistical overview of the legal and demographic characteristics of the 105 women who participated in the Bedford Hills and Taconic nursery programs during 1992. This statistical profile is illustrated by the case histories of seven participants.

All of the above cited research reports are available upon request. Please include the following checklist with your written requests.

Requests for these reports should be forwarded to:

**Ms. Elaine S. Humphrey
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New York State Department of
Correctional Services
Division of Program Planning,
Research and Evaluation
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Questions concerning this report series may be directed to
Ms. Elaine S. Humphrey at (518) 457-3005.

CHECKLIST

REPORTS ON FEMALE COMMITMENTS

A. TRENDS IN THE FEMALE INMATE POPULATION

- _____ 1. Female Offenders Committed to State Prison
- _____ 2. Female New Court Commitments, 1976 through 1987
- _____ 3. Characteristics of Female Inmates Held Under Custody, 1975 through 1985

B. COMPARISON REPORTS

- _____ 4. Comparison of Male and Female Inmates Under the Department's Custody: December 31, 1990
- _____ 5. A Comparison of Women Under Custody: 1912 and 1982

C. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- _____ 6. Domestic Violence and Incarcerated Women: Survey Results

NOTE: See Also 1986 Female Homicide Commitments

D. DRUGS

- _____ 7. Female Drug Commitment Population 1987 to 1989
- _____ 8. Sample of 1986 Female New Commitments for Controlled Substance Convictions Involving "Crack"

E. INMATE DISCIPLINE

- _____ 9. Review of Literature of Female Security Issues

F. REPORTS ON WOMEN COMMITTED FOR HOMICIDE

- _____ 10. 1986 Female Homicide Commitments

G. INMATE MOTHERS

- _____ 11. Bedford Hills Nursery Mothers Follow-Up

- _____ 12. Profile of Participants: The Bedford Hills and Taconic Nursery Program in 1992