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AN AWARENESS ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore how young adults perceive the fairness of the death penalty, its deterrent effect, and its moral standing in contemporary society. The study highlights the concept of "rarest of rare" cases, which serves as a guideline for applying capital punishment in India. Additionally, the paper contrasts abolitionist and retentionist countries, providing a historical overview of capital punishment in ancient India. One major factor contributing to this issue is the perceived inadequacy of punishments for serious crimes, with many arguing that more severe penalties are necessary to deter criminal activity. Among the different types of punishments in India, capital punishment stands out as the most severe. The study seeks to determine whether young adults perceive capital punishment as an effective deterrent to crime or if they view it as morally problematic and outdated. The research adopts an empirical methodology, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed to 200 participants from the Chennai region, selected using a convenience sampling method. The findings highlight a generational shift, with many young adults questioning the fairness and efficacy of the death penalty, expressing concerns about wrongful convictions, and emphasizing the potential for rehabilitation over punitive measures.

KEYWORDS: capital punishment, death penalty, legislation, capital offense, crimes.

INTRODUCTION:

Capital punishment, or the death penalty, is one of the most severe forms of punishment applied in criminal law, where a person is sentenced to death for committing a capital crime. In India, it is imposed for serious offenses such as murder, terrorism, and waging war against the government. The debate over its application has persisted for decades, with strong arguments both for and against it. Proponents argue that it acts as a deterrent to heinous crimes, while opponents highlight the irreversible nature of the punishment, potential for wrongful convictions, and ethical concerns. In this context, capital punishment remains a contentious issue within the Indian legal framework, calling for a deeper understanding of its legal, ethical, and societal implications. The research presented

aims to explore the public's perception, particularly focusing on young adults, who are often at the forefront of social and legal change. As society evolves, the question of whether capital punishment remains relevant or should be abolished continues to shape legal reforms and public opinion.

The history of capital punishment in India traces back to colonial times when the British implemented the death penalty extensively, often for political reasons and as a tool of control. After India gained independence in 1947, the use of the death penalty was reduced, but it remained a part of the penal system. In the years that followed, there were efforts to examine the morality and effectiveness of the death penalty in deterring crime. The landmark case of *Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab* in 1980

marked a critical shift, where the Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty should only be applied in the "rarest of rare" cases. This marked a significant change from earlier, more routine applications of capital punishment. Over time, societal attitudes towards the death penalty began to evolve, with growing concerns over its fairness and human rights implications. In the 21st century, high-profile cases such as the 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape case reignited debates, leading to calls for stricter laws and a rethinking of the role of the death penalty. These developments reflect the ongoing evolution of India's stance on capital punishment, influenced by both legal precedents and changing societal values.

The primary aim of this research is to assess the level of awareness and understanding of capital punishment among young adults in India. This includes investigating their views on the legal, ethical, and societal implications of the death penalty. The study aims to gauge whether young adults perceive capital punishment as a necessary deterrent to crime or if they see it as an outdated and morally problematic punishment. Understanding their opinions on the fairness of its application, the potential for wrongful convictions, and its impact on marginalized communities is a key objective of this research.

In addition to examining general perceptions, the study seeks to understand how young people's values, education, and exposure to media shape their views on capital punishment. This research intends to provide insight into the generational shift in attitudes towards capital punishment, which could influence future legal reforms and public policy in India. The findings will contribute to broader discussions on criminal justice, human rights, and the evolving landscape of the Indian legal system.

The Indian government has implemented various initiatives to regulate the use of capital punishment, ensuring it is applied only in the most exceptional circumstances. One key initiative is the guidance provided by the

Supreme Court of India, which established the principle of the "rarest of rare" cases in the 1980 *Bachan Singh* case, emphasizing that the death penalty should only be used when life imprisonment is considered inadequate. Additionally, the Constitution of India allows for mercy petitions to be filed, where the President or Governor can commute death sentences to life imprisonment in exceptional cases. This potential for clemency ensures that there is a system of checks and balances in place, preventing arbitrary or unjust imposition of the death penalty. The Indian government has also introduced reforms to speed up the legal processes involved in capital punishment cases, addressing public concerns about lengthy delays. Despite these initiatives, human rights organizations continue to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty, pointing out its irreversible nature and the risk of miscarriages of justice. These initiatives reflect the ongoing balancing act between maintaining the death penalty for the most egregious offenses and ensuring that the legal system operates fairly and justly.

Current trends in the application of capital punishment in India reveal a decline in the frequency of death sentences, with many courts opting for life imprisonment instead. In recent years, the number of executions has decreased significantly, with only a few high-profile cases leading to the imposition of the death penalty. However, certain types of crimes, especially those involving terrorism or brutal violence, continue to spark debates about the need for harsher punishments. The Nirbhaya case of 2012, in which the convicts were eventually executed, reignited public discourse on the death penalty's role in deterring violent crimes. Additionally, the recent execution of the 2013 Mumbai blast convict, Yakub Memon, has further fueled discussions about the appropriateness of capital punishment in counterterrorism efforts. While some argue that capital punishment serves as a deterrent, others believe its application is not effective in reducing crime rates. These trends point to a shift towards more

selective and cautious use of the death penalty, in line with the judicial principle that it should only be applied in exceptional cases, ensuring that the legal process remains fair and just.

Several factors affect this research, including public opinion, societal values, and the media's portrayal of capital punishment. Public opinion on the death penalty is often influenced by high-profile criminal cases, media coverage, and political ideologies, which can sway individual perceptions. Additionally, the lack of awareness or misinformation about the legal process surrounding capital punishment may affect how young adults view its application. Societal values such as human rights, justice, and fairness play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward the death penalty, especially as India's younger population becomes increasingly aware of global human rights standards. Political ideologies also play a crucial role in shaping public discourse, with some political parties advocating for harsher punishments, while others call for reform or abolition. The influence of social media and news outlets further amplifies these debates, creating a platform for individuals to voice their opinions. Furthermore, the education level and exposure to criminal justice systems in other countries may contribute to shaping attitudes toward the death penalty. These factors all influence how young adults in India perceive capital punishment and, consequently, the findings of this research.

When comparing India's approach to capital punishment with other countries, particularly the United States, notable differences emerge in terms of legal processes and frequency of use. While both India and the U.S. maintain the death penalty for certain crimes, the U.S. has a more extensive history of capital punishment, with states like Texas regularly carrying out executions. In contrast, India's approach is more restrictive, with the death penalty applied only in rare and exceptional cases, primarily for heinous crimes such as murder or terrorism. Furthermore, the legal proceedings in the U.S. are often protracted, involving lengthy appeals

and reviews, which can delay the execution process. In India, while death penalty cases also undergo extensive legal scrutiny, the judicial system has occasionally been criticized for its relatively quicker resolution of death sentences compared to the U.S. Additionally, the application of the death penalty in the U.S. varies by state, while in India, the death penalty is governed by national laws, and its imposition is subject to the discretion of the judiciary. This comparison highlights the differences in the application of capital punishment based on national legal frameworks and societal attitudes.

The objective of this research is to understand the perspectives of young adults in India regarding capital punishment, particularly focusing on their awareness and views on its legal, ethical, and societal implications. The study aims to explore how young adults perceive the fairness of the death penalty, its deterrent effect, and its moral standing in contemporary society.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To critically analyze the legal provisions and frameworks related to capital punishment in India.
2. To investigate the impact of capital punishment on marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities in India.
3. To evaluate the fairness and efficacy of the judicial processes in capital punishment cases in India.
4. To assess the psychological, social, and economic consequences on the families of victims involved in capital punishment cases.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Malhotra, N. (2024): "Political Influence on Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To explore the role of political ideologies in the application of capital punishment. Findings: The paper found that political influence plays a significant role in capital punishment cases, with some political groups advocating for its abolition while others defend its necessity. **Jai, S. (2024):** "Public

Discourse on Capital Punishment in Contemporary India" Aim: To analyze the evolving public discourse surrounding capital punishment. Findings: The study notes a shift in public opinion, especially among younger generations, towards questioning the need for capital punishment in India. **Sahni, S., & Junnarkar, A. (2020):** "Rehabilitation and Reformation in Capital Punishment" Aim: To evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation and alternative sentencing in lieu of capital punishment. Findings: The paper suggests that rehabilitative justice could be more effective than the death penalty in reducing recidivism and reintegrating offenders into society. **Blanken, P. (2021):** "Gender and Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To examine the intersection of gender and capital punishment in India. Findings: The study found that gender dynamics significantly influence the likelihood of a person receiving the death penalty, with women often receiving less frequent sentences. **Misra, N., & Project 39A (2021):** "Human Rights and Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To investigate India's international obligations concerning the death penalty. Findings: The study highlights India's global human rights obligations and argues for the abolition of capital punishment to align with international human rights standards. **Raman, M. (2021):** "Historical Evolution of Death Penalty Laws in India" Aim: To trace the historical evolution of capital punishment laws in India. Findings: The article discusses how death penalty laws in India evolved from British colonial rule to post-independence and the legislative changes over time. **Jha, R. (2018):** "Religious and Cultural Perspectives on Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To explore the role of religion and cultural beliefs in shaping attitudes towards capital punishment. Findings: The study reveals that various religious beliefs significantly influence public opinion on capital punishment, with some communities showing greater acceptance due to cultural factors. **Hodgkinson, P. (2016):** "Judicial Delays in Death Penalty Cases in India" Aim: To explore the causes of delays in the

execution of capital punishment in India. Findings: The study identifies systemic delays and inefficiencies in the judicial process as a major concern, with prolonged appeals often leading to unfair outcomes.

McCafferty, A. (2018): "Socio-Economic Disparities in the Application of Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To analyze the socio-economic factors influencing the application of the death penalty. Findings: It concluded that socio-economic status and political influences often skew the application of capital punishment, with marginalized groups more likely to face the death penalty. **Sarat, A. (2011):** "Capital Punishment and Its Cultural Dimensions" Aim: To investigate the cultural and historical context of capital punishment in India. Findings: The study reveals how cultural perceptions and historical practices influence the continued use of the death penalty in India. **Heilbrun, K. (2013):** "Deterrence and Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To assess the deterrent effect of capital punishment on crime rates in India. Findings: The study found no clear evidence that the death penalty significantly deters crime, calling into question its effectiveness as a crime prevention tool. **Gandhi, V. (2016):** "Socioeconomic Status and Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To investigate the correlation between socio-economic status and the likelihood of receiving the death penalty. Findings: The research found that individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds are disproportionately sentenced to death, reflecting inherent biases in the legal system. **Bedau, H., & Cassell, P. (2005):** "Ethical Implications of Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To explore the ethical considerations surrounding the death penalty in India. Findings: The paper argues that the ethical justification for capital punishment in India is weak, with human dignity being compromised.

Fridell, M. (2004): "Public Opinion and the Death Penalty in India" Aim: To explore public opinions and societal perspectives on capital punishment in India. Findings: The research found significant divergence in public opinion,

with younger generations showing more support for abolition compared to older groups. **Thompson, R. (2009):** "The Role of the Judiciary in Capital Punishment in India" Aim: To examine how India's judiciary has shaped the application of capital punishment. Findings: The article found that the judiciary plays a crucial role in moderating the imposition of the death penalty, particularly through judicial review. **Palmer, J., Jr. (2008):** "Human Rights and the Death Penalty in India" Aim: To analyze the human rights implications of capital punishment in India. Findings: The paper critiques the death penalty from a human rights perspective, emphasizing the ethical concerns surrounding its use.

Bedi, S. (2000): "Capital Punishment in India: A Study of Legal Developments" Aim: To explore the evolution of capital punishment laws in India. Findings: The study highlights the historical roots of capital punishment in India and its significant changes post-independence, focusing on the application of the death penalty in modern India. **Laurence, J. (1971):** "Psychological Effects of Capital Punishment" Aim: To investigate the psychological effects of capital punishment on judges, lawyers, and witnesses. Findings: The paper highlights the emotional toll that capital punishment places on all parties involved, including the legal professionals, resulting in ethical dilemmas. **Schabas, W. (1996):** "International Perspectives on Capital Punishment" Aim: To examine the international views on capital punishment and how they affect Indian law. Findings: The study finds that global opinion is increasingly against capital punishment, urging India to consider abolition in line with international human rights standards.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The retributive theory in capital punishment asserts that punishment should be proportional to the severity of the crime. It emphasizes moral accountability, where offenders must "pay" for the harm they caused. In cases of heinous crimes like murder, the theory supports the death penalty as a fitting consequence. The

principle of proportionality demands that the punishment matches the severity of the offense. Capital punishment is seen as a condemnation of the crime, reinforcing societal values and deterring future transgressions. It also aligns with the idea of justice being deserved, ensuring criminals face consequences reflecting the gravity of their actions. Ultimately, retribution seeks to restore moral balance and uphold justice in society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

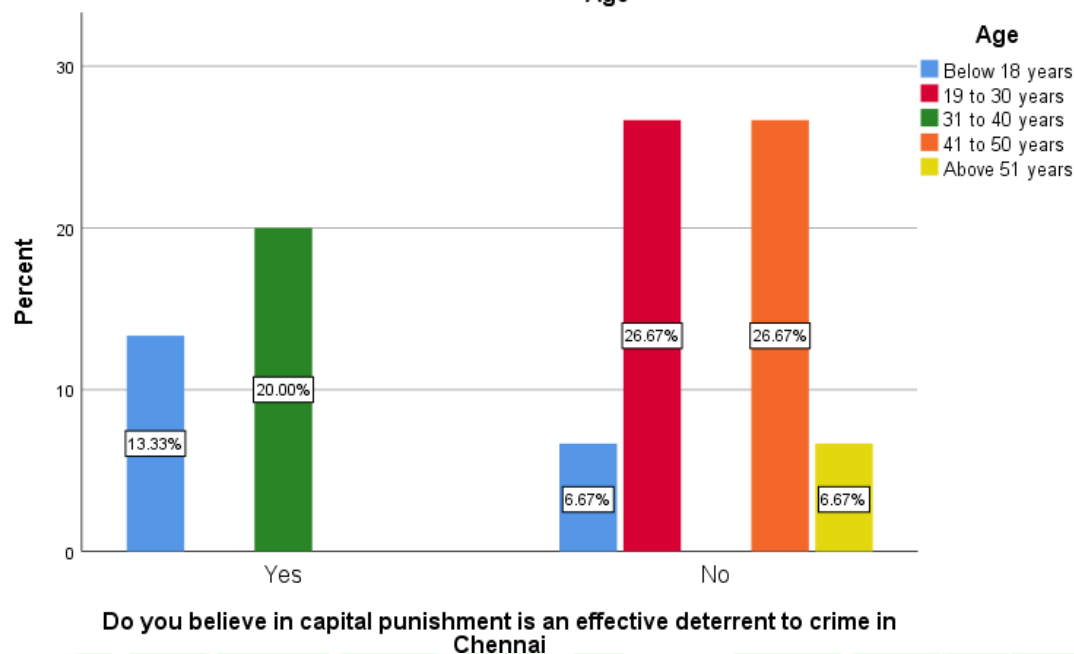
The research method adopted in this study is empirical research, which focuses on collecting and analyzing real-world data to derive meaningful conclusions. Data for this research was gathered through a structured questionnaire, with a sample size of 200 participants. A convenience sampling method was used to select the participants, ensuring accessibility and relevance to the study. The sample consisted of students from the Chennai region, and the independent variables considered in the study include gender, age, education qualification, and occupation, all of which could influence the participants' views on capital punishment. The dependent variables are focused on the participants' perceptions of capital punishment, including whether they believe it is an effective deterrent to crime, their awareness and opinion on the current laws and procedures related to capital punishment in Chennai, and their views on the fairness and accuracy of the legal system's application of capital punishment.

The data collected was analyzed using graphs and statistical methods to identify patterns and trends in the responses, helping the researcher understand how factors such as gender or education level impact opinions on capital punishment. By analyzing these variables, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of young adults' views on capital punishment in Chennai, shedding light on the effectiveness, fairness, and the procedural aspects of its implementation within the legal system.

ANALYSIS:

FIGURE 1:

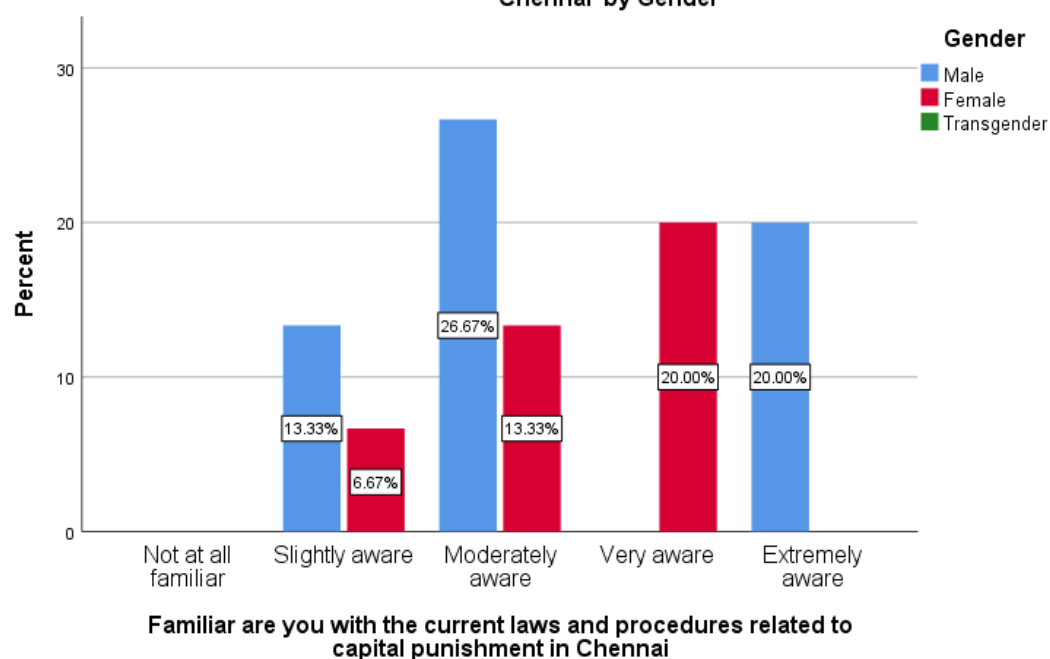
Clustered Bar Percent of Do you believe in capital punishment is an effective deterrent to crime in Chennai by Age



LEGEND: Figure 1 represents the age of the sample population and their opinion on the effectiveness of capital punishment on deterrant of crimes in chennai.

FIGURE 2:

Clustered Bar Percent of Familiar are you with the current laws and procedures related to capital punishment in Chennai by Gender



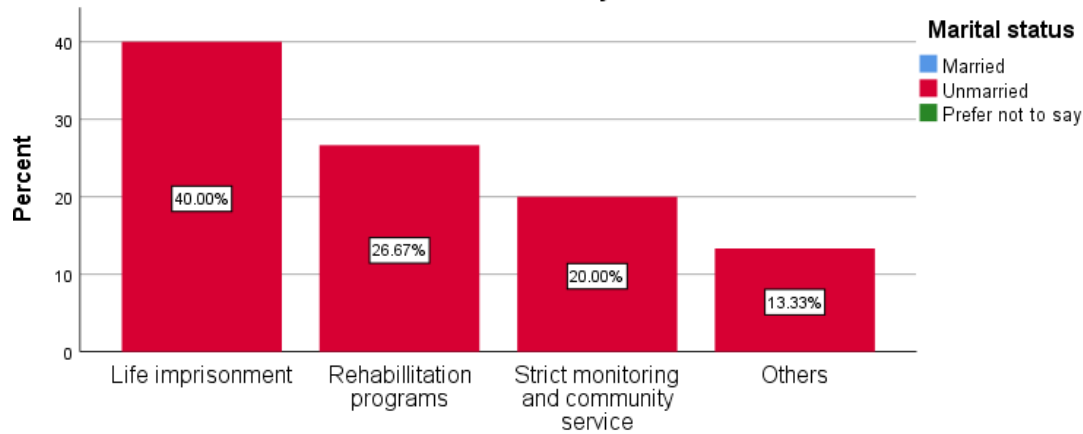
LEGEND: Figure 2 represents the gender of the sample population and their views on familiarity with

current laws and procedures related to capital punishment in Chennai.

FIGURE 3:

LEGEND: Figure 3 represents the marital status of the sample population and their choice over which

Clustered Bar Percent of Other than capital punishment, what you think is the effective way for crime deterrence. by Marital status

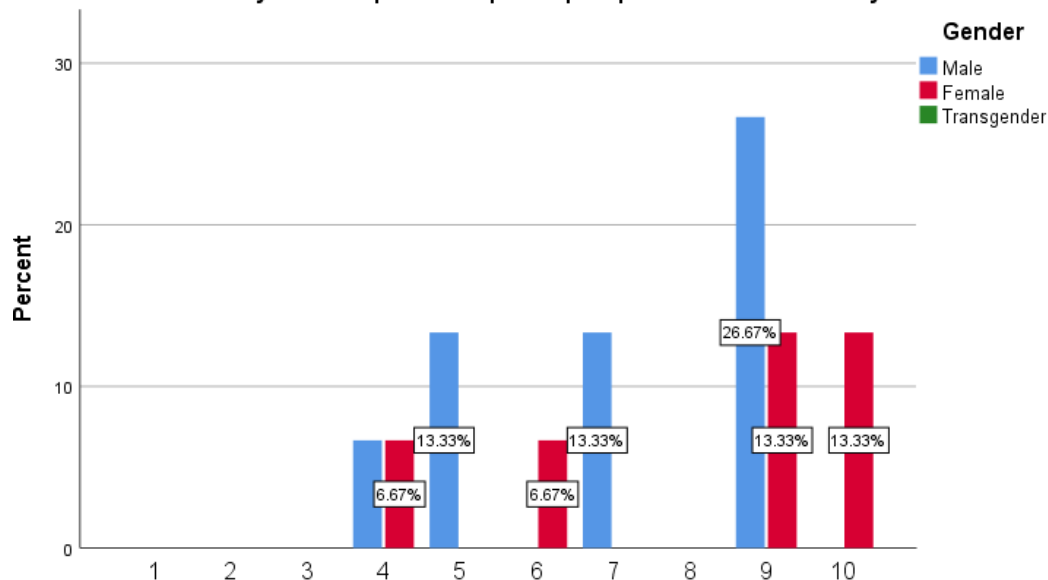


Other than capital punishment, what you think is the effective way for crime deterrence.

would be the most effective way of crime deterrence other than capital punishment.

FIGURE 4:

Clustered Bar Percent of On a scale from 1 to 10, rate your opinion on the fairness and accuracy of the legal system's implication upon capital punishment in India. by Gender

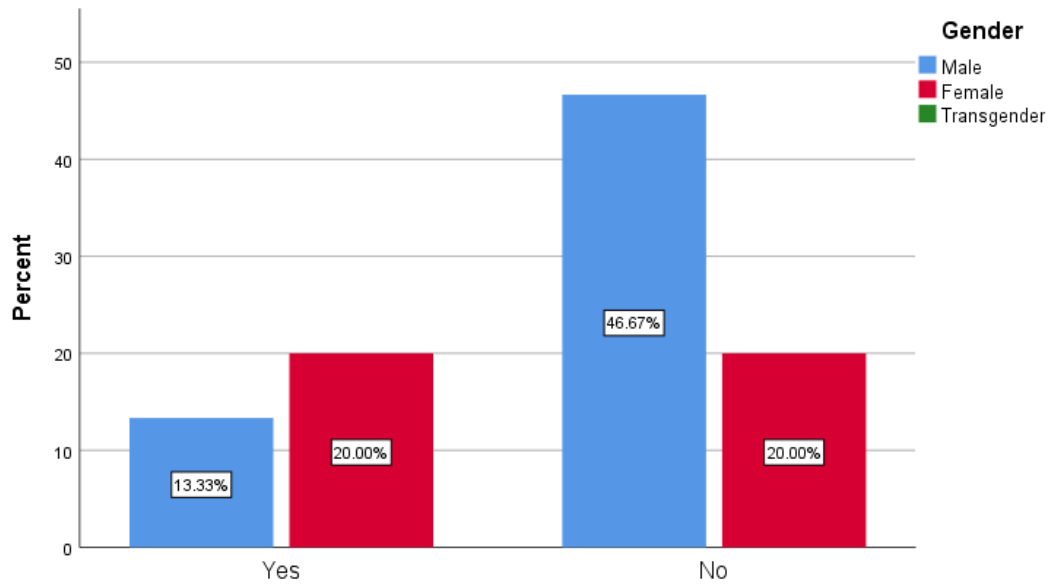


On a scale from 1 to 10, rate your opinion on the fairness and accuracy of the legal system's implication upon capital punishment...

LEGEND: FIGURE 4 represents the gender of the sample population and their opinion on the rating scale upon the fairness and accuracy of the legal system's implication upon the capital punishment in Chennai.

FIGURE 5:

Clustered Bar Percent of Do you believe in capital punishment is an effective deterrent to crime in Chennai by Gender

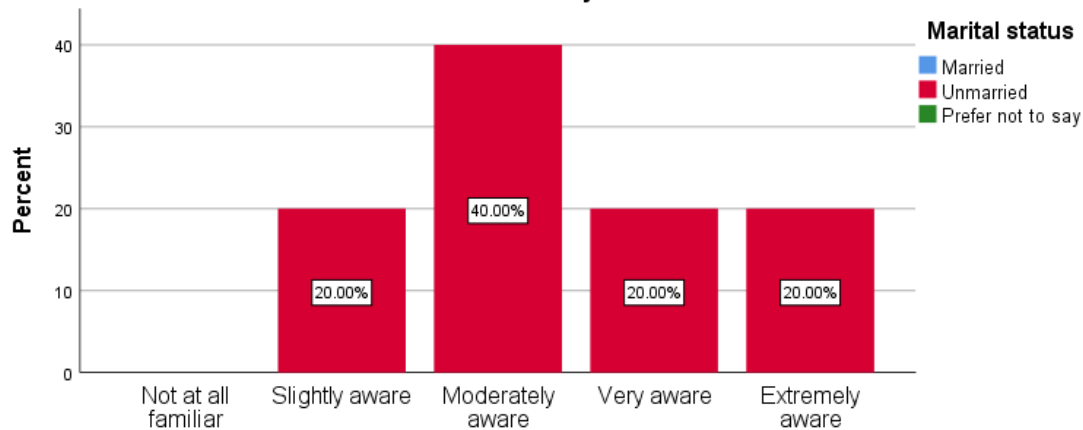


Do you believe in capital punishment is an effective deterrent to crime in Chennai

LEGEND: Figure 5 represents the gender of the sample population and their opinion on the effectiveness of capital punishment on deterrance of crimes in chennai.

FIGURE 6:

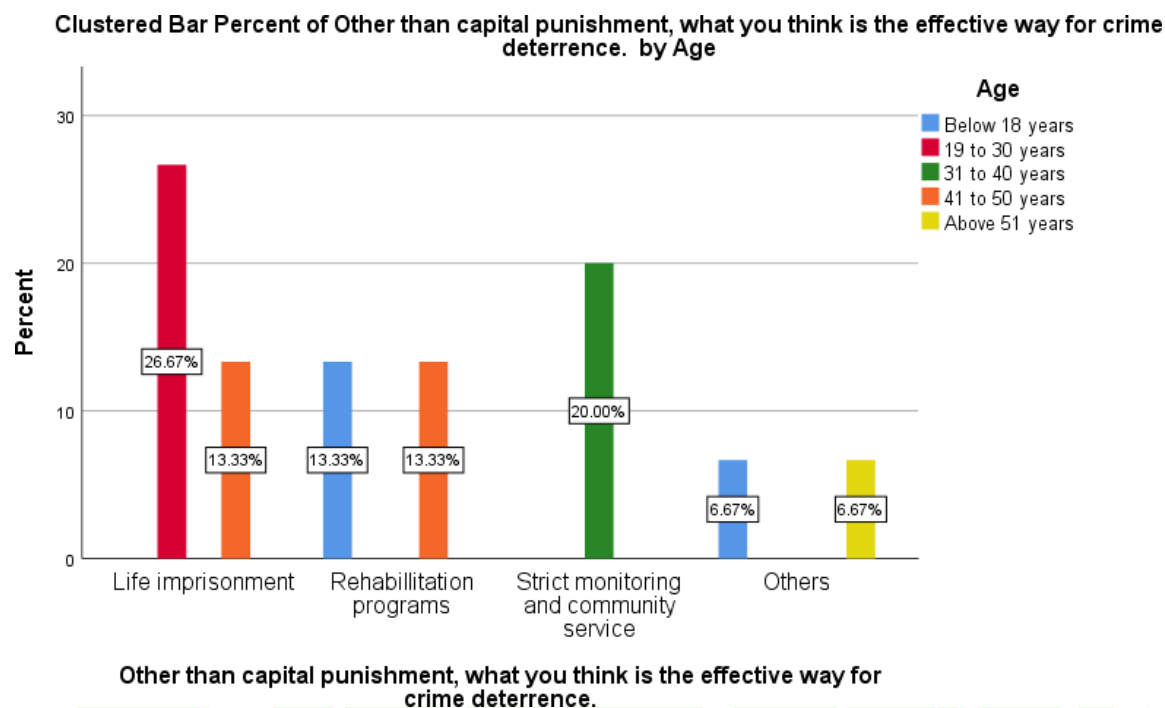
Clustered Bar Percent of Familiar are you with the current laws and procedures related to capital punishment in Chennai by Marital status



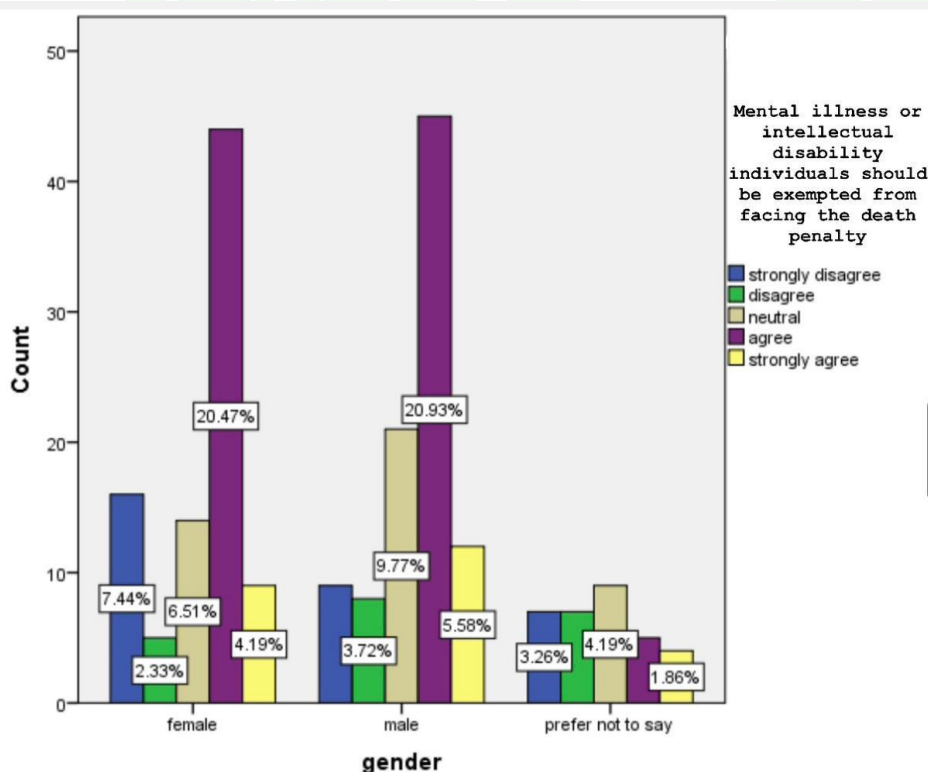
Familiar are you with the current laws and procedures related to capital punishment in Chennai

LEGEND: Figure 6 represents the marital status of the sample population and their views on familiarity with current laws and procedures related to capital punishment in Chennai.

FIGURE 7:

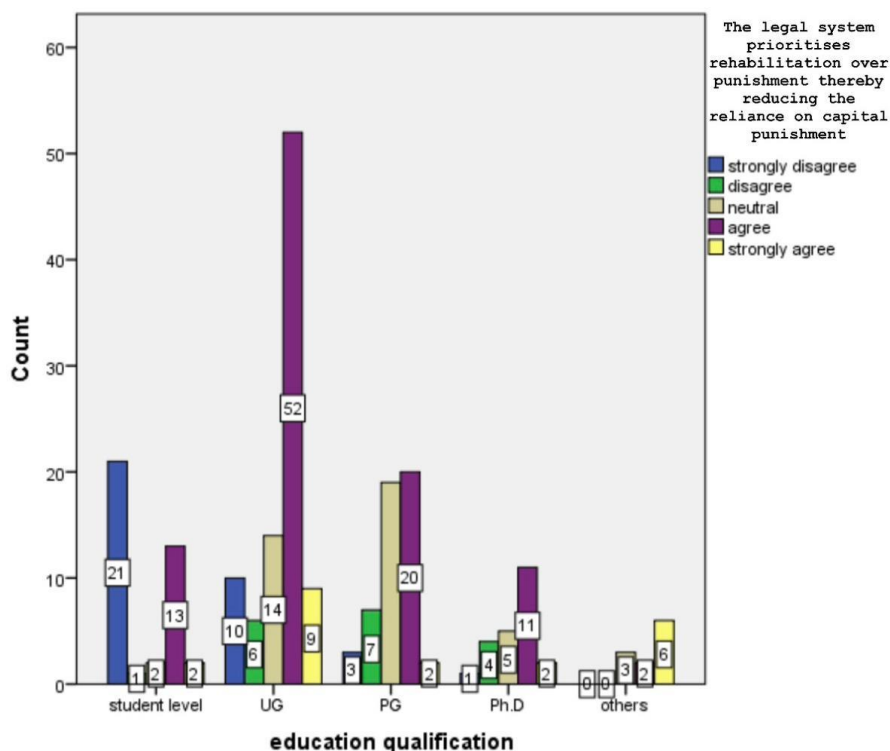


LEGEND: Figure 7 represents the age of sample population and their choice over which would be the most effective way of crime deterrence other than capital punishment. **FIGURE 8:**



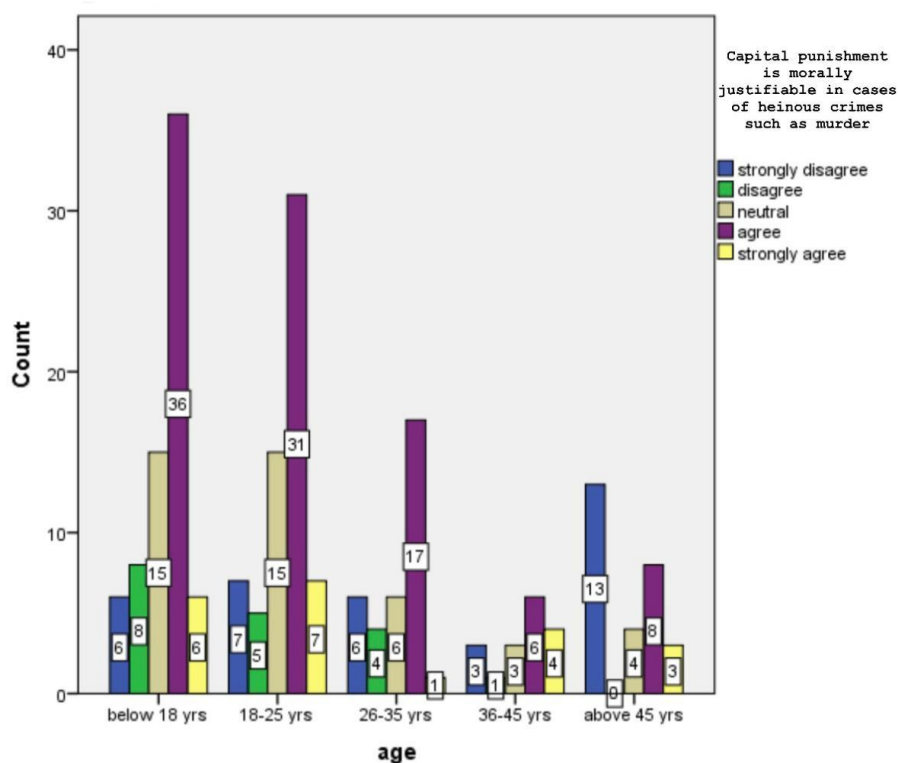
LEGEND: Figure 8 represents the Gender of sample population and their opinion on the mental illness or intellectual disability individuals should be exempted from facing the death penalty.

FIGURE 9:



LEGEND: Figure 9 represents the educational qualification of sample population and their opinion on the The illegal system priorities rehabilitation over punishment thereby reducing the reliance on capital punishment.

FIGURE 10:



LEGEND: Figure 10 represents the age of sample population and their opinion on the Capital punishment is morally justification in cases of heinous crimes such as murder.

RESULT:

Figure 1 represents that higher percentage of sample population 26.67% belonging to the age group of 19–39 years responded no to the question “do you believe in capital punishment is an effective deterrent to crime in Chennai?”

Figure 2 represents that higher percentage of sample population 26.37% belonging to the gender category of males have responded moderately aware to the question ‘how familiar are you with the current laws and procedures related to capital punishment. In **figure 3**, higher percentage of sample population unmarried, have responded 40% that life imprisonment is the effective way for crime deterrence compared to rehabilitation programs, strict monitoring and etc. **FIGURE 4**, represents the higher percentage of the sample population belonging to the category of males 26.67% have responded 9 on the rating scale upon the fairness and accuracy of the legal systems implication upon capital punishment. **Figure 5**, represents that higher percentage of sample population belonging to male 46.67% responded No that they don’t believe in capital punishment is an effective deterrent to crime in Chennai.

Figure 6, represents that higher percentage of sample population unmarried 40.00% responded moderately aware of current laws and procedures related to capital punishment in Chennai. In **figure 7**, represents higher percentage of sample population belonging to the age group of 19–30 years, responded life imprisonment would be the effective way for crime deterrence. In **figure 8**, represents that higher percentage of sample population belonging to male have agreed to the statement that mental illness or intellectual disability individuals should be exempted from facing the death penalty. In **figure 9**, represents that higher percentage of sample population belonging to ug have agreed to the statement that the illegal system priorities rehabilitation over punishment thereby reducing the reliance on capital punishment. In **figure 10**, represents

that higher percentage of sample population belonging to 18 years have agreed to the statement that Capital punishment is morally justification in cases of heinous crimes such as murder.

DISCUSSIONS:

FIGURE 1: The result shows that about a quarter of young adults, aged 19–39, don’t think capital punishment stops crime effectively in Chennai. This age group includes various people from different backgrounds and beliefs. Some might have doubts about whether punishment really stops crime, while others might think there are better ways to prevent crime. This tells us that opinions on this topic can vary, and it’s important to listen to different viewpoints when making decisions about how to handle crime in Chennai. **FIGURE 2:** The data from Figure 2 indicates that a significant portion, around 26.37%, of males in the sample population have expressed moderate awareness regarding the current laws and procedures concerning capital punishment. This finding suggests that while a considerable number of males have some level of familiarity with these legal aspects, there remains room for improvement in understanding the intricacies of capital punishment laws and procedures. Possible reasons for this moderate awareness could include limited access to information, complexities within legal systems, or differing levels of interest in legal matters among males in the sample group. Enhancing public awareness and education about capital punishment laws and procedures, particularly among males, could contribute to more informed discussions and decisions regarding this controversial issue in the context of Chennai’s legal landscape. **Figure 3:** Figure 3 reveals that a significant 40% of unmarried individuals in the sample population believe that life imprisonment is a more effective method for deterring crime compared to rehabilitation programs, strict monitoring, and other

approaches. This suggests that unmarried individuals, who likely represent a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives, have a preference for harsher penalties as a means of discouraging criminal behavior. Potential reasons for this viewpoint could include a belief in the severity of punishment as a deterrent, lack of faith in rehabilitation programs, or concerns about the effectiveness of monitoring systems. Understanding the prevalence of this belief among unmarried individuals is crucial for policymakers and advocates seeking to address crime effectively, as it highlights a preference within this demographic for punitive measures over rehabilitative approaches.

FIGURE 4: Figure 4 illustrates that a substantial portion, about 26.67%, of males in the sample population have rated the fairness and accuracy of legal systems regarding capital punishment as a 9 on the rating scale. This indicates a strong belief among these individuals in the fairness and accuracy of the legal processes associated with capital punishment. Such confidence in the legal system's ability to administer capital punishment fairly might stem from various factors, including trust in the judicial system, perceptions of the rule of law, or personal experiences. However, it's essential to recognize that perspectives on the fairness and accuracy of legal systems can vary widely, and factors such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and personal beliefs may influence individual viewpoints. This finding underscores the importance of maintaining transparency, accountability, and fairness within legal systems to uphold public trust and confidence in administering capital punishment. **FIGURE 5:** Figure 5 shows that a significant majority, about 46.67%, of males in the sample population responded "No" to believing that capital punishment is an effective deterrent to crime in Chennai. This finding highlights a strong skepticism among males regarding the effectiveness of capital punishment in deterring crime. Possible reasons for this skepticism could include doubts about the deterrent effect of

harsh penalties, concerns about the fairness and accuracy of legal processes, or a preference for alternative approaches to addressing crime, such as rehabilitation and prevention programs. Understanding and addressing the underlying reasons for this skepticism is crucial for shaping effective policies and public perceptions regarding crime and punishment in Chennai, ensuring that approaches to crime prevention and justice align with community values and expectations.

FIGURE 6: Figure 6 indicates that a significant portion, about 40.00%, of unmarried individuals in the sample population expressed moderate awareness of the current laws and procedures related to capital punishment in Chennai. This finding suggests that while many unmarried individuals have some level of familiarity with these legal aspects, there is room for improvement in their understanding. Possible reasons for this moderate awareness could include limited exposure to legal education, complexities within the legal system, or varying levels of interest in legal matters among unmarried individuals. Enhancing public awareness and education about capital punishment laws and procedures, particularly among unmarried individuals, could contribute to more informed discussions and decisions regarding this contentious issue in Chennai's legal landscape.

FIGURE 7: Figure 7 depicts that a larger proportion of the sample population within the age group of 19–30 years believe that life imprisonment is a more effective method for deterring crime. This suggests a prevailing sentiment among younger individuals that harsh punishments, such as life imprisonment, serve as better deterrents compared to other approaches. Possible reasons for this viewpoint might include a perception of the severity of the punishment acting as a deterrent, skepticism about the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs, or a lack of faith in the justice system's ability to rehabilitate offenders. Understanding the prevalence of this belief among young adults is important for

policymakers and stakeholders involved in crime prevention strategies, as it indicates a preference within this demographic for punitive measures over rehabilitative approaches. Addressing the underlying reasons behind this perception could inform more effective crime prevention strategies tailored to the attitudes and beliefs of younger individuals. **FIGURE 8** suggests that males tend to support exempting mentally ill or intellectually disabled individuals from facing the death penalty more than females, possibly reflecting differing societal attitudes and perspectives on vulnerability and justice. **FIGURE 9** undergraduate students show a stronger inclination towards prioritizing rehabilitation over punishment within the legal system, signaling a youthful idealism and progressive stance towards criminal justice reform. Conversely, **FIGURE 10** highlights that 18-year-olds are more likely to morally justify capital punishment for heinous crimes like murder compared to older age groups, underscoring a generational divide in views on punishment and societal norms. Together, these figures emphasize the complexity of public opinion on capital punishment, influenced by factors such as gender, education, and generational perspectives, which are pivotal for shaping future policies and societal attitudes towards justice and punishment.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, this critical study on capital punishment in India has provided valuable insights into the multifaceted issues surrounding this contentious subject. Through an in-depth analysis of legal provisions and frameworks, the research has revealed several complexities and ambiguities within the Indian legal system, particularly in its approach to capital punishment. One of the key findings is the disproportionate impact of capital punishment on marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities, which underscores existing systemic injustices that need urgent attention. These communities are often more vulnerable to facing capital punishment due to factors such as lack of

adequate legal representation and biased judicial processes.

The study has highlighted concerns regarding fairness and efficacy in the judicial process, with particular focus on the lengthy and complex legal proceedings that often delay justice. The fairness of trials, including the application of the "rarest of rare" principle, has been questioned, especially when considering the potential for judicial errors or biases. Additionally, the research underscores the profound psychological, social, and economic consequences that families of victims and offenders experience in capital punishment cases. These consequences often extend beyond the immediate parties involved, affecting the broader social fabric and perpetuating cycles of trauma.

Another significant aspect revealed in the study is the inefficiency and lack of transparency in the mercy petition process, which delays the execution of sentences and contributes to public distrust in the justice system. The study advocates for reforms to streamline this process, ensuring that it is more transparent, timely, and just. The future scope of this research lies in exploring alternative and more effective punitive measures, such as restorative justice, which focuses on rehabilitation, reconciliation, and repairing harm rather than solely punishing offenders. Additionally, there is a need for further research on the psychological impact of capital punishment on young adults, as their cognitive and emotional development might warrant different approaches to justice. The study also emphasizes the importance of considering international trends, including the growing abolitionist movement and the effectiveness of life imprisonment as a more humane alternative to the death penalty. By advancing these discussions, future research can contribute to creating a justice system that is not only fairer but also more rehabilitative, focusing on the potential for societal healing and preventing the recurrence of crimes.

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