



Dialogues in Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation

Year - December 2018 For private circulation No. 9

REHABILITATION MATTERS



FRATERNITY FOR

REHABILITATION

Special Issue - Civil Society Interventions in Prisons

Dialogues in Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation

A newsletter of NGO Forum of organisations working in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), to initiate discussion among the government authorities, civil society organisations and other stake holders in the CJS, with special reference to the legal rights and the rehabilitation of citizens affected by crime or commercial sexual exploitation.

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Editorial

Social work intervention in prisons in India began with the work of Prayas, around 3 decades ago. Ever since, this sector has been gradually growing and expanding. The number of NGOs working in the field has increased with a few state government departments also expressing the need for appointment of social workers in the criminal justice system. Dialogues has been trying to highlight some of the issues faced by prison populations and the work being done by civil society organisations in this regard.

The scope of the civil society intervention has expanded in the field from to include persons being processed at police stations, courts, prisons, juvenile homes, aftercare institutions, etc. There are a few NGOs focusing on the situation of under trial prisoners with the objective of legal aid, family support and rehabilitation. Some are working with both the under trials as well as convict populations, especially with children of prisoners left outside. NGOs focusing on rehabilitation of prisoners and working with their families, especially their children, have been attempting to improve their family situation and relations between the prisoners and their families. Work with children of prisoners is being done with the objective of preventing their criminalization, exploitation and victimization. There is also a recent trend of CSOs initiating work with families of crime victims, especially their children. Besides, with the increase in the number of spousal murders, NGOs need to work with the offenders as well as the victims who hail from the same family.

This Special Issue tries to capture the experiences of a few organisations working in the criminal justice system, thereby demonstrating the need for civil society intervention in the system.

The Story of Sudhaar:

Opening Doors of Prisons for Correctional Work

Surekha Talari

(MSW, LLB, MPhil)

Background of Sudhaar

The story of Sudhaar began when I seriously considered to initiate work in the area of my specialisation-‘Criminology and Correctional Administration’. In year 2000, there were not many job opportunities in the field of Criminology and Correctional Administration. Carving out one to work in the Criminal Justice System was a very challenging task as the system was very rigid for the entry of individuals and civil societies, highly patriarchal in nature and held strong disregard for ‘people in crime’ and therefore, did not have much space for any unusual intervention. Indeed, Sudhaar’s intervention was conceptualised to approach ‘people in crime’ differently and the initiative was headed by a female leadership who was trying to make space for corrections and reforms in the system. Away from the hard hand of discipline and disregard for the prisoners, Sudhaar proposed a humanitarian approach to mend people and their lives by which they can be found useful to the society. It is worth mentioning, that an old Hindi film ‘*Do Aankhen Aur Barah Haath*’¹ had the philosophy of corrections and thus, ‘Sudhaar’ as a name was considered for the series of interventions developed to reform prisoners and also to bring prison reforms. ‘Sudhaar’ which is an Hindi word means “*Reforms and Corrections*”.

Certainly, Sudhaar, as an endeavour had its knowledge and practice roots in M.A in Social Work course which had a definite component of field work as well as dissertation. As a student social worker, I examined the experiences of women under-trial prisoners in the Criminal Justice System in Arthur Road Prison, Mumbai for my dissertation requirement. Simultaneously, I developed a field work intervention model to work with women under-trial prisoners of the Kalyan District Prison.

Journey from District to Central Prisons

With the background of education and experience, I made my first step in Betul District Prison, Betul, Madhya Pradesh in 2001. As such Betul is predominantly inhabited with Gond and Korku tribal population and therefore, maximum population in the prison reflected the demography of that district. Being female social and correctional worker, I was permitted to work in the women’s ward only. While rendering my socio-legal counselling and family support to marginalised women prisoners, I came across few cases² that sensitised me further to work for a purpose and to sustain all the hardship and challenges for opening the doors of the Criminal Justice System in the state of M.P. Undoubtedly,

1. A movie made in 1957 where the Jail warden takes charge of the rehabilitation of six hardened prisoners.

Sudhaar's intervention was first of its kind in the state of Madhya Pradesh till date.

The work in Betul District Prison was actually modelling the socio-legal and rehabilitation intervention with the women prisoners for enabling reforms in the beneficiary group and in the system too. As a correctional worker, I extensively co-ordinated with the district lawyers, the families of women prisoners and the prison department to sensitise them on the issues and worked for speedy trial, family support and post-release rehabilitation aid. The model was successful in reducing the duration of stay of women population in prison, promoted better health among women due to increased family contacts and also the system became active to meet the needs of reforms as there was better co-ordination between concerned stakeholders of the Criminal Justice.

This intervention was appreciated by the Chief Probation Officer, Mr. Bopchay of M.P. Prison Department, who had an heart for prison reforms and therefore, he recommended Sudhaar's work for expansion to the central prisons and other district prisons. After receiving financial support from the Indo-German Social Service Society for Betul intervention, it is with the aid from Sir Dorabaji Tata Trust that Sudhaar ventured out to expand its work in the central prisons and district prisons of the state of Madhya Pradesh. And we continued to render social, legal and rehabilitation support services for the male and female prisoners and met the needs of their family members, particularly sponsoring the education of children of imprisoned parents from the year 2000 to 2014.

Turning Point – Development of Post-Release Rehabilitation Intervention

Our work aided prisoners to evolve away from criminal behaviour and we channelized necessary support from them to be normal and useful citizens. Our interventions were also in line with the constitutional and fundamental framework rights and therefore, it evoked multi-layered prison reforms. Unfortunately, our humanitarian and correctional services for prisoners made some corrupt prison officials angry with us and we were paused from accessing the prisons and prisoners. In that precarious period, where we were not sure to get permission to access prisons to render our services, a released prisoner along with her family walked into Sudhaar's office one day to seek post-release rehabilitation support and education support for her children. Since then, Sudhaar extended another wing of intervention called 'post-release rehabilitation' support as its major wing of intervention.

Meanwhile, Sudhaar re-gained access to work inside the prisons with the help of a keen and diligent prison officer, D. G. Shri S.P. Dangwal who was open to the idea of trained social and correctional work in the prisons by the civil societies. After regaining the entry, Sudhaar drew an intensive road map for systematic intervention with the prisoners, their families, the lawyers, the prison officials and other stakeholders to generate the momentum required for state level prison reforms and for promoting correctional approach among prisoners. In the subsequent part of this article, I will discuss about the underlying philosophy and practice,

2. A woman was languishing in the prison for more than six months for a theft of Rs.40/- where the court proceedings were as there was no presence of witness/evidence in the court to conclude the case. There was another case, where the woman was accused for the theft of a hen and was languishing in prison for more than six months.

methodology for Rehabilitation and Corrections that we learned through our work.

Understanding Human Behaviour for Effective Corrections

Human mind is a very complex system that responds to various stimuli. The mind reacts to stimuli to respond in 'action'. The mind can also respond in absence of any stimuli and therefore, vacuum itself forms as a stimulus for humans to act. It is to be noted that human behaviour is developed in response to repetitive stimuli. The repetitive stimuli and response forms a behavioural pattern which needs to be considered while interacting with people in crime. Mostly, the human behaviour patterns are formed since childhood and are often observed to be rooted in genetics and nurturing environment that enables humans to respond in certain way. Even though some routes are genetics but the mind is also proactive in choosing a response to certain stimulus based on human ability to learn new things and therefore, nurture (the environment) has strong influence over genetics to call for a better response from human beings. And thus, some sociologists and psychologist indicate that human behaviour is learnt and therefore, criminal behaviour is learnt too. Here, I suggest that corrected behaviour can also be learnt by modulating the environmental settings. Corrections are all about re-building corrected behavioural patterns as in response to the criminal opportunities which act as stimulus.

Any aberration (offence) in response indicates that the stimuli was not favourable for human mind and therefore, produces criminal response. Most often humans are unable to understand the

stimulus/stimuli behind their actions and hence, make sub-conscious or conscious responses based on pre-staged genetics and environmental upbringing. So are the prisoners who come to prison either accused of crime or convicted for crime. Within convicted prisoners, there are two types- i) first time offenders and ii) habitual offenders. The habitual offenders make conscious choice of response to a given criminal opportunities (stimulus) and the first time offenders makes sub-conscious choice in responding to a criminal opportunity. While it is clear that the basis of criminal behaviour is very different for both types, it is to be remembered that the habitual offenders were once the first time offenders who were not corrected. And similarly, the first time offenders have shown the vulnerability to be habitual offenders and therefore, working on behavioural patterns in both types is necessary for reforms, rehabilitation and correction of people in crime. Mostly, the prisoners show some or other form of behaviour aberration like extreme anger, less tolerance, little adjustment and so forth that has made them to be in prisons. However, there is also a small percentage of prisoners who are actually victims of others' crime and are innocently caught in prisons.

In all such cases, there is a need for socio and correctional trained intervention. Here, the word 'trained' means having systematic knowledge of criminology, crime prevention, human development, law and correctional theories and experience to work with deviant population. Sudhaar was equipped to deal with corrections since it had these skills and abilities and was systematic in approaching corrections which is one of the major goals of modern imprisonment.

Sudhaar's Rehabilitation and Corrections

Approach

As popularly known, work on rehabilitation begins from the day one of the imprisonment of the prisoner. The prisoners are mostly very confused and often depressed to live imprisonment term. They are cut off from the outside world and therefore, they do not see any hope and find their future to be bleak. Certainly, the imprisonment has severe impact on the socio-economic and psychological state of the prisoners.

In such scenario, the first intervention of Sudhaar to provide socio-legal and psychological support at individual level and allowed them to re-work on their behaviour at their own pace and comfort. **Case work** has a major component of individual support which is based on the process of counselling. The first step is to understand the prisoner and his/her needs. Asking questions and seeking information is an important part of counselling of prisoners at all stages (from stage of providing support to self-reflection to corrections). It is through this process, trust is established whereby the prisoner confesses the crime or explains the condition in which the crime occurred. The situation of crime gives clue about the behavioural aspects of the prisoner which is important information for working on the corrections. It is to be noted that most often the prisoners are first time offenders. However, their vulnerability to commit crime has increased for various reasons such as social stigma, unacceptance in society, criminal labelling, the prison culture and so forth.

Sudhaar has made efforts to decrease the prisoners' vulnerability to commit crime and hence, necessary support is provided at all levels by

which the rights of prisoners are also established. The establishment of rights framework actually helps the prisoners be in introspection process of his/her behaviour. Here, the basic human rights in prisons are very essential for establishing the environment for self-reflection process whereby the mind is not in conflict with the surroundings. And therefore, Sudhaar has always worked for availing the basic human rights of the prisoners for calling effective corrections. It is also to be noted that the human rights and constitutional provisions do help the prisoners to move away from criminal behaviour and work to be more useful to the society. In our experience, we have also seen that lack of dignity in living life and stagnant process of criminal justice can make humans motivate to commit other forms of crime as their survival mechanism or as their reaction to the extreme situation.

While working on the first level of individual support, Sudhaar identified areas of interest for the prisoners to give new skill training. The new skill training is purely for rehabilitation purposes that a prisoner can use after release. Here, Sudhaar applied group work skills to understand the interaction pattern of prisoners in the group settings which adds to behaviour modification for correctional feasibility. Sudhaar organised array of rehabilitation options whereby the prisoners have a range of choice to opt it as their occupation after they are released. For example, if the prisoners who hailed from agriculture background were given tractor mending training and manure making. The prisoners hailing from urban settings were given mobile repair training, carpentry or electrical fitting training. Some of the trainings were given that can be used in

any setting. For example tailoring skill training organised for male prisoners in the Hosangabad Central Prison was most successful intervention as the prisoners learnt the skill and started stitching the uniforms of the prison staff and that helped them to build some savings. Not only that, some prisoners after release were able to open their own tailoring shop to work on it as their occupation. Here, it is to be noted again that the engagement of human mind to build something constructive is always beneficial in rehabilitation and corrections process. The series of rehabilitation training programs allows the prisoners to take a root away from the criminal thought and be constructive in thought process as well as in action. The key is to put the prisoners in training as per their interest, preference and choice so that they can sustain and develop those skills so that they can make it as their occupation.

Finally, when the prisoners are released after imprisonment tenure, the post-release support needs are addressed. Such needs vary as per status, situation and personality of the prisoners. Some prisoners need social support, some require financial support and some require both. As per individual requirements, Sudhaar has provided small financial and/or material assistance to ensure that the released prisoners are rehabilitated and put their energies in building their own work with which they are comfortable to establish themselves. Certainly, rehabilitation is linked to corrections as rehabilitation options ensures that there are ways other than criminal ways to be positively contribute for self-development and be useful for the society too. In overall, mostly Sudhaar achieved correction which means 'building resistance towards criminal opportunity'.

Data on Reach Out

In 15 years of work, Sudhaar rendered services to approx. 10,000 prisoners and their families. On an average, 800-1000 prisoners were given casework support every year. We successfully extended support for sponsoring education of 100-110 children of prisoners for a decade whereby these children were able to accomplish the primary and the higher secondary school education in absence of their parents. Sponsoring education of children of prisoners has also helped in corrections of the prisoners as the prisoners developed the element of empathy and care towards society as their children were taken care. Around 5000 prisoners were helped with post-release rehabilitation support during 2001-2014. Apart from individual casework support, major reforms were introduced as Sudhaar worked with state welfare departments to make released prisoners as beneficiary in the government schemes. Speedy trial, free legal aid and release from prison on payment of bail and/or personal bond for petty crimes including better co-ordination with lawyers and other stakeholders helped build the momentum of prison reforms in state of Madhya Pradesh by Sudhaar. By end of 2014, we concluded our interventions in prisons after demonstrating positive impact on prison system. We now tender our services in the form of trainings to the prison officers and enable them to vision prison reforms.

Conclusion

The trained social and correctional work in prisons is necessary for prisons to be correctional homes. Prisons as such need to be also maintained for discipline and punishment

purposes and therefore, the socio and correctional work which is narrated above is less feasible by the prison staff due to their different nature of work. The reforms, rehabilitation and correctional work can be well conducted by the trained civil society intervention or by a separate wing of the prison that oversees welfare of the prisoners. The process of rehabilitation and corrections is mostly at individual level, and therefore it needs lot of patience to work with the prisoners to allow them to walk the path of

de-learning criminal behaviour to re-learning the acceptable behaviour. The entire process calls multiple levels of co-ordination and application of social work skills and knowledge of criminology. This can be successfully done only when the trained civil societies are permitted and supported to work systematically in prisons. To conclude, corrections and correctional homes (prisons) shall remain incomplete without the participation of social and correctional workers.



Project Azad of Sahaara Charitable Society

K. Xavier Selvan

CEO, Sahara Charitable Society

Sahaara Charitable Society was founded in 1994 with a vision to fulfil dreams of the marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society in the city of Mumbai. Our search for such people led us to the red-light areas, government children homes, shelter homes for trafficked women and prisons. Project Azad was launched in 1997 and is a project intervention to serve the prison inmates in Mumbai prisons.

One of the more invisible and powerless group of people in our city of Mumbai are the thousands of under-trials housed in the prisons. Separated from all their loved ones, they sometimes lose all hope of ever being able to live a normal life again.

There are very few NGOs involved in the type of interventions that Sahaara is doing among the prison inmates in Mumbai, which makes our work unique in this project spectrum. Over the years, through various interventions and regular interactions with prisoners, prison officials, and other NGOs, we have a fair technical understanding of the problems and solutions to reduce recidivism in the city prisons.

Project Azad reaches out to men, women and children confined in prisons through various in-prison activities such as counselling, legal aid, legal case assistance to prison inmates and also provides pre-primary education for the children of the women inmates. We also offer emergency support to families of prisoners and long-term reintegration support to released prisoners. Through these activities we seek to add value to

their lives and thus reintegrate our beneficiaries into society.

Project Goal

The focus of Project Azad is to target first time young petty offenders and support them when they are vulnerable, desperate and confused through counselling and legal aid support with a final goal to bring them to a place where they are living a life free from crime and are able to fulfil their dreams thereby becoming positive contributors to society.

Project Beneficiaries

Though our focus is on first time petty offenders but we find to make the vision succeed we need to also focus on their families and connect with them on release to support them with their reintegration.

- Petty offenders (with a focus on youth in the 18-25 years age bracket)
- Families of prisoners (especially dependent children of women prisoners)
- Released prisoners (those who have received legal aid/assistance from Project Azad and are inclined to join our long term reintegration intervention)

Project Location

Counselling, Legal aid/case assistance and Educational Interventions:

- Byculla District Prison – Male and Female Sections and Pre-primary education for the

children of women inmates.

- Talaja Central Prison – For male inmates

Health Interventions

- Byculla District Prison – For male and female inmates
- Kalyan District Prison – For male and female inmates
- Thane Central Prison – For male and female inmates
- Mumbai Central Prison – For male inmates
- Talaja Central Prison – For male inmates

Geographical scope for family support and long-term reintegration interventions are limited to Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai districts.

Problems and Opportunities

Petty offence takes place due to various reasons such as

- Poverty
- Lack of education, skills and employment opportunities
- Violence in the home and dysfunctional families
- Mental instability
- Bad company
- Addictions

When petty offenders land up in prison, many of them do not have knowledge of the legal process or have no access to their families in order to secure release. Due to this, many languish in prison for long periods of time. This leads to frustration and potential wrong influence from the criminal network while they are in prison. Overcrowding in prisons also leads to various health challenges - contagious diseases especially skin infections.

In many cases, we have observed that the families of these petty offenders also face numerous challenges in the society such as

- Social stigma leading to alienation.
- Lack of basic provisions if the person in prison was the only breadwinner.

Women in prison are allowed to keep their children with them till the age of 5 years. However, without an educational intervention, these children will lose on their basic right to education and personal development. It is pertinent that unless the issues of resettlement and reintegration plans of such prisoners are in place, there is high probability of them becoming habitual offenders.

The service offerings offered by Sahaara to prison inmates are:

1. Counselling
2. Medical camps
3. Emergency assistance for prisoners' families
4. Bringing stability to the families of released prisoners
5. Legal aid and support to first time petty offenders
6. Legal case assistance on case to case basis
7. Pre-primary education for children of prisoners
8. Continued mentoring and counselling of released prisoners
9. Higher education and vocational training for released prisoners
10. Rehabilitation and reintegration of released prisoners through job placements

Impact and Sustainability

This project will impact the recidivism rates as it aims to help petty offenders to live a life free from crime.

This project will also impact their immediate families, especially children by ensuring their continued formal education and thus reducing the school dropout rates in the city.

The prison officials will also be impacted as this project will help address the issue of overcrowding in prisons and also indirectly prevent the various health and hygiene concerns that arise due to overcrowding.

The medical camps conducted in all the male and female sections of the prisons of Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai will contribute in meeting to some extent the acute health needs of prisoners.

The project also aims to address issues of social stigma, provision of higher education, vocational training and job placement to released prisoners in order to empower them to have stable livelihoods. This will be achieved by partnering with other NGOs and it will increase the capacity of the released prisoners to manage their own career development in their lives.

Through all these services offered we strive to ensure that all our beneficiaries are able to fulfil their dreams and become positive contributors to society.



An Exposure Visit to the Prisons of Telangana: Learnings from the Field

Prayas – A Field Action Project of Tata Institute of Social Sciences

As part of a MoU been signed between the Government of Maharashtra and the Tata Trusts in April 2016, trained social workers have been appointed in six locations of the prison department. Prayas is appointed as a technical partner to train and mentor the social workers and carve out their roles and functions as social workers working in prisons towards the welfare and rehabilitation of prisoners. Prayas has been organising refresher courses for the social workers every three months. Since more than a year has been completed since the project was implemented, it was felt that instead of classroom inputs, it would be better to organise an exposure visit to another state which has made significant strides towards prison reforms and learn from their experiences. Accordingly, Prayas arranged an exposure visit to the prisons of Telangana from 28th to 30th September 2018. The social work and supervisory staff attached to the Prisons Project under the GoM-TT MoU and 16 staff members from Prayas jointly went for this exposure trip. The Prisons Department of Telangana hosted the team in the State Institute of Correctional Administration (SICA) hostel, located near to the Chanchalguda Central Prison, Hyderabad.

On the first day, we were shown the Anand Ashram – a project of the Telangana Prisons Department initiated for the welfare and rehabilitation of persons into begging. The Government of Telangana has issued a Government Order (GO) Ms No. 266 through the Municipal Administration & Urban Development (UBS) Department dated 12-10-2017,

which outlines the framework for the project. As per this GO, the persons housed in Anand Ashram are provided educational and skill development training besides counseling and medical treatment. Employment is provided to them through the prison industries and alternative livelihood options are explored for them. Efforts are made to reunite the residents with their families if their families are willing to accept them.

After this visit, we were taken to the Female Section of Chanchalguda Prison where we were shown around by the female staff and later briefed by the Superintendent, Ms. Basheera Begum. Later, there was a presentation made about the Unnathi programme (please see details below) being implemented by Prof. C. Beena, Psychologist from Osmania University. After lunch, we visited the Male Section of Chanchalguda Prison. The next day we visited the Male Section of the Cherlapally Central Prison after which we were served lunch in the staff mess of the prison. In the afternoon, we visited two petrol pumps run by the prison department, whereby released prisoners are given employment and the revenue generated is ploughed back into prisoners' welfare and rehabilitation activities.

The common programmes or activities being conducted in the prisons are:

Vidyadana Yojana

As per this programme running since in 2014, efforts are made to make all prisoners literate.

According to their grasping power, prisoners are divided into classes from 1st to 10th and have to appear for the trimester exams conducted in the prison, after which they are promoted to the next class. Till date 119407 prisoners have undergone this program and become literate.

Unnathi

This is a one month behavioural skill development and counseling programme conducted for habitual and high risk offenders by Prof. C. Beena and her team from the Department of Psychology, Osmania University. The life convicts are trained under a TOT (Training of Trainers) by Prof. Beena and her team to counsel and motivate the fellow inmates. This specially designed counseling programme is yielding good results in changing the behaviour of prisoners. Besides, the prison department has also appointed psychologists in all prisons. Till date, 4439 prisoners have undergone this programme. Out of the 3733 prisoners who have been released from prison either on bail or after completion of their sentence, only 69 prisoners have come back to prison after their release. This programme has been highly successful in the Khammam District Prison where the rate of recidivism has become nil.

Mahaparivarthan

Project Mahaparivarthan was launched in August 2015 which aims at complete transformation of prisoners. Telangana Prisons have taken an initiative to provide loans to the convict prisoners who have completed at least three years of conviction for various purposes such as education of their children, daughters' marriage, financial aid to their dependents to run small business enterprises e.g. tailoring, dairy farm, etc. Later, these loans are recovered from the wages earned by the prisoners on installment basis.

Under this programme, we were informed that released prisoners are given loans without interest to help them start a new life outside after their release, which they can gradually repay.

Telangana Prisons have seen 68,369 admissions in 2017. There are 3 central prisons in Hyderabad, Cherlapally and Warangal, 7 district prisons in Adilabad, Sangareddy, Nalgonda, Khammam, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Mahboobnagar, 1 Special Jail for Women in Hyderabad, 4 Special Sub-jails, 28 sub-jails, 1 prisoners' agricultural colony (Open Prison) in Cherlapally and 1 Borstal School in Nizamabad. The total accommodation capacity in all these prisons is 6848. There were total 6259 prisoners housed as on 7.1.2016, 6212 prisoners as on 7.1.2017 and 5474 prisoners as on 7.1.2018. In 2018, 5744 prisoners are confined in the prisons, out of which 2249 are convicts, 3249 are under trials, 245 detenues and 1 is a civil prisoner. One can see that there is hardly any overcrowding of prisons in the state. This may be attributed to implementation of programmes like Mahaparivarthan and Unnathi.

Rehabilitation of released prisoners

We were told that the Prison Welfare Officers regularly interact with the prisoners at the time of their release and record their requests for employment in the "Employment Register" maintained in all prisons. A Placement Cell has been setup at the Head office through which efforts are made to provide employment to the released prisoners.

Health facilities

According to the prison department, there has been a drastic decrease in the custodial deaths from 56 prisoners in 2014 to 7 prisoners in 2018. The prison department attributes this to measures like prohibition of smoking, introduction of

physical training, yoga, improved medical facilities, Master Health Check-up of prisoners, diet scale, etc.

Running petrol pumps

The Telangana Prisons Department is marching towards self-sufficiency by 2020, by setting up petrol pumps and prison industries across the state. Presently, there are 15 petrol pumps which they plan to increase to 100. The annual turnover from the petrol pumps as well as prison industries in 2017 was Rs. 40,52,778,699/-. This profit goes into the Prison Welfare Fund from where the loans are given to the prison inmates, released prisoners, and other welfare activities of the prison department.

Employment

Prisoners are provided employment on release from prison. Till date, 227 prisoners have been employed at the petrol pumps and other prison industries while 532 prisoners have secured employment in private industries. In 2018, the prison department plans to create 2500 jobs for ex-prisoners in their various prison industries.

A corruption free department

The Telangana Prisons Department claims to be a corruption free department and they have declared a reward of Rs.10,000/- to anyone who is able to prove any of their officials to be corrupt or having taken a bribe.

To get real time feedback from the released prisoners, we were informed that the department has started a third party call centre. They contacted 1290 released prisoners in 2017 and 3195 prisoners in 2018 upto September. Out of these prisoners, only 77 prisoners had some complaints related to bad behavior, or delays in release on bail or food

quality. The remaining 4408 released prisoners spoke well about the prisons department.

Leadership

Besides this, the prisons department had ventured into new innovations like food courts, modernised mulakat rooms, extension of ayurvedic facilities in prisons, village outlets for sale of prisons products, computer literacy for prisoners, getting Aadhar Cards made for prisoners (with their consent) and overall sprucing up of prison environment.

These changes have been the result of the vision of Shri Vinoy Kumar Singh, IPS, who took charge as DG Prisons, Telangana, 4 years back. There have been major changes in the department, prison infrastructure, administration, programmes, etc. due to his innovative interventions.

The visit to Telangana prisons was a great learning experience and participants felt inspired from the exposure visit. They came back with many learnings and reflections with regard to issues, challenges and way forward in the field of prison reforms and prisoners' rehabilitation.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude and thanks to Shri Vinoy Kumar Singh, DG Prisons, Telangana for hosting the team for this visit. We would also like to record our deep appreciation for Shri Sampath, Vice Principal, SICA, for making all the arrangement during our visit and for his overall guidance. We would also like to thank Shri Subhash, Shri Rathan, Shri Tirumala Yadav, Shri Dhananjay Sadula, Ms. Basheera Begum, the Superintendents and staff of the Anand Ashram, Special Prison for Women, Chanchalguda, Male Prison, Chanchalguda, Cherlapally Central Prison, Cherlapally Open Jail, the staff of the hostel and mess for making our visit a grand success and a memorable experience.

A Ray of Hope for Prison Inmates, Their Children and Families

India Vision Foundation

About India Vision Foundation

INTRODUCTION: India Vision Foundation (IVF) is a non-profit making trust registered under the Indian Trust Act.; born out of the Ramon Magsaysay Award (equivalent to Asian Nobel Prize) in 1994. The award was conferred to Dr. Kiran Bedi, the first female officer of Indian Police Service (IPS), for forging ‘positive relationships’ between people and the police through creative leadership. India Vision Foundation seeks to carry forward its service in all those areas which were the basis of the award; namely Police and Prison Reforms; Women Empowerment while ‘**save the next victim**’ remains its mantra.

Initiatives Inside Prisons

Reformation and rehabilitation of prison inmates are the core activities of the Foundation inside prison. The reformation activities are based on the **3 S Model of Sanskar** (*value inculcation*), **Shiksha** (*Education*) and **Skills** (*training & development*). India Vision Foundation is touching more than **2500 lives every day** through projects inside prisons; striving hard to give a new hope to the prison inmates through positive reinforcement, education, values and vocational skill trainings. Currently, the Foundation programmes are spread over the prisons of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Initiatives Outside Prison

“The needs are plenty but interventions are minimal” this is the condition of inmates and their children in

Indian prisons. Due to the parental incarceration, children of prisoners became hidden victims. Absence of relevant intervention and effective social support programmes make this hidden group vulnerable and at the same time, high risk group for inter-generational crimes. The project supports the socio- economic, psychological, emotional and educational needs of these children while the parent is/are behind bars.

Presently **253 children** are being supported under three components of CVF Project:

- **Residential School programme** for children whose one or both parents are behind bars.
- **Home Support programme** for children who stay with extended families when their parents are in prison.
- **Community Empowerment programme** for the children of released inmates who lived in crime affected regions..

The above mentioned three support programmes are unique in its model and purely based and developed on the need basis of the children of incarcerated parents. Various research studies emphasise the relevance of such social support programmes for preventing children to follow the path of their parents and promote resilience among children of prison inmates. Each component of the programme has a separate team, including a psychologist that contributes to the mental health well-being of these children, in their school, hostel or at home. The Project Manager

manages the project and reports to the Director for the overall decision making processes. The project adopts child-rights based approach of protection, participation and education of the children of the prison inmates.

Formation of a dance group called “Hausla” is an achievement of the Foundation in its attempt to contribute towards decrease in recidivism. “Hausla - a journey of courage” is a reintegration initiative of India Vision Foundation that enables the released inmates to put their life in prison behind themselves and embark on a journey that recognises their talent and self-respect.

Twenty four glorious years of service with children of prison inmates

The concept of importance of work with the children of prison inmates started with the studies in 1980s especially in U.S and New York. In India, as compared to western countries, such intensive studies and work with the children of prison inmates are less and not strong enough to influence policy making. From this point of view, India Vision Foundation’s work for children of prison inmates since 1994 stands out and is contributing towards enriching the lives of children of prison inmates.

Dr. Kiran Bedi in her book “It’s Always Possible: Transforming One of the Largest Prisons in the World” (1998), has extensively described the services developed during her tenure as Inspector General of Prisons within Tihar Central Prison, Delhi, for children below five years living with their incarcerated mothers.

IVF was the pioneer in setting up crèches inside the prisons for children of incarcerated mothers; unfortunate to accompany their mothers since they

had no family/guardian to nurture and care for them. For making its crèches competent to meet the growing socio-psychological needs of children of prisoners, the Foundation has collaborated with the leading child care institutes like Mobile Crèches for the Creche Curriculum and Petal School.

There were 1,866 children living in prisons with their mothers (1,597 women inmates) at the end of 2015 as per NCRB Records, 2015.

This number can be quoted as NCRB has the details of children accompanying their mother (and in few cases even fathers) but imagine the alarming number of children who remain away from the periphery of the society or any record book when both their parents are incarcerated.

Today, India Vision Foundation is one of the pioneer organisations that is engaged and involved in augmenting lives hitherto mired in crime and deprivation. It is able to provide quality education, care and nutritious diet for the holistic development of the children below the age of six years. It also aims to prepare children for their formal schooling after the age of six years.

Amongst the 17 Goals of Sustainable Development, Goal No. 4: Quality Education - Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, is of utmost importance, because education has the potential to empower people – to build, access to information, services and help them improve their lives by breaking the vicious cycle of poverty.

Evolved need of the Project Children of Vulnerable Families (CVF)

Need is the base for interventions. Our Crèche Project led to the ‘**Children of Vulnerable**

Families' Project in 1996. Since then, it has been a powerful journey for creating a strong moral, educational and value oriented foundation for the children who are less privileged to spend their early childhood with their incarcerated mothers.

CVF is IVF's answer to the question of where will these children go after the age of 6 years when there is no extended family and mothers do not trust the government facility of "foster care or welfare homes". There was no system or policies for helping children of incarcerated parents to continue a safe and secure life in India. Even the Juvenile Justice Act was launched in 2000 and on the basis of that, Child Welfare Committees were formed much later than India Vision Foundation's thought for children of prison inmates. In 1996, India Vision Foundation joined hands with missionaries for giving a respectful life to the children of prison inmates with safe and healthy environment for living and empowerment through education.

Effective mainstreaming and nurturing of Tihar Jail crèche for the children was a beginning and the Foundation explored more areas of required support. The children who were left in the community during the arrest of their parents were another group that required special attention. Parents especially mothers were worried about their children's well-being as most of them were not updated by their families and no provision for mother-child meet.

With the reference of imprisoned parents especially mothers, the project did the home visits of the children and identified their living status and eligibility for admission in the residential programme of the project, prioritised on need basis. Beginning with just eight children, the project has impacted more than 700 beneficiaries

till date; including the strength of 253 project supported children.

The Project CVF Model

Child and family centred studies highlights the needs and vulnerability of the children of incarcerated parents at various levels. Johnston reports that children who are repeatedly separated from their parents because of parental incarceration are more likely to be delinquent and/or gang-involved during adolescence and are more likely to experience inter-generational incarceration in the future (1995, as cited in Simmons, 2000).

Socio, behavioural, emotional and psychological issues are very high with this group and absence of right intervention at right time may cause accumulation of risks for them. Accordingly, the project developed an effective social support model for giving importance to conventional activities like moral education, sports, exposure trips, birthday celebrations etc. supporting children to give a vision for better life and generating opportunities in their life for working as effective turning points in their life.

The more stress a caregiver feels, the less acceptance there may be for the children. As a result, their quality of parenting may be diminished (see Mackintosh, Myers & Kennon, 2006). Considering the importance of primary caregivers in a child's life during the incarceration period of the parents, the project gives importance to **regular home visits of the Project Coordinators and capacity building programmes**. Through rapport building and interaction, the project analyses the family condition and financial support essential for supporting the child is accordingly extended.

Parent-child visitation programme inside prisons are other exclusive areas of the project that strengthens the connectivity between children and parents. Different from the usual family visitation programme in the prison according to the Prison Manual, the project makes efforts to help the children and parents through personalised visits. Considering the importance of personal touch of the parents for their children, project facilitates the visits in collaboration with prison authorities so that parents and children can share their feelings and emotions beyond barriers.

The project's **home support programme** supports more than **seventy eight children** who are fortunate enough to get a potential caregiver in the family despite their parental incarceration. 60% of such caretakers are grandparents of the children who feel helpless for these children due to the lack of finances. This is another area taken care by the project with its continuous support. Along with family sensitisation programmes, the project gives emphasis to strengthening the neighbourhood programmes to fight with stigma and isolation these families face in their communities.

The **developed model of community** strengthening in the crime prone communities has already proved to be an effective model for preventing crime in the community. Currently, the project works with fifty two children in the community, by reaching more than 100 families in the Bawana J.J. Colony. The community centre facilitates training, value and education classes for the children as an effective way of empowering the young generation to lead a life away from crime. Drugs, crime and arrests are normal in

Bawana community; however none of the project beneficiaries are engaged in such activities. This is great evidence and gives confidence to the project for continuing with its activities.

Summary

More than an NGO, India Vision Foundation is a hub of promotional activities for children of incarcerated parents. Envisaging the mission "Save the Next Victim", India Vision Foundation works to provide a protective environment to the children of prison inmates. India Vision Foundation helps the community to extend help for this vulnerable group of society through imparting education and other conventional ways of support. Apart of encouraging the social support of outside community, the Foundation strengthens the families and parents of the children to become a source of support from the family, helping them to create a vision of a better life and encouraging turning points. The Foundation has successfully reached out to more than 1, 50,000 beneficiaries under its Prison reforms and rural development program till date.

We also have an **Alumni Group** of our older children and many of them **are working professionals in vocations like nursing, marketing, sales, automobile engineering, journalism, IT, hospitality, physiotherapy** etc.

Few of these children have **shared their stories of triumph over their tragedies** and they have been compiled in a book called **FATEH!** The name of the book has been conceptualized by the children themselves who feel no guilt or shame of their parents' deeds but learned to rise above their challenged circumstances and create their own identities in life!

भरकटलेले बालपण

प्रवीण खांडपासोळे

संचालक, दिशा संस्था, अमरावती ९७६६६ ९८४९६

मागील ७ वर्षांपासून मी गुन्हापीडितांसाठी काम करत आहे. त्यामध्ये विविध प्रकारे हाताळले व काही चांगले अथवा वाईट अनुभव आले. परंतु अल्पवयीन मुलांच्या समस्या हाताळताना मी कमालीचा प्रभावित झालो. २०१२ मध्ये आलेला लैंगिक अपराधा पासून बालकांचे संरक्षण कायद्यामध्ये काम करताना मुलांच्या समस्या विविध अंगाने समजून घेण्याची संधी मला मिळाली. एकूण प्रकारणांमध्ये तारुण्याच्या उंभरट्यावर असणाऱ्या मुलांचे प्रमाण जास्त असल्याचे आढळले. या वयामध्ये मुलांचे पळून जाण्याचे, गुन्ह्याला बळी पडण्याचे किंवा चुकीच्या गोष्टी मध्ये सामील असल्याचे प्रमाण वाढले आहे. यामागची कारणे शोधून त्यावर उपाययोजना करणे हे या समाजापुढे तसेच कुटुंबापुढे मोठे आव्हान आहे.

या समस्यांवर काम करण्यापूर्वी त्यांची कारणे डोळसपणे शोधणे, हे सुद्धा तेवढेच महत्वाचे आहे. बाल्यावस्थेतून पौगंडावस्थेत प्रवेश करणारी मुले ही शारीरिक व भावनिक संक्रमणावस्थेतून जात असतात. त्यांच्यामध्ये होणाऱ्या बदलांबद्दल त्यांना पुरेशा माहिती नसते. काही प्रकरणांमध्ये अपुऱ्या भावनिक आधारामुळे सुद्धा मुले बळी पडतांना दिसतात. त्याचबरोबर फेसबुक, WhatsApp, इंटरनेट, चित्रपट, मालिका, मित्र-परिवार ह्या साऱ्या

घडामोडीत आणि शारीरिक व मानसिक बदलांत अधिक रंग भरत असतात. मग अश्या नाजुक मनोवस्थेमध्ये त्यांना फिल्मी स्वप्नरंजन, घरातून पळून जाण्याचा थरार, घरच्यांच्या विरोधात बंड करणे, ईतरांपेक्षा काहीतरी वेगळे करणे, प्रेमात पडून एकमेकांसाठी जीव देण्याच्या आणा-भाका घेणे, या गोष्टींचे थ्रिल वाटायला लागते, आणि त्यामुळे त्यांचे जीवन अधिक गुंतागुंतीचे होते व चुकीच्या मार्गाने गुरफटत जाते. हयामागची काही ठळक कारणे आमच्या अनुभावातून पुढे आली आहेत. ती म्हणजे पौगंडावस्थेतील मुलामुलींना एकमेकांबद्दल आकर्षण वाटणे, त्यामधून प्रेमात पडणे, आपल्या प्रेमाला विरोध होण्याची शक्यता वाटणे, कायद्याबद्दलचे अज्ञान, सामाजिक मान्यतेच्या विरोधात जाऊन बंडखोरी करण्याबाबत वाटणारे 'थ्रिल', कौटुंबिक स्तरावर आवश्यक असलेला मानसिक किंवा भावनिक आधाराचा अभाव, मुले व पालक यांच्यामध्ये आवश्यक असलेल्या सुसंवादाचा अभाव.

या समस्येची काही सामाजिक कारणे सुद्धा आहेत, त्यामुळे मुलांचा सहज तोल जाऊ शकतो. प्रामुख्याने वयात येणाऱ्या मुलींची सातत्याने होत असलेली अवहेलना. मुलगी म्हणून अनेक आवडींना घातलेली मुरड, आणि सततच्या दूस्वासामुळे न भागलेली प्रेमाची व मायेची

भूक, या तारुण्याच्या उंभरठ्यावर स्वतःच्या मनाप्रमाणे वागण्याची ओढ असते. या ओढीवर ताबा मिळवणे मुलांना कठीण जाते. या मुलांना ह्या चक्रव्यूहातून बाहेर काढण्यासाठी आपल्याला पालक म्हणून अथवा मुलांबरोबर काम करणारा घटक म्हणून काही गोष्टी मुलांसोबत बोलणे गरजेचे आहे. पौगंडावस्थेतील मुलांना योग्य माहिती देणे आणि योग्य लैंगिक शिक्षण हा एकच या समस्येवर यशस्वी होण्याचा मार्ग दिसतो. तसेच भावना कश्यामुळे उद्दिपित होतात, व त्यावर ताबा कसा व का मिळवावा हे या वयामध्ये सांगण्याची गरज आहे.

तसेच बेजबाबदार लैंगिक संबंदातून उद्भवणारे प्रश्न जसे दुर्धर आजार व लादलेले गर्भारपण, शारीरिकसंबंधाचे चित्रीकरण व त्याचा गैरवापर याबाबत मुलांसोबत सातत्याने बोलले गेले पाहिजे. आपल्या भावनांना आवर न घातल्यास होणारे दुष्परिणाम मुलांना कळले पाहिजेत. त्यांचे लक्ष त्यांच्या छंदांवर केंद्रीत करणे व त्यांना तशी संधी व साधन उपलब्ध करून देणे हा एक चांगला पर्याय असू शकतो. ह्या बाबींचा सकारात्मक उपयोग करत, त्यांच्या अतिरिक्त उर्जेला दिशा देणे सहज शक्य होऊ शकतो.



Alliance of Socio-Legal and Rehabilitation Initiatives in CJS

BACKGROUND

Prayas is working in the field of criminal justice in Maharashtra and Gujarat since last two decades now. The initiative was started with the efforts of a small team, and presently, the team has developed according to the emerging needs in the field of rehabilitation. The process is an outcome of constant efforts towards developing partnerships with NGOs and respective departments of the government both at state and central levels.

Similar efforts have been initiated by other civil society groups in some towns in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. But such efforts alone are not enough to strengthen the role of social workers in the criminal justice systems, not is it sufficient to bring about change at policy level. The need of the hour is for voluntary organisations working in the field of criminal justice to come together and create a platform which can dialogue within as well as with government and civil society, on issues related to promotion of legal rights and rehabilitation of crime affected persons and their families. Moreover, new developments are taking place in the field and at policy level which have implications are really useful for the field and for the client populations is a big question, which needs to be addressed.

INCEPTION OF THE FORUM

In the view of above, Prayas has tried to bring groups and organisations working in the CJS to promote a process of regular give and take amongst experts in the field. There is a need to develop clarity among these players towards legal rights and rehabilitation issues and strategies for advocacy, which need to be jointly developed to achieve the expected results. The overall expectation is to build a working and mutually supportive relationship amongst the partners, to provide effective services at the field level and lobby for policy changes.

OBJECTIVES

- To enrich the experience of member organisations through regular interactions.
- To develop strategies to protect legal rights and develop rehabilitation services for CJS affected groups.
- To encourage and mentor new initiatives in the field.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

- Conducting regular meeting of partners of the Forum.
- Organising interactive sessions to share the new initiatives, projects and ideas.
- Publishing a newsletter of activities and for sharing of ideas and thoughts.

MEMBERSHIP

- Membership would be limited to organisations working in the CJS towards the legal rights and rehabilitation of vulnerable groups.
- Membership would be by invitation and seconded by at least one member of the Forum.

BOOK POST



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