iachss

9th International Academic Conference on
Humanities and Social Sciences

23 - 25 February 2024
Milan, Italy

Shackled: The Inhumane Treatment of Incarcerated Pregnant Women in Some U.S. Prisons

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Abstract

The inhumane practice of shackling incarcerated and detained pregnant women during childbirth and pre and post childbirth continues to occur in the United States. Statistics suggests that majority of the women impacted by this dehumanizing practice are women of color. This research examines the history of shackling of pregnant detained and incarcerated women, explores the policies within the states whose prison systems still engage in such practices, and investigate each state's rationale for its continued use.

Further, using descriptive statistics and the comparative analysis method, the research seeks to determine whether pregnant women of color are more likely than white pregnant women to receive such treatment and whether the occurrences are more in the Southern part of the US than in the Northern states. Finally, the research will include a discussion of the efforts by advocacy groups to eliminate this practice.

Keywords: shackling incarcerated pregnant women, shackled while giving birth, inhumane practice against women in U.S.