

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

Dr. Shweta Chaudhary<sup>1</sup>, Bhavya Gupta<sup>2\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The study involved 402 participants, of which 263 were females, 138 males and 1 non-binary between the age group of 18 and above, belonging to those who had access to the internet and were familiar with the English language. For the study a three-part questionnaire was developed and administered to Indian participants who met the inclusion criteria. The questionnaire was divided into demographic details, support towards death penalty measure using the Likert scale, and additional questions regarding the same. The results showed moderate support towards death penalty by majority of the participants (n=326). There exists a significant difference between the views of men and women regarding the crimes for which death penalty should be used as punishment and executing individuals with mental illnesses. There also exists a belief in the deterrence effect of death penalty, which is correlated to the support of death penalty ( $r=0.69$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The latter is also positively correlated to death penalty hindering the right to life of the convicted ( $r=0.52$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Participants also believe imprisonment is harsher than death penalty.

**Keywords:** *Death Penalty, India, Public Opinion, Deterrence Effect, Punishment, Juvenile Punishment, Exempting Reasons, Capital Punishment, Death Penalty Perception*

Capital punishment, or the death penalty, is the state-ordered homicide of a convicted person as punishment for a crime. The sentence order that someone is punished with the death penalty is called a death sentence, and the act of carrying out such a sentence is known as an execution.

Amnesty International, a human rights organization, reported that China carried out the highest number of execution in 202, followed by Iran, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, accounting for 88% of the executions (excluding China). The total number of executions recorded by the organization is 483 for 2020, which is said to be 26% lower than the number recorded the previous year. There were some countries, 13 in total, in which an increase in the number of death sentences was seen. Pardons were received on sentences in 33 countries, according to this report. It is also imperative to note the difference between death sentences and executions. While this research does not emphasis on this aspect, it is must that people be aware of it (Amnesty International Global Report, 2021).

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Gargi College, University of Delhi, India

<sup>2</sup>Student, Gargi College, University of Delhi, India

\*Corresponding Author

Received: November 12, 2021; Revision Received: December 26, 2021; Accepted: December 28, 2021

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

India is listed under the 'retentionists' or 'executing countries' column when counting those that continue to legally support the implementation of death penalty. In 2020, India carried out 4 executions out of the 77 death sentences. Within the last two decades, India has executed a total of eight persons. According to the Project 39A at the National Law University, Delhi, all the sentences were imparted for homicides or homicide related offences except the four that were executed. India resumed executions for the first time after a four-year hiatus since 2015.

Findings of Project 39A, from 2016, show that there is no record of death sentences in some Indian states including Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Sikkim, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. However, as of 2020, Tripura, Manipur, and Himachal Pradesh also sentenced individuals to death penalty. Further, the research of 2016 also shows that maximum number of death sentences, 57.1% were imparted for murder simpliciter, followed by sexual offences. There is one sentence to death in India for drug based offences. Analyzing socio-economic factors and their role in death penalty, over 74% prisoners interviewed were belonging to the economically vulnerable class. According to this data death penalty was also implemented on sole bread earners of families, indicating that it not factored into or weighs marginally in the decision making process. Over 40 more participants sentenced with death penalty belong to 'other backward classes', as compared to 'general' and 'scheduled caste/scheduled tribe'. The least number was noted in 'religious minorities'. The study reports that of 270 participants, 216 admitted to have custodial torture from police.

Comparing the South Asian countries in a recent study of 2020, Silvee and Wu concluded that in both, India and Bangladesh, the pleas of social justice outweigh the convicted individual's rights which gives an assumption of justice upheld post sentencing the death penalty. They argue that there exist inconsistencies in the judicial systems of both countries. Understanding the layperson perspective, a study conducted in 2008 by Lambert, *et al.*, titled 'Views on the death penalty among college students in India', showed that 44 percent of the sample expressed opposition to the death penalty and favorability was demonstrated by 43 percent. The remaining 13 percent were unresolved on the matter. In their study, the primary reasons of opposition were morality and the possibility of achieving deterrence by imparting life sentences without parole. Contrary to this, explanations of support included retribution, instrumentalist goals, and incapacitation.

A study of 1215 Christian, Muslim, and Hindu participants from Tamil Nadu revealed that all three religious groups were largely opposing death penalty, while there was support towards euthanasia and abortion. The authors wrote that findings suggested that religions form a basis for 'sacredness' and 'quality' of life. (Anthony and Sterkens, 2018)

A 2018 study by Lambert *et al.* on the cultural and gender differences in support of death penalty among Indian and U.S college students revealed that higher number of men in both countries were more likely to support the death penalty. Men were more supportive for reasons of punishment, deterrence, and incapacitation, while women tended to oppose the death penalty for rehabilitation, innocence, and moral reasons. The study also showed that Indian students were highly contrasted in their reasons to oppose or support death penalty.

On similar accounts, this research proposes to understand the general view of death penalty and the gender differences of opinions. However, the belief held is that any attitude or belief is formed of complex layers of understandings about the subject. A study of Brazilian

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

population showed that murders, experience of insecurity, and perceived institutional legitimacy in large part have an effect on assist for the death penalty. In addition, ethnicity, religiosity have an effect on citizens' attitudes towards the capital punishment. (Boateng and, Dzordzormenyoh, 2021) Therefore, instead of asking whether the participants support or oppose death penalty and their reasons for the same, this research aims to understand the components of favorability and opposition.

While the legal age of punishment is 18 years, the study tries to discern the popular view of what the minimum age of implementation of death sentences ought to be. For the same, age categories were created commencing from below 10 years of age to above 18 years (adult).

The next vital component of death penalty is the crimes for which it should be implemented. For the same, all crimes were divided into broader categories like drug offences, homicide and its forms, financial crimes and so on. Separate questions were asked about death penalty's implementation for violent crimes against children, rape, murder, and terrorism due to their nature. A section for moral and ethical based questions was created to understand the affective part of the attitude towards death penalty, for example, the belief that death sentences lead to the loss of humanity and violates the individuals' fundamental right to life.

Exceptions always exist and have the ability to make their way no matter the precision of the law. The study pursues this thought by asking with open ended questions, and multiple choice questions, the reasons of exemption and factors that weigh in when calculating the appropriateness of the same. Furthermore, a comparison was made within the questions between prison life and death sentences to analyze which the participants think is harsher. An attempt was made to evaluate the belief in the deterrent effect of death penalty.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Objective*

This research aims to comprehend the public view regarding death penalty and its various aspects including crimes for which death penalty is regarded appropriate, the minimum legal age at which it should be implemented, and between life imprisonment and death penalty, which is a harsher punishment. Additionally, the research aims at understanding different beliefs about death penalty's morality and the belief in its effectiveness to curb crime.

### *Sample*

A total sample of 402 participants were chosen through convenient and snowball sampling for the study which included 263 females, 138 males and 1 non-binary, between the age group of 18 and above 64, belonging to those who had access to the internet and were familiar with the English language.

### *Design*

For this research, a quantitative survey called the Views on Death Penalty Questionnaire was conducted through the development and circulation of an online form in order to understand the opinions of people on the death penalty and its implementation. It was a three-part questionnaire, with the first being demographic details. The second part is a set of questions on the 5 point Likert scale, including strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Finally, there are some multiple choice questions, and questions with the response choice from 'yes', 'maybe' and 'no'. The questionnaire covered domains of crimes for which it should be implemented and the reasons that excuse the use of death penalty. Questions are also asked about the fairness of implementing death penalty, the minimum age

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

at which death penalty should be used as punishment for crime, and the deterrent effect. The questionnaire is inspired from a template created by SurveyMonkey.

### Administration

The death penalty questionnaire was circulated through online platforms to known contacts who met the inclusion criteria. Upon taking consent and giving the instructions, the participants were then required to fill the questionnaire. The participants were informed that the information shared will remain confidential and they were thanked for their participation. After the data was collected from 402 (263 females, 138 males and 1 non-binary) participants, the form was closed for further responses. Data analysis was conducted, consisting primarily of percentage evaluation of the questions and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation of the same.

## RESULTS

*Table 1 Total Scores on Likert Scale*

	No/mild support	Moderate support	Great support
<b>Female</b>	48	207	8
<b>Female percent</b>	18.25%	78.71%	3.04%
<b>Male</b>	16	119	3
<b>Male percent</b>	11.59%	86.23%	2.17%
<b>Other</b>	1	0	0
<b>Other percent</b>	100%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>16.17%</b>	<b>81.09%</b>	<b>2.74%</b>

A total of 65 participant score between the range of 32 to 74 indicating that they either do not support the death penalty or support it marginally. Out of these, 48 were female participants, 16 were male and one non-binary participants. Moderate support was shown by 326 participants. The gender composition of this number includes 207 females (78.70% females) and 119 males (86.23% males). Lastly, 2.73% participants or 11 in total greatly support death penalty, including 8 females and 3 males.

### Age

*Table 2 What Is the Youngest Age at Which the Death Penalty Should Be Used?*

	< 10 years	10-12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years & above	Total
Male	3	2	1	3	10	42	9	68	138
Male percent	2.174%	1.449%	0.725%	2.174%	7.246%	30.435%	6.522%	49.275%	
Female	3	2	7	6	13	32	17	183	263
Female percent	1.141%	0.760%	2.662%	2.281%	4.943%	12.167%	6.464%	69.582%	
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other percent	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	1.49%	1.00%	1.99%	2.24%	5.72%	18.41%	6.47%	62.69%	100% (approx.)

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

There is a gradual spike in the percentages from 'below 10 years' to '16 years' after which it takes a sharp fall and the number of responses for 17 years reduces. Maximum number of respondents, 252, opted for '18 years and above'. It would thus be correct to state that 150 participants have opted for death penalties for crimes committed by juveniles.

**Table 3 Juveniles Should Face the Death Penalty for Certain Crimes.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	29	30	31	35	13	138
Male percentage	21.014%	21.739%	22.464%	25.362%	9.420%	
Female	66	55	55	64	23	263
Female percentage	25.095%	20.913%	20.913%	24.335%	8.745%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Total	96	85	86	99	36	402
Percentage	23.88%	21.14%	21.39%	24.63%	8.96%	100% (approx.)

The above mentioned statistics suggest that proportion of disagreement to juveniles being on death row is marginally higher than the proportion of those in favor of it. A fifth of the population remains neutral to the idea of a juvenile punishment in the form of penalty.

### Exemption from death penalty

**Table 4 Should Any of the Following Affect the Extent to Which the Death Penalty Would Be an Appropriate Punishment? (Select All That Apply)**

	Male	Male percent	Female	Female percent	Other	Other percent	Total	Percentage
The severity of the crime	110	79.710%	219	83.270%	0	0.000%	329	81.84%
The level to which the defendant's culpability had been established	61	44.203%	124	47.148%	0	0.000%	185	46.02%
Whether the defendant had expressed compassion/empathy for the victims	30	21.739%	68	25.856%	0	0.000%	98	24.38%
The defendant's antecedents	64	46.377%	117	44.487%	0	0.000%	181	45.02%
The level of criminality in the area in which the crime has been committed	27	19.565%	53	20.152%	0	0.000%	80	19.90%

### Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

	Male	Male percent	Female	Female percent	Other	Other percent	Total	Percentage
None of the above	20	14.493%	30	11.407%	1	100%	51	12.69%
Not in favor of death penalty	0	0.000%	3	1.141%	0	0.000%	3	0.75%
Situational	0	0.000%	1	0.380%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
Reasons for committing a crime	0	0.000%	2	0.760%	0	0.000%	2	0.50%
Planned intentional homicide	0	0.000%	1	0.380%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>		<b>618</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>931</b>	

The graph suggests that the masses feel the severity of the crime committed, the example of which is given from burglary, rape to homicide, should have an impact on the relevancy of sentencing the convicted individual with the death penalty. This is followed by the level to which the defendant's culpability has been established, fully or not fully, and the defendants' antecedents, whether they had already committed crimes previously or not. Further, about a quarter of the sample population that believes expression of compassion and empathy for the victims by the defendant should also weigh in on the aptness of the punishment. A significant percentage of the participants also opted for the level of criminality in the area. However, the numbers reduced significantly for the option of 'none of the above'.

**Table 5 Should Any Reason for Committing a Crime Be an Exception to Death Penalty? (If Yes, Please State Reason in 'Other')**

	Male	Male percent	Female	Female percent	Other	Other percent	Total	Percentage
YES	15	10.870%	23	8.745%	0	0.000%	38	9.45%
NO	31	22.464%	65	24.715%	0	0.000%	96	23.88%
MAYBE	67	48.551%	132	50.190%	0	0.000%	199	49.50%
Self defense	8	5.797%	16	6.084%	1	100%	25	6.22%
Revenge/ Justice	5	3.624%	3	1.141%	0	0.000%	8	1.99%
Reason for crime	3	2.174%	0	0.000%	0	0.000%	3	0.75%
Blackmail/ forced to commit crime	4	2.899%	2	0.760%	0	0.000%	6	1.49%
Crime for greater good	0	0.000%	0	0.000%	0	0.000%	0	0.00%
Coercion	3	2.174%	0	0.000%	0	0.000%	3	0.75%
Not in favor of death penalty	2	1.449%	8	3.042%	0	0.000%	10	2.49%
Mental illness	3	2.174%	9	3.422%	0	0.000%	12	2.99%
Antecedents of accused	1	0.725%	0	0.000%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%

### Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

	Male	Male percent	Female	Female percent	Other	Other percent	Total	Percentage
Context/ circumstances	0	0.000%	5	1.901%	0	0.000%	5	1.24%
Mitigating factors	0	0.000%	1	0.380%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
Provocation/ aggravation	0	0.000%	1	0.380%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
Caused by brainwashing youngsters	0	0.000%	1	0.380%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>		<b>266</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>409</b>	

A fourth (approximately) of the total participants did not consider any reason to hold the ability to exempt death penalty. Among several reasons listed by participants, self-defense was the most common answer. Followed by this is mental illnesses and crimes done for seeking revenge or justice. Minimal number of participants wrote crime under force or blackmail, and coercion. Some suggested that circumstantial context and reasons of crime need to be considered.

**Table 6 The Death Penalty Should Not Be Used Due to Fear of Executing a Wrongfully Convicted Human Being.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	8	27	50	41	12	138
Male percentage	5.797%	19.565%	36.232%	29.710%	8.696%	
Female	8	28	85	104	38	263
Female percentage	3.042%	10.646%	32.319%	39.544%	14.449%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	4.23%	13.68%	33.58%	36.07%	12.44%	100% (approx.)

It becomes evident that almost half of the total sample population agrees that death sentences should not be given due to the dread of convicting and subsequently executing an innocent. There is distinguish support for the use of death penalty despite this limitation presented.

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

**Table 7** *The Reason for Committing a Crime (If Any) Should Matter When Deciding Punishment.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	8	8	33	61	28	138
Male percentage	5.797%	5.797%	23.913%	44.203%	20.290%	
Female	6	32	43	129	53	263
Female percentage	2.281%	12.167%	16.350%	49.049%	20.152%	
Other	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other percentage	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	3.48%	9.95%	18.91%	47.26%	20.40%	100% (approx.)

The results seem glaring with more than 60% of the participants agreeing it to some reasons being valid when deciding punishment for a crime. There is marginal opposition suggesting that the latter percentage favors ignoring the motive of the crime when convicts are punished.

**Table 8** *It Is Okay to Sentence Convicted Individuals with Mental Illness to The Death Penalty.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	25	44	38	19	12	138
Male percentage	18.116%	31.884%	27.536%	13.768%	8.696%	
Female	62	111	56	28	6	263
Female percentage	23.574%	42.205%	21.293%	10.646%	2.281%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	21.89%	38.56%	23.38%	11.69%	4.48%	100% (approx.)

The analysis above shows that there is strong dissent towards convicting individuals with mental message to death penalty. It is also observed that the percentage of participants who disagree is greater among female participants than among males. There is minimal



## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

difference between the percentage of participants who agree to the statement, with the male participants having a higher ratio than the females.

### Crimes punishable by death penalty

**Table 9 The Death Penalty Should Be Used for Violent Crimes Against Children.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	13	10	29	51	35	138
Male percentage	9.420%	7.246%	21.014%	36.957%	25.362%	
Female	24	42	39	98	60	263
Female percentage	9.125%	15.970%	14.829%	37.262%	22.814%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	9.45%	12.94%	16.92%	37.06%	23.63%	100% (approx.)

Conclusively we can say that there is marginally greater agreement among the male participants as compare to the females who are in disagreement for the use of death penalty as a method of crimes against children. It can also be said that overall, with over half the number of participants agreeing to it, the majority lies on the supporting side of the aforementioned statement.

**Table 10 The Death Penalty Should Be Used for Rape.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	13	9	19	36	61	138
Male percentage	9.420%	6.522%	13.768%	26.087%	44.203%	
Female	14	36	24	63	126	263
Female percentage	5.323%	13.688%	9.125%	23.954%	47.909%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	6.97%	11.19%	10.70%	24.63%	46.52%	100% (approx.)

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

With over three-fourths of the participants agree or strongly agreeing to the statement, it can be said that majority of the participants believe that those convicted with charges of rape crimes should be charged with the death sentence. The differences between the gender based percentages of participants who agree to the statement is not a notable one. There is greater opposition among female participants than males to the question mentioned above.

**Table 11 The Death Penalty Should Be Used for Murder.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	13	11	27	43	44	138
Male percentage	9.420%	7.971%	19.565%	31.159%	31.884%	
Female	19	32	56	71	85	263
Female percentage	7.224%	12.167%	21.293%	26.996%	32.319%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Total	33	43	83	114	129	402
Percentage	8.21%	10.70%	20.65%	28.36%	32.09%	100% (approx.)

Evidence suggests that majority of the participants support death penalty for murder crimes. There is little opposition for the same. The ratio of females who support the death penalty for convicts of murder crimes is minimally lower than those of males.

**Table 12 The Death Penalty Should Be Used for Terrorism.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	11	11	14	36	66	138
Male percentage	7.971%	7.971%	10.145%	26.087%	47.826%	
Female	20	24	36	70	113	263
Female percentage	7.605%	9.125%	13.688%	26.616%	42.966%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Total	32	35	50	106	179	402
Percentage	7.96%	8.71%	12.44%	26.37%	44.53%	100% (approx.)

### Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

An evaluation of the above mentioned data shows a similar pattern as observed in the questions of the appropriateness of death penalty used for punishing murder, rape and for violent crimes against children. Over 70% of the participants agreed to terrorism being punished by the death penalty whereas a much lower proportion of only about 16% participants disagreeing with convicts of terrorist activities being charged the death sentences.

**Table 13 For What Crimes Should the Death Penalty Be Used? (Select All That Apply)**

	Male	Male percent	Female	Female percent	Other	Other percent	TOTAL	PERCENT
None	12	8.696%	21	7.985%	1	100%	34	8.46%
Alcohol related crimes	19	13.768%	18	6.844%	0	0.000%	37	9.20%
Drug related crimes	29	21.014%	33	12.548%	0	0.000%	62	15.42%
Traffic offences	11	7.971%	7	2.662%	0	0.000%	18	4.48%
Financial crimes	10	7.246%	8	3.042%	0	0.000%	18	4.48%
White collar crimes	16	11.594%	18	6.844%	0	0.000%	34	8.46%
Inchoate crimes	14	10.145%	16	6.084%	0	0.000%	30	7.46%
Property crimes	8	5.797%	5	1.901%	0	0.000%	13	3.23%
Terrorism	105	76.087%	196	74.525%	0	0.000%	301	74.88%
Trafficking	80	57.971%	178	67.681%	0	0.000%	258	64.18%
Homicide + forms	87	63.043%	136	51.711%	0	0.000%	223	55.47%
Assault and battery	31	22.464%	79	30.038%	0	0.000%	110	27.36%
Rape	112	81.159%	211	80.228%	0	0.000%	323	80.35%
Domestic abuse	34	24.638%	85	32.319%	0	0.000%	119	29.60%
Child abuse	75	54.348%	155	58.935%	0	0.000%	230	57.21%
Kidnapping	22	15.942%	3	1.141%	0	0.000%	25	6.22%
Arson	19	13.768%	36	13.688%	0	0.000%	55	13.68%
Acid attack	0	0.000%	1	0.380%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
Depends on Intention	0	0.000%	1	0.380%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%

### Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

Depends on severity	1	0.725%	0	0.000%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
Related to parents	1	0.725%	0	0.000%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
War crimes	1	0.725%	0	0.000%	0	0.000%	1	0.25%
Total	687		1207		1		1895	

Over 80% participants opting for rape crimes to be punished via death penalty, of which there is marginal difference between males and females. This is followed by terrorism, trafficking, homicide, and child abuse. Further, significant number of participants selected assault and battery, and domestic abuse as well. In all these mentioned, except terrorism and homicide, there is a greater weightage of female responses as compared to male. Some other crimes garnering lesser votes include kidnapping, arson, inchoate crimes, drug and alcohol related, financial and white collar crimes. Statistically insignificant number of participants have opted war crimes, those related to parents and acid attacks.

#### *Imprisonment versus death penalty*

**Table 14**

***Prison Life Is Easy.***

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	49	53	23	10	3	138
Male percentage	35.507%	38.406%	16.667%	7.246%	2.174%	
Female	101	112	39	6	5	263
Female percentage	38.403%	42.586%	14.829%	2.281%	1.901%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Total	151	165	62	16	8	402
Percentage	37.56%	41.04%	15.42%	3.98%	1.99%	100% (approx.)

It becomes glaring that a majority of the participants disagreed to present life being easy with the majority of over 56% who believe so. Percentages who agreed to present life being a version are minimal, 24% in total. It is also worth mentioning that there is a greater percentage of females who disagree to the statement in question and a greater percentage of male participants who agree to it.

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

**Table 15 A Life Spent in Prison Is a Worse Punishment Than an Execution.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	6	43	46	33	10	138
Male percentage	4.348%	31.159%	33.333%	23.913%	7.246%	
Female	19	52	80	86	26	263
Female percentage	7.224%	19.772%	30.418%	32.700%	9.886%	
Other	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other percentage	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	6.22%	23.63%	31.34%	29.60%	9.20%	100% (approx.)

Simply put, there is a significantly larger percent of population that agrees to life imprisonment being a harsher form of punishment as compare to execution. 29% participants, approximately, disagree to the above. A greater percentage of male participants disagree and a larger percentage of female participants agree and strongly agree to the statement.

**Table 16 The Death Penalty Is Cheaper Than Life Imprisonment for The State. Does This Factor Make You Support, Or Is Part of the Reason You Support the Use of Death Penalty?**

	YES	NO	MAYBE	TOTAL
Male	32	78	28	138
Male percentage	23.188%	56.522%	20.290%	
Female	29	202	32	263
Female percentage	11.027%	76.806%	12.167%	
Other	0	1	0	1
Other percentage	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	15.17%	69.90%	14.93%	100% (approx.)

Approximately 70% participants deny life imprisonments' cost effectiveness as a reason for supporting death penalty. An almost equal number of participants were supporting it or neutral in answers. The percentage of male participants is greater in support than against the statement.

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

**Table 17 Should Inmates Sentenced with Life Imprisonment Be Allowed to Apply for The Death Penalty?**

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Male	55	46	37	138
Male percentage	39.855%	33.333%	26.812%	
Female	99	97	67	263
Female percentage	37.643%	36.882%	25.475%	
Other	0	0	1	1
Other percentage	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>38.31%</b>	<b>35.57%</b>	<b>26.12%</b>	<b>100% (approx.)</b>

There is a greater percentage of male participants who both agree to the statement. Overall, there is only a minor difference between the total number of participants who agree or deny to this proposition. Over one-fourth of the participants remained neutral.

### Beliefs about implementation of death penalty

**Table 18 The Death Penalty Is Used Fairly for All Socioeconomic Classes.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	30	46	36	19	7	138
Male percentage	21.739%	33.333%	26.087%	13.768%	5.072%	
Female	68	94	52	45	4	263
Female percentage	25.856%	35.741%	19.772%	17.110%	1.521%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>24.63%</b>	<b>34.83%</b>	<b>21.89%</b>	<b>15.92%</b>	<b>2.74%</b>	<b>100% (approx.)</b>

Evidently with over half of the total sample population disagreeing, it can be said that the majority believes that death penalty is not used fairly for all socio-economic classes. There is a greater percentage of female participants who disagree with it and there is insignificant difference between the percentages of male and female participants who agree to the statement.

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

**Table 19 The Death Penalty Is Used Fairly for All Races.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	32	36	35	26	9	138
Male percentage	23.188%	26.087%	25.362%	18.841%	6.522%	
Female	78	94	46	36	9	263
Female percentage	29.658%	35.741%	17.490%	13.688%	3.422%	
Other	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	27.61%	32.34%	20.15%	15.42%	4.48%	100% (approx.)

In a similar pattern to the above statement, there is a greater percentage of participants who disagree and strongly disagree as compare to the proportion of those who agree to the death penalty being used fairly for all cases. Over a fifth of the participants remain neutral. There is a greater percentage of female participants who disagree to the statement, while the percentage of male participants who agree that it is used fairly greater.

**Table 20 People Have Been Sentenced to Death for Crimes They Did Not Commit.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	5	7	30	71	25	138
Male percentage	3.623%	5.072%	21.739%	51.449%	18.116%	
Female	6	23	61	125	48	263
Female percentage	2.281%	8.745%	23.194%	47.529%	18.251%	
Other	0	0	0	1	0	1
Other percentage	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	2.74%	7.46%	22.64%	49.00%	18.16%	100% (approx.)

With over 65% participants in favor of the statement, it can be said that the majority participants feel that people have been sentenced to death penalty for crimes that they have

### Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

not committed. There is a greater percentage of male participants who disagree to the statement as compare to females, whose percentage ratio is higher for agreement.

**Table 21 The Death Penalty Is Used Too Much.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	19	58	53	3	5	138
Male percentage	13.768%	42.029%	38.406%	2.174%	3.623%	
Female	39	94	96	24	10	263
Female percentage	14.829%	35.741%	36.502%	9.125%	3.802%	
Other	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other percentage	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	
Total	58	152	149	27	16	402
Percentage	14.43%	37.81%	37.06%	6.72%	3.98%	100% (approx.)

It can be concluded that with over a third of the participants remaining neutral and over half of them disagree or strongly disagree, the majority lies in the disagreement of the statement. The percentage of male participants who disagree with the statement is proportionately greater than that of females, whereas the percentage of females who agree that the death penalty is implemented to match is greater than that of males.

**Table 22 The Use of Death Penalty Leads to The Loss of Humanity in The Society.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	23	55	26	22	12	138
Male percentage	16.667%	39.855%	18.841%	15.942%	8.696%	
Female	29	104	61	46	23	263
Female percentage	11.027%	39.544%	23.194%	17.490%	8.745%	
Other	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other percentage	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	
Total	52	159	87	68	36	402
Percentage	12.94%	39.55%	21.64%	16.92%	8.96%	100% (approx.)



### Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

The above results indicate that majority of the participants, over 50%, believe that death penalty as a punishment method does not lead to the loss of humanity in the society while one fourth of the participants believe in the loss of humanity as a consequence of death penalty. The percentage of male participants disagree is marginally higher than that of female participants, the latter is proportionately higher in agreement to the statement.

**Table 23 Does The Death Penalty Hinder the Right to Life of the Convicted Individual?**

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Male	35	62	41	138
Male percentage	25.362%	44.928%	29.710%	
Female	80	90	93	263
Female percentage	30.418%	34.221%	35.361%	
Other	1	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Total	116	152	134	402
Percentage	28.86%	37.81%	33.33%	100% (approx.)

There is marginal difference between the percentages of all three response categories. The highest is recorded under no, followed by maybe and finally yes receiving the least responses. The percentage of female participants who agree to the violation of right to life caused by death penalty is greater than that of male participants.

**Table 24 Do You Consider the Death Penalty to Be Cruel and Unusual or Swift and Painless? (Can Select Multiple)**

	Cruel	Painless	Swift	Unusual	Total
Male	51	33	72	42	198
Male percentage	36.957%	23.913%	52.174%	30.435%	
Female	116	56	105	96	373
Female percentage	44.106%	21.293%	39.924%	36.502%	
Other	1	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Total	168	89	177	138	572
Percentage	41.79%	22.14%	44.03%	34.33%	

### Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

These percentages suggest that majority of the participants, 180, consider death penalty to be a swift method. This is followed by 168 participants who believe it to be cruel, and 138 who believe it to be a usual. Lastly, the least number of participants, 89, selected the option of painless. A gender division of these percentages suggest that a greater number of female participants consider death penalty to be cruel and unusual, while a greater percentage of male participants consider it to be painless and swift.

**Table 25 Do You Support the Use of Death Penalty to Justify and Appease the Victims or Victims' Families?**

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Male	59	34	45	138
Male percentage	42.754%	24.638%	32.609%	
Female	58	117	88	263
Female percentage	22.053%	44.487%	33.460%	
Other	0	1	0	1
Other percentage	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>29.10%</b>	<b>37.81%</b>	<b>33.08%</b>	<b>100% (approx.)</b>

It becomes evident that with the majority, most participants do not support the use of death penalty to appease the victim. There is a greater percentage of female participants who selected the option of 'no' as compare to male participants. The number of male participants who support the use of death penalty for this reason is approximately twice in proportion as compare to female participants. There is statistically insignificant difference between the percentages of male and female participants who remained neutral.

**Table 26 Are Your Views of the Death Penalty Influenced by The Religious Arguments of the Religion You Follow?**

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Male	8	116	14	138
Male percentage	5.797%	84.058%	10.145%	
Female	9	231	23	263
Female percentage	3.422%	87.833%	8.745%	
Other	0	1	0	1
Other percentage	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>4.23%</b>	<b>86.57%</b>	<b>9.20%</b>	<b>100% (approx.)</b>

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

There is a minimally larger percentage of female participants who are not influenced by religious arguments as compare to male participants. The number of male participants who are influenced is marginally higher.

### Deterrence effect

**Table 27 The Death Penalty Has a Deterrent Effect (Discourages Others from Committing Same/Similar Crimes).**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	15	15	39	46	23	138
Male percentage	10.870%	10.870%	28.261%	33.333%	16.667%	
Female	19	43	48	119	34	263
Female percentage	7.224%	16.350%	18.251%	45.247%	12.928%	
Other	0	1	0	0	0	1
Other percentage	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	8.46%	14.68%	21.64%	41.04%	14.18%	100% (approx.)

The result shows that as compared to male participants, there is a greater percentage of female participants who agree and disagree to the implementation of death penalty having a deterrent effect. The percentage of male participants' responses is greater than the counter gender in neutrality. Cumulatively with over 55% participants, it can be said that majority of the sample population believe that death penalty discourages others in the society from committing same or similar crimes.

**Table 28 Do You Believe That the Use of Death Penalty Is an Effective Way to Curb Crime?**

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Male	59	34	45	138
Male percentage	42.754%	24.638%	32.609%	
Female	81	80	102	263
Female percentage	30.798%	30.418%	38.783%	
Other	0	1	0	1
Other percentage	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>402</b>
Percentage	34.83%	28.61%	36.57%	100% (approx.)

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

With majority of the participants, over 36%, remaining neutral, it can be said that the majority of the participants neither believe nor disbelief in reduced crime rates as a consequence of implementing death penalty. Between the two options of 'yes' and 'no', there is a greater percentage of responses for 'yes'. Within this percentage, there is a greater proportion of male responses as compare to females. Consequently, the percentage of female participants who responded negatively is greater than that of male.

### DISCUSSION

The study aims to understand the perspectives of the general population regarding death penalty and its employment. For the same, there are primarily five domains of the subject matter on which the opinions of people are asked. These include the crimes for the punishment of which it should be used and if there are any reasons that exempt a convict from receiving the death sentence. Furthermore, it also asks the minimum age at which the death penalty can be implemented, as per their opinion. There is also an attempt to draw a comparison between the beliefs of imprisonment and death penalty. On a more moral basis, the respondents' beliefs were considered, for example, if they believe death penalty is sentenced to innocents, or if they oppose it for this very reason. Lastly, participant opinion was asked on the deterrence effect of the death penalty.

#### *Total scores on Likert*

There are three times as many as female participants as male who either marginally support the use of death penalty or do not supported at all. The majority of participants showed moderate support towards death penalty. The gender composition for this category includes over 80% of female participants and approximately 86% of male participants. Cumulatively, there is a greater percentage of male participants who support death penalty. These results are supported by the study of Lambert et al. (2018) which suggested males were more likely to be in support of death penalty as compared to females.

#### *Age*

There are two questions in the questionnaire that assess the public opinion on the appropriate age at which death penalty should be administered. The first is a multiple-choice option, with age categories from below 10 years to 18 years and above as possible answer choices. A question with answers on the Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree asks if in their opinion, juveniles should face the death penalty for certain crimes.

A predominant percentage of participants opted for 18 years and above to be the age at which death penalty should be implemented. Almost a third of the participants have opted for death penalties for crimes committed by juveniles, i.e. children of age under 18. A similar percentage of proportion of participants, averaging a third of the total, agree to juvenile death penalty on the second question. However, an immense percentage of participants oppose juveniles facing the death sentence, with a greater ratio of female participants opposing it than male. These results are in line with a study from 2003 by Vogel and Vogel in which juvenile death sentencing was supported by a quarter of the participants (under 15 years of age at the time of crime). The support was still larger for adult executions in the study.

#### *Crimes punishable through death penalty*

When asked if the death penalty should be used for violent crimes against children, over 60% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed to it. Similar favorability is also seen for punishment of murder crimes through capital punishment. The agreement among the male participants is higher, though minimally, than the female participants, for both

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

crimes mentioned. This also means that the female participants are in greater disagreement for the statement as compare to the male participants.

For terrorism and rap crimes, analysis suggest that over 70% of the participants agreed to both being punished through means of death penalty. The percentage of females who agree to death penalty for terrorism is marginally lower than that of males. For the latter, the gender differences between this percentage is statistically insignificant. The overall percentages of disagree and strongly disagree also suggest that female participants are higher in number on the opposition to use of death penalty to punish the pair mentioned above.

On the multiple-choice question, which asked the participants to select all the crimes for which death penalty should be used, there were 33 participants who opted for none of the crime is to be punished by death penalty. Most of the options mentioned, including financial, white collar, property, alcohol related, received less than 15% responses individually. A rapid boost was observed in terrorism, trafficking, homicide and all its forms, child abuse with percentages above 50%, and over 80% selected capital punishment for rape. Further, over 25% of the participants selected crimes like assault and battery, domestic abuse. Some of the options mentioned by the participants included as it attacks, war crimes, crimes related to parents.

### *Exemptions from death penalty*

From within the given options, 80% participants selected the option of severity of the crime, about 46% selected level to which defendant's capability has been established, and expression of compassion shown by defendant was selected as a reason to exempt sentencing by over 24% of the participants. Approximately 45% participant selected the defendant's antecedents and, 22% selected level of criminality in the area. Female participants wrote answers which included reasons for committing a crime, situationally factors. Further, about 13% of the participants believe that none of the reason should be affecting the method of punishment. There is a greater percentage of female responses for all the reasons of exemption.

9.5% participants replied affirmatively to some reasons for committing crimes excluding death penalty, while 23% disagreed. The most common answers included mental illness, self-defense, revenge and justice, followed by crimes committed under force of blackmail, context and circumstances, reasons for committing a crime, coercion, mitigating factors, provocation and aggravation, and crimes of passion.

Further, virtually half of the total participants agree or strongly agreed to not implementing that penalty out of concern for punishing an innocent. When analyzing the agreement or disagreement on whether reasons of committing crime should matter when deciding punishment, it was observed that majority, approximately 60%, participants were in favor. There is a significantly larger percent of female participants who agreed to both the statements as compared to male participants.

Result tabulation of whether it is appropriate to convicted individuals with mental illness is to the death penalty suggest that there is strong opposition towards convicting individual living with mental illness is the death penalty. Unsurprisingly, a greater number of female participants disagree to death penalty being implemented on those mental illnesses.

### ***Imprisonment versus death penalty***

When asked if present life is easy, majority of the participants disagreed to the statement. Approximately, a quarter of the participants agreed to said statement. The number of female participants who disagree to the statement is higher in proportion as compare to male participants. Further, it was asked if a life spent in prison is a worst punishment than execution. For this, majority of the participants agreed to the aforementioned. A greater percentage of female participants agreed, with ratios similar to the previous statement. Custodial deaths from 2001 to 2010 were assessed in a 2015 article by Bardale and Dixit, and in 173 deaths, 8.09% were suicides. Hanging was the most common identified, proceeded by insecticidal poisoning. A review of 12 studies published between 2000 to 2017 on prisoners' mental health showed that prevalence of substance use, schizophrenia, depression, adjustment issues, and suicidal risk is considerably high. (Rabiya & Raghavan, 2018)

The participants were asked if one of the reasons for supporting the death penalty was that it was cheaper than imprisonment for the state. To this, majority of the participants denied the cost factor of life imprisonment as a reason being their support for the death penalty. Lastly, it was asked if inmates sentenced to life in prison and should be allowed to apply or opt for death penalty in place of life imprisonment, and the majority votes negatively. The ratio of male participants who support the above two statements is greater than female.

### ***Beliefs about implementation of death penalty***

Majority of the participants believed that death penalty is not used fairly for all socio-economic classes. Similarly, most of the sample population believe that it is not used fairly for all races. A higher percentage of female participants believe existence of racial discrimination and that on the basis of socio-economic class in the implementation of death penalty. Almost 2/3 of the participants believe that individuals sentenced with the death penalty were wrongfully convicted. When considering gender based responses, it can be observed that there is a greater ratio of female participants who agree to this, as compare to males who are in disagreement.

Over half of the total sample population believe that the death penalty is not used too much. There is a greater percentage of male participants who disagree with this statement and more female participants agree that the death penalty is used exceedingly. Over 50% of the participants believe the death penalty as a punishment method does not lead to the loss of humanity and the ratio of male participants who believe so is greater than that of female. A question was asked the participants if they believe that the death penalty hinders the right to life be convicted in the ritual. Majority of the participants do not believe so, followed by those who are uncertain, and lastly, those who do believe in the violation of the right to life from this punishment method. Among these, there is a greater percentage of female responses in the last.

When asked the participants about the use of the death penalty to justify or appease the victim or victim families, majority of the participants' responses suggested that this was not one of the reasons for their support of death penalty. Contrary results were shown in a study by Yelderman et al. (2019). The study showed that 'eye for an eye' reason of punishment was associated with fundamentalist beliefs.

Predominantly, participants consider death penalty to be a swift method of punishment. Further, with the difference of 3% between the former, a large proportion of the participants

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

believe that it is cruel. 138 participants believe it is an unusual method, and finally the least number of participants, less than hundred believe it to be painless. The gender proportions were tilted towards female participants for cruel and unusual, and for painless and swift towards the male participants.

The number of female participants who support the implementation of death penalty for this reason is half of those of male participants. 86.6% participants disagreed to the religious views influencing their opinions of death penalty. The gender differences in percentage is minimal with greater weightage of female participants. Unnever's (2010) findings suggest that Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindus would be in greater support of death penalty as compared to Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. Further, it says that an increase in depth of religious practices would likely decrease support for capital punishment.

### *Deterrent effect of death penalty*

Agreeability of death penalty's deterrent effect was asked using the Likert scale. The results suggested that female participants' percentage is greater on the extreme ends of agreement and disagreement, while males remained largely neutral. Overall, 55% participants believe in the deterrence effect caused by death penalty. There was marginal difference between all three options of 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe' when asked if death penalty can curb crime. Highest number of responses were recorded under 'maybe', followed by number of responses under 'yes', and lastly under 'no'. There is a greater percentage of male participants believe that death penalty can result in reduced crime rates.

A study by Nagin (2013) showed substantial deterrent effect of increase in prison sentences, while no conclusive results could be drawn for capital punishment. Goel (2019) studied the deterrence effect on white collar crimes and found that death penalty reduced corruption and show economy. Further studies are needed to understand the public view on its deterrence and to calculate the effect for various crimes.

### *Correlation analysis*

There is a significant positive correlation (Appendix A) between the scores on the Likert scale and if the participants believe that death penalty can curb crime ( $r=0.69$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), support the punishment method to justify the victim and family ( $r=0.51$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This suggests that an increased in belief in the latter two is positively correlated with the increased support for death penalty. Surprisingly, there is also a significant positive correlation between the scores and the view that death penalty hinders right to life ( $r=0.52$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This could be seen in accordance with favoring executions to justify the victim; 'eye for an eye' and supporting death penalty for the very reason that it violates this fundamental right. Though statistically low, there is significant positive relation ( $r=0.26$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) between the Likert score and the cost the state bears for life imprisonment. There is a negative correlation ( $r=-0.17$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) between the opinions of death penalty imparted without re-appeal and the total scores, suggesting that as the scores increase, there is decrease in the support for re-appeal.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is relatively moderate support towards the use of death penalty by majority of the participants. More female participants have extreme (low or high) opinions about it. It was also observed that there is greater support for death penalty among female participants for gender based crimes. These include trafficking, domestic abuse and child abuse. For most others, support among males is higher. There is a significant percentage of population that

## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

supports death penalty for juveniles, while the proportion of females for the same remains lower than that of males. Greater proportion of female participants oppose implementing death penalty on those living with mental illnesses.

When reflecting on the results of reasons of exempting, mental illnesses and self-defense were the most common responses. Significant number of participants also believe that severity of the crime should factor in when deciding punishment methods. There is concern shown by approximately half of the sample population (greatly by female participants as compared to male) regarding executing innocents. The results also suggest that majority believe death penalty has the potential to discourage others from committing crimes, and therefore, may result in reduced crime rates. Participants also believe that prison life is not easy and is a worse or harsher punishment than death penalty. Lastly, there is a greater percentage of female participants who agree to it, however the proportion is lower in support of opting for death penalty in place of life imprisonment.

## REFERENCES

- Amnesty International. (2021) Global Report: Death Sentences and Executions 2020
- Anthony, F. V., & Sterkens, C. (2019). Religion and the right to (dispose of) life: A study of the attitude of Christian, Muslim and Hindu students in India concerning death penalty, euthanasia and abortion. In *Euthanasia, Abortion, Death Penalty and Religion-The Right to Life and its Limitations* (pp. 13-63). Springer, Cham
- Bardale, R. V., & Dixit, P. G. (2015). Suicide behind bars: A 10-year retrospective study. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 57(1), 81.
- Boateng, F. D., & Dzordzormenyoh, M. K. (2021). Capital Punishment in Brazil: Exploring Factors That Predict Public Support for the Death Penalty. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*
- Goel, R. K., & Mazhar, U. (2019). Does capital punishment deter white-collar crimes?. *The World Economy*, 42(6), 1873-1897
- Lambert, E. G., Baker, D. N., Elechi, O. O., Jiang, S., Khondaker, M. I., Pasupuleti, S., & Hogan, N. L. (2018). Gender and cultural differences on death penalty support and views among Indian and US college students. *Journal of ethnicity in criminal justice*, 16(4), 254-271
- Lambert, E. G., Pasupuleti, S., Jiang, S., Jaishankar, K., & Bhimarasetty, J. V. (2008). Views on the death penalty among college students in India. *Punishment & Society*, 10(2), 207-218.
- Nagin, D. S. (2013). Deterrence: A review of the evidence by a criminologist for economists. *Annu. Rev. Econ.*, 5(1), 83-105
- Project 39A. (2016) Death Penalty India Report. India
- Project 39A. (2020) Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics. India
- Rabiya, S., & Raghavan, V. (2018). Prison mental health in India. *Indian Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 34(3), 193.
- Silvee, S. S., & Wu, X. (2021). Death Penalty in South Asia: A Comparative Study between India and Bangladesh. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 56(3), 415-433
- Unnever, J. (2010). Global support for the death penalty. *Punishment & Society*, 12(4), 463-4
- Vogel, B. L., & Vogel, R. E. (2003). The age of death: Appraising public opinion of juvenile capital punishment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 31(2), 169-18
- Yelderman, L. A., West, M. P., & Miller, M. K. (2019). Death penalty decision-making: Fundamental beliefs and the evaluation of aggravating and mitigating circumstances. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 24(1), 103-12



## Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception

### **Acknowledgement**

We are extremely grateful and appreciative of all those who participated in the study and contributed to its success.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Chaudhary S. & Gupta B. (2021). Capital Punishment in India: A Public Perception. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(4), 2272-2296. DIP:18.01.213.20210904, DOI:10.25215/0904.213

## **Appendix A**

### **Correlation of the total Likert scores and supplementing questions**

Likert scale total	Do you believe that the use of death penalty is an effective way to curb crime?	Do you support use of penalty to justify and appease victims' families?	Do you support the death to and the or	Does the death penalty hinder the right to life of the convicted individual?	The death penalty is cheaper than life imprisonment for the state. Does this factor make you support, or is part of the reason you support the use of death penalty?	Are there loopholes and shortcomings in the legal system?	Are your views of the death penalty influenced by the religious arguments of the religion you follow?	Should conviction with death penalty be final without room for re-appeal?
Likert scale total	1							
Do you believe that the use of death penalty is an effective way to curb crime?	0.69*							
Do you support the use of death penalty to justify and appease the victims or victims' families?	0.51*	0.52*						
Does the death penalty hinder the right to life of the convicted individual?	0.52*	0.41*	0.25*					
The death penalty is cheaper than life imprisonment for the state. Does this factor make you support, or is part of the reason you support the use of death penalty?	0.26*	0.27*	0.17*	0.13*				
Are there loopholes and shortcomings in the legal system?	0.05	0.01	0.07	-0.07	0.03			
Are your views of the death penalty influenced by the religious arguments of the religion you follow?	-0.05	-0.01	-0.12**	0.16*	-0.21*	-0.23*		
Should conviction with death penalty be final without room for re-appeal?	-0.17*	-0.10**	-0.08	-0.12**	-0.13*	-0.24*	0.15*	1

\* Significant at 0.01 level, \*\* Significant at 0.05 level