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(I.S.S.N 2321- 6417 (Online))

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## REHABILITATION AND WELFARE OF PRISONERS IN THE PRISONS OF HARYANA \*

**Introduction:** The rehabilitation and welfare of offenders is the ultimate objective of prison administration. Number of initiatives have been taken and continue to be undertaken by many states under direction and supervision of Central Government in pursuance to meet this objective in the field of rehabilitation and welfare of prison inmates. The Govt. of India is running various schemes through Ministry of Home Affairs not only for the improvement of prison infrastructure and administration, but also organizing national as well as international conferences on correctional administration for sensitization of prison staff. In this line the ministry has framed 'Model Prison Manual, 2016<sup>1</sup>.' As prison is State subject, hence overall supervision and management of prisons is under direct control of respective state. The present study throws light on various good practices adopted by the prison departments of Haryana for reform and rehabilitation of prison inmates in the state.

**Methodology:** The present study is a part of doctoral research being undertaken on prison administration in Haryana. Total 9 jails were visited to collect primary data through structured questionnaire and personal interviews. These jails consist of one central jail of Hisar (Hisar II) and eight district jails of Kurukshetra, Karnal, Kaithal, Jind, Jhajhar, Gurugram, Faridabad and Sonapat districts of Haryana state. Information was also collected from secondary data and other options like visiting the web portal of Haryana prison department regularly.

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<sup>1</sup> Model Prison Manual for the Superintendence and Management of Prisons in India', 2016

**Rehabilitation and Welfare Measures:** Various rehabilitation and welfare measures undertaken by the prisons department of Haryana state is being summarized as follow:

- 1. Education:** Educating the jail inmates not only provides a corrective approach to the psyche of the offender (especially the undertrials) but also goes a long way in developing a responsive and respectful attitude in them towards the society. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Centers have been set up in the Central Jail, Ambala, District Jail Sirsa, Karnal, Gurgaon and Faridabad to enable the prison inmates to study and acquire higher qualifications after 10+2 so as to provide the inmates better employment opportunities after the release from the jails. Further, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) centers are functional in all the jails (barring Panipat, Palwal and Rewari jails) to enable the prison inmates to get education up to 10+2 level. A unique literacy programme named '*Padho Padhao*' has been started in the district jail of Jind to educate illiterate prisoners in which 48 aged and young illiterate prisoners have been scrutinized who can now read, write and are able to sign on their own.
- 2. Library Facility:** There is a library in the central jail of Hisar (Hisar II), which is being run by a lady teacher deputed by the District & Sessions Judge. She teaches and counsels prisoners and seemed to have a positive impact on them. She helps women in pursuing education through NIOS. 12 women have completed education under her guidance and some have also been enrolled in graduation courses. Similarly, the district jail of Faridabad has the facility of library with the collection of around 2200 books and a provision of education through e-library facility in the prison premises.
- 3. Health and Hygiene:** The prisons department of Haryana is taking various measures to improve health care and sanitation, promote *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* and *Yoga* and Meditation among prison inmates. A hospital is available within the prison premises in all the 9 visited jails. Gurugram jail seemed to have better medical infrastructure than other jails. The limited medical staff in most prisons is assisted by convict prisoners who are assigned hospital duty. In tune with the campaign "*Swachh Bharat, Swachh Haryana*" the prisons department has started the "*Swachh Haryana Jails*" Campaign. Inmates are required to maintain cleanliness within the prison premises. While the common areas are cleaned by convicts undergoing rigorous imprisonment as part of their prison labour, barracks are cleaned by the inmate residing in them.

- 4. Vocational Training:** Training is one of the important rehabilitation measurements in the field of prison reforms. Nowadays, training of inmates in various vocational training and skills in the prisons has received a lot of importance in almost all the States/UTs. Approximately 2153<sup>2</sup> prisoners have already been enrolled under the scheme for vocational training.
- 5.** In the prisons of Haryana the vocational training is being imparted to prison inmates in the jails with the help of RSETI/lead Banks, technical education department of Haryana and NGOs in trades like plumbing, electrician, motorcycle repairs, refrigerator repairing, hair cutting, beautician, handicrafts, painting and computer data operator.
- 6. Wages:** Prisoners who are engaged in labour in the prison are paid a nominal wages based on their skills sets. Wages paid per day of work to the convicts is Rs 60, 50 and 40 per day to skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled prisoners, respectively. In the prisons of Haryana 1904<sup>3</sup> convicts are undergoing rigorous imprisonment and are engaged in work within the prisons. The wages they earn are directly deposited in their bank accounts, can be used after their release.
- 7. Food and Clothing:** The jail authorities in the prisons take care of the dietary needs of sick inmates, children of inmates, pregnant and lactating women. There is a provision in the jail manual for special diet for inmates whenever required. In addition to the special diet prescribed in the jail manual for children some jails also gives 250 ml of milk to all inmates. Some jails have chapatti warmers and even bakery units to bake breads that are distributed in the morning with tea. The food distribution schedule in Haryana jails starts every morning at around 6.00 AM with tea and bread, followed by lunch (five chapattis and lentils) at noon. Evening tea is served around 3.00 PM followed by dinner at 5.00 PM, which consists of five chapattis and seasonal vegetables.

The prison department provides two thin sheets as bedding, one of which a prisoner is supposed to spread as a bed sheet and the other as a cover. Families of prisoners are permitted to give clothes and bedding to prisoners. Convicts are provided white uniforms from the prison department. Some prisons make the uniforms inside the prison premises itself. The undertrials are allowed to get clothes from their families.

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<sup>2</sup> National Crime Records Bureau at <http://ncrb.gov.in>

<sup>3</sup> Inside Haryana Prisons a study by Commonwealth Human Right Initiatives

- 8. Telephone Facility:** Prison Inmate Calling System (PICS) have been installed in all the 9 studied jails in Haryana. The time limit of calling allowed is 35 minutes per week for male and 60 minutes for the female inmates. This measure has made it possible that the family members of prisoners residing at far off places are not needed to take the trouble of travelling long distances which saves time and money also. There is a provision of modern interview rooms in all the jails with facilities like intercoms, fans, exhaust fans, sound proof glass etc.
- 9. Spiritual and Cultural Activity:** The prisoners are encouraged to participate in prayers and spiritual programs, games and sports and cultural programs. The assistance of voluntary agencies and NGOs has been taken for positive and correctional approach. An endeavor is made to give humane treatment to the convicts/undertrials lodged in the jails of Haryana. All the respondent inmates told positively about these measures undertaken for their wellbeing.
- 10. Legal Aid to Prisoners:** Efforts are being made to provide legal aid to the needy prisoners through the free legal aid society. Legal aid society members visit the jail regularly and undertake to defend their cases in the court. They also meet the prisoners collectively and individually to listen to their problems and sort out their grievances as per rules.
- 11. Special Initiatives:** Some special initiatives or good prison practices have been started in few jails of Haryana especially, in the district jails of Jind and Gurugram. These are as follow:
- Both the jails have started submitting online e-custody certificate in Hon'ble High Court, Chandigarh (Timely submission of custody certificate saves men power and money)
  - Jind is India's first jail to start common service centre (CSC) for prisoners in which many facilities are being provided to them.
  - This jail has also started online money transfer in the accounts of prisoners so that relatives and family members of prisoners need not to come from far away for this purpose
  - This is also told to be India's first jail to implement online employee duty module so that transparency may be shown to the prison staff while assigning duties.
  - Efforts of Jind jail administration is worth mentioning in implementation of Online Parole Module so that transparency may be provided to the inmates and any kind of litigation is avoided in the Hon'ble Courts

- At Gurugram jail ‘Project Dhun’ is initiated to not only promote the inmates’ talent, but also to up-skill and groom them in various creative pursuits, including music. To find out about the prisoners talented in music, a talent hunt was launched in the jail by a television channel in collaboration with India Vision Foundation, an NGO. Of more than 2,000 prisoners in the jail who took part, 100 cleared the first round of auditions out of which 20 were selected for training of one year duration. To help with the training session, a room called *Dhum* has been designed and created in the jail. In *Dhum*, the prisoners have access to all types of musical instruments including guitar, harmonium and *tabla* and there are teachers to help them learn the instruments.

**Conclusion:** The present study found that the various measures undertaken by the prison department of the state of Haryana are best steps in the efforts of making the life of inmates happy and also helping them to live a dignified life in the prison so that they can emerge out of the prison as good and improved citizens.

