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Research Article

Condition of Prisons in India: Issues & Challenges with Special Reference to Educational & Vocational Training

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Abstract: Prison system has been a vital part Indian criminal justice system since time immemorial but what has changed over a period of time is its role in the criminal justice system it has evolved from being center of punishment to center of reformation. In background of such facts the paper will look to study how the Indian prison system is changing its dynamics to meet the changing needs. The paper will try to understand some broad and fundamental problems of prison system with special reference to educational and vocational training in prisons as the basic purpose sending a person behind the bars is to reform the person as per the modern criminological approach what is needed is a reformed individual post release who can gel up with the society and reintegrate with the mainstream without any stigma. The paper would give some useful and practical suggestions with regard to prison education and vocational training at both policy making level and implementation wise so that prison education and vocational training is carried out in a more effective manner as it is the backbone of the structure for reforming the offenders and if carried out effectively and passionately it could do wonders to reform our criminal justice system.

Keywords: Prison, Reformation, Education, Training

INTRODUCTION

The system of prison is not new to India it is present since time immemorial; in a number of religious texts, we find mention of prison system and how it was managed at that point of time prisons were called by different names like "Karagar", "Bandigrah" etc. but the biggest difference between prison at that time and today is the reformatory aspect was not so dominant at that point of time. Nowadays prisons are considered as center for reformation earlier they were mainly center for punishment where one could purge out his guilt and come out of it as a law-abiding citizen.

The King used to impart justice and award punishment according to his "Rajdharma" different kinds of punishment were awarded for different types of offences however with the passage of time the system of prison developed and evolved and now prison system are a means of reformation rehabilitation and reintegration they look to make a prisoner better person inside out through educational and vocational training. We now have a well-structured prison system to meet the needs of the society and reshape the personality of an offender to a law-abiding citizen.

In many nations, the institution of prison is referred to as different things, such as correctional facilities, detention centers, Jails, remand centers, etc. With a shift in how society views jail and prisoners, the earlier idea of prison as a facility where prisoners are forcibly confined and deprived from a number of basic human rights as a form of punishment has been challenged. It is now regarded as a correctional or improvement center, which shows that reforming criminals is given more priority than punishing

them. So, the role of prison system in modern society is even more important.

INDIAN PRISON SYSTEM HISTORICAL BACKDROP

The ancient criminal justice system talks about four methods of punishment namely, by gentle admonition, by severe reproof, by fine, and by corporal punishments and these punishments may be inflicted separately or together according to the nature of the offence. In the early phases of Indian civilization, "Dharma was Supreme", the offender was shown maximum tolerance, but with the passage of time a lot of changes took place in the system and modes of punishment. The foundation of Indian society and its ideas of justice and punishment in antiquity was laid by Manu's ideas, which were expounded upon by Yagnavalkya, Kautilya, and other scholars.

The legal system in medieval India was similar to that in ancient India, and Muslim rulers of the time made very few, if any, attempts to interfere with the daily operation of the legal system.

The sources of law and their characteristics were essentially Quranic and remained so throughout the Mughal era.

Crimes were separated into three categories: offenses against the state, offenses against God and offences against private individual,

Significant criminal reforms in India started during the British colonial era. The Indian jail system and its inmates were not treated well by the British authorities, despite their

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best efforts. The then-existing prison system underwent radical modifications that took the opinions of the local populace into consideration. The entire legal system saw some initial modifications with the arrival of the British and post-independence by the virtue of many committees and commissions a host of other good changes were brought into Indian Prison system

INDIAN PRISON SYSTEM: PROFUSION OF PROBLEMS

India as a country has no doubt made a lot of progress but our Indian prison system is still is suffering from age old problems which were in existence even before independence like overcrowding, poor health, criminality inside the prison, understaffing lack of proper education and vocational facilities etc. It seems like there is lack of political will and the government is not very keen on reforming the Indian prison system although a lot has been said and done but it seems like a futile exercise as the results are not very positive. The honorable Supreme Court in Reinhuman conditions in 1382 prisons took suo moto action keeping in view the poor condition of Indian prisons but still a lot is still desired to make the prison environment better suited for reformation and rehabilitation.

One of the key concerns not only for prisoners but also in general is of Health and hygiene as it is said that a healthy mind lives in a healthy body the aspect of health becomes even more important in case of presence as there is a need of a lot of changes and improvement with regard to prisoner's health and the health condition of prisoners is one of the most ignored aspect the High Court of Madhya Pradesh in Anil Kumar Vs. state of MP in 1999 mentioned some of the factors which are responsible for poor health of prisoners

- 1. Delay in diagnosis
- 2. Overcrowding
- 3. Failure to segregate infectious cases from other prisoners
- 4. Poor ventilation and poor nutrition

The basic purpose of sending a person to prison is to reform and rehabilitate him as a law abiding citizen but unfortunately there is a lot of criminality inside the prison the hardcore criminals create a lot of problems for the other offenders who are serving their term inside the prison and they are made to work for long hours which ranges to even 8 to 10 hours of proper labour and if they don't want to do such work they have to pay a certain amount of money to the veteran inmates.

The problem is that every prisoner tries to establish his superiority over other prisoners which leads to heated discussion and quarrel among prison inmates and many a times the causeway of fight is very small like food or cleaning toilets etc. for the present in discipline and criminality the prisoners alone cannot be blamed but the prison authorities and officials who sometimes do undue

favors to certain prisoners for material gain are also to be blamed for the criminality in prison

A friendly and healthy environment in jails is very important for inmates to be reformed in order to accomplish this goal we need education, recreational, and vocational training facilities in addition to a focus on social and ethical values to integrate into society following release. They also need access to educational, recreational, and vocational training facilities so they can change their antagonistic attitudes towards society and become more integrated into it.

as well as providing other means of subsistence. So amidst a plethora of issues that our prison system is facing the issue of good educational and vocational training is of utmost importance as it is the means to an end i.e. it is the most potent tool to reform the prisoners as a good educational and vocational training would give them the confidence to go back to the society with updated skills despite being behind the bars they would not get outdated have the skill sets to get a job. During a personal interaction with a prison inmate at Jaipur central prison who works at Petrol pump right next to central jail Jaipur as part of prison reform scheme he disclosed that there are so many other issues like access to blankets in winter clean water etc. that they barely think about education and training and it is the basic facilities that they carve for more.

Educational & Vocational Training: A Panacea to break the vicious circle of problems in Prison system

A good system of prison education and vocational training could do miracles and act as a game changer in prison management. In addition to teaching focus should be on imparting practical skills for life to earn a livelihood post Prison work and vocational training are two aspects of the rehabilitation procedures used in the Indian criminal justice system, which uses imprisonment as a tool for offenders' correction, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society although there are proper schemes and al ot is being done in this regard but there is no proper up gradation and innovation in prison education and vocational training in many of the prisons.

Union Ministry of Home Affairs has made 2003 & 2016 Model Prison Manual and many other acts rules and advisories for the Superintendence and Management of Prisons in India with the primary goal of efficient prison administration of which quality vocational and educational training programs are an integral part. Numerous prison reform committees, including the Justice Mulla Committee (1982–1983) (GOI 1983) and the Justice Krishna Iyer Committee (1987), have also emphasized the value of inmate rehabilitation and vocational training.

Through some relevant data from National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Prison Statistics India report published in 2022. We can have look at the current status of prison education and vocational training in prisons in India and look for a way forward.

Table 1									
SI.		No. of prisoners benefitted by							
No.	State/UT	Elementary Education	Adult Education	Higher Education	Computer Course				
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)				
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	1374	531	394	88				
2	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0	0	0	0				
3	ASSAM	530	261	52	150				
4	BIHAR	8923	7470	802	154				
5	CHHATTISGARH	1435	5 372 337		550				
6	GOA	0 0		9	0				
7	GUJARAT	793 706 909		909	35				
8	HARYANA	1028	1127	801	375				
9	HIMACHAL PRADESH	0	0	5	0				
10	JHARKHAND	1023	716	357	32				
11	KARNATAKA	874	3172	53	90				
12	KERALA	878	87	76	44				
13	MADHYA PRADESH	1110	4498	395	90				
14	MAHARASHTRA	251	965	677	224				
15	MANIPUR	0	О	О	О				
16	MEGHALAYA	0	0	0	0				
17	MIZORAM	0	4	0	0				
18	NAGALAND	0	0	0	0				
19	ODISHA	379	832	535	155				
20	PUNJAB	119	16	150	12				
21	RAJASTHAN	1379	296	335	121				
22	SIKKIM	0	0	1	0				
23	TAMIL NADU	5856	1127	889	3				
24	TELANGANA	6954	3768	263	628				
25	TRIPURA	0	0	0	0				
26	UTTAR PRADESH	3480	5292	4101	1162				
27	UTTARAKHAND	36	0	14	31				
28	WEST BENGAL	1033	576	16	40				
	TOTAL (STATES)	37455	31816	11171	3984				
29	A & N ISLANDS	2	3	0	0				
30	CHANDIGARH	45	29	35	0				
31	DNH & DAMAN DIU	0	0	0	0				
32	DELHI	1189	422	2719	224				
33	JAMMU & KASHMIR	93	274	158	142				
34	LADAKH	0	0	0	0				
35	LAKSHADWEEP	0	0	0	0				
36	PUDUCHERRY	0	0	0	0				
	TOTAL (UTs)	1329	728	2912	366				
	TOTAL (ALL-INDIA)	38784	32544	14083	4350				

Source table 10.1 PSI- accessible at https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/PSI-2021/PSI_2021_as_on_31-12-2021.pdf The data shows that there is intent on part of authorities to impart prison education right from elementary to higher education. The states or union territories showing very lesser or no beneficiary have very low inmate count. But what is clear is a good intent to educate and reform.

SI.							In the second second second				
	State/UT	Agri- culture	Carp- entry	Cann- ing	Tailor- ing	Weav-ing	Making of Soap and Phenyl	Hand- loom	Others	Total	% share of Total Vocational Trg.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	ANDHRA PRADESH	48	10	0	108	20	24	8	677	895	2.28
	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
	ASSAM	15	12	12	10	30	34	12	26	151	0.38
100	BIHAR	1029	18	345	256	46	30	50	1178	2952	7.51
	CHHATTISGARH	75	249	0	254	245	21	210	126	1180	3.00
	GOA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
	GUJARAT	182	89	15	92	183	9	9	552	1131	2.88
	HARYANA	176	400	212	115	14	3	0	1376	2296	5.84
200	HIMACHAL PRADESH	16	27	2	47	65	4	40	38	239	0.61
10	JHARKHAND	635	41	0	150	245	123	317	1225	2736	6.96
11	KARNATAKA	333	38	0	304	45	37	78	658	1493	3.80
12	KERALA	828	72	25	342	97	123	93	794	2374	6.04
13	MADHYA PRADESH	181	250	27	306	485	0	265	573	2087	5.31
14	MAHARASHTRA	23	113	40	51	49	8	16	199	499	1.27
15	MANIPUR	0	0	0	8	0	0	7	7	22	0.06
16	MEGHALAYA	22	27	0	0	0	0	0	5	54	0.14
17	MIZORAM	4	5	0	5	3	1	5	1	24	0.06
18	NAGALAND	13	23	17	13	4	9	12	4	95	0.24
19	ODISHA	209	0	0	32	0	85	0	585	911	2.32
20	PUNJAB	3	164	0	112	190	23	0	384	876	2.23
21	RAJASTHAN	0	0	0	329	1768	0	0	2540	4637	11.80
22	SIKKIM	16	12	0	5	0	0	0	83	116	0.30
23	TAMIL NADU	88	20	0	159	159	108	28	490	1052	2.68
24	TELANGANA	145	92	0	284	110	79	41	466	1217	3.10
25	TRIPURA	34	0	2	1	0	2	0	5	44	0.11
26	UTTAR PRADESH	1508	216	10	2483	2109	15	90	759	7190	18.29
27	UTTARAKHAND	76	28	0	18	24	0	20	144	310	0.79
28	WEST BENGAL	41	1	0	51	0	2	0	63	158	0.40
	TOTAL (STATES)	5700	1907	707	5535	5891	740	1301	12958	34739	88.37
29	A & N ISLANDS	22	13	15	4	15	0	8	0	77	0.20
30	CHANDIGARH	56	26	6	52	0	0	0	176	316	0.80
31	DNH & DAMAN DIU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
32	DELHI	0	117	0	466	57	0	0	3124	3764	9.57
33	JAMMU & KASHMIR	0	26	0	58	23	0	67	228	402	1.02
34	LADAKH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
35	LAKSHADWEEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
36	PUDUCHERRY	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0.04
	TOTAL (UTs)	93	182	21	580	95	0	75	3528	4574	11.63
	TOTAL (ALL-INDIA)	5793	2089	728	6115	5986	740	1376	16486	39313	100.00

Source table 10.2 PSI- accessible at https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/PSI-2021/PSI_2021_as_on_31-12-2021.pdf The data shows that prisoners are being trained in a number of skills set and vocations to prepare them to lead the life of a normal law-abiding citizen. As a good vocational training will enable them to earn a respectable job and earn the bread for themselves and their family and also turn prison inmates from liability to an asset.

	T	able 3
SI. No.	State/UT	Gross Value of Sale Proceeds / Earnings (* In Crore)
(1)	(2)	(3)
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	8.65
2	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0.00
3	ASSAM BIHAR	0.16
5	CHHATTISGARH	12.87
6	GOA	2.43
7	GUJARAT	0.00
		11.24
8	HARYANA	1.41
9	HIMACHAL PRADESH	2.45
10	JHARKHAND	9.01
11	KARNATAKA	3.35
12	KERALA	7.17
13	MADHYA PRADESH	2.44
14	MAHARASHTRA	12.75
15	MANIPUR	0.00
16	MEGHALAYA	0.00
17	MIZORAM	0.07
18	NAGALAND	0.00
19	ODISHA	1.86
20	PUNJAB	1.33
21	RAJASTHAN	1.67
22	SIKKIM	0.04
23	TAMIL NADU	65.17
24	TELANGANA	41.61
25	TRIPURA	0.02
26	UTTAR PRADESH	15.40
27	UTTARAKHAND	0.61
28	WEST BENGAL	8.43
	TOTAL (STATES)	210.16
29	A & N ISLANDS	0.00
30	CHANDIGARH	8.53
31	DNH & DAMAN DIU	0.00
32	DELHI	19.32
33	JAMMU & KASHMIR	0.23
34	LADAKH	0.00
35	LAKSHADWEEP	0.00
36	PUDUCHERRY	0.00
	TOTAL (UTs)	28.09
	TOTAL (ALL-INDIA)	238.25

Source table 10.3 PSI- accessible at https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/PSI-2021/PSI 2021 as on 31-12-2021.pdf

The data shows that while some states are performing well in terms of revenue generation some of the states are lagging behind in terms of revenue generation despite having a large number of prison inmates and a number of resources at their disposal which needs to be examined. This is a food for thought for the authorities.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

The Indian Constitution has given a number of fundamental rights to every individual and it includes those individuals also who are behind the bars but unfortunately the prison administration most of the time forget this fact and treat the prisoners in a very bad manner which has a very negative impact on their reformation and rehabilitation what is required is a change of approach not only from the part of prison authorities but also on the part of prison educators trainers the government and most importantly from the point of view of the society social stigma attached to prisoners needs to be washed away and the open presence are a good way to do so where a person is under minimum security and he becomes a part of the mainstream society and upon his final release the society is more over prepared to accept them as a reformed individual which is not the case in case of release from a regular prison hence it could be a good idea that just like Lok Adalats are held regularly in the same way a prison committee should meet on a regular basis and take action on files of deserving prisoners who could be put up in open prison based on the minimum requirement and their track record should be sent to open prison for their better rehabilitation and reformation.

It would be beneficial not only for the prisoner but also for the authority as there is a drastic difference between the cost of maintaining a prisoner inside a regular prison and an open prison as a study carried out by Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority in 2017 observed that monthly cost per prisoner in a central Jail is 7,094 Rs. whereas in open Jail it is 500 Rs. per month so it is a win-win situation for both. It could act as a step-by-step process for better social reintegration. It boosts the confidence of society as well as offender that now they are ready for being mingled with the people.

Every institutional framework is a reflection of the community in which it exists. Therefore, the same issues that plague Indian society outside of prison like indiscipline, lack of opportunity, etc. occur inside Indian prisons also. How can it be ensured that prisoners could learn what they want to learn when citizens in the free world aren't given the freedom or opportunities to do so is a pertinent question to be asked? How the quality of training teaching and assessment can be measured from a pragmatic point of view? Furthermore, how many prisoners who have finished their vocational training at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) attached to prisons are able to secure a respectable career? How can we guarantee that prisoners have access to quality education and training which could lead to a respectable job or self-employment? Unless the authorities ask these questions to themselves they would not be able to create a good system of vocational and educational training. As self-doubt and selfassessment by authorities could act as a fuel to catapult the efforts of prison authorities and for that we need passionate people as staff and trainers in prison who are pumped up for bringing a social change.

A post release survey and tracking of record along with personal interview of those who had taken prison education and training should be done for further improvement, guest lecture of good and successful prisoners who highly benefited from prison education and training should be organized there should be an incubation center as well to nurture fresh ideas among prison inmates, well-educated prisoners should be made instructors in there specialization this will create employment as well as inmates could have their teacher full time with them to clear their doubts.

The prison education programs must reflect the rehabilitation's aims and objectives. Before assigning an inmate to a training program, it is important to take into account their age, gender, educational background, and cultural background. For prisoners, an aptitude test must be administered, and programs should be made available as much as feasible based on their areas of interest. Programs specifically designed for prisoners with disabilities ought to exist. Prior to assigning an inmate to a vocational course, it is necessary to take into account their length of stay. Prior to starting any program, it is necessary to make sure that qualified staff are available. The curricula ought to be created with marketable skills in mind. It is necessary to regularly assess prisoners' performance in order to map their learning.

The modern prison system in our nation is a holdover from British Rule. The primary goal of the colonial rulers who established our penal system was to make incarceration "a terror to wrongdoers." Rehabilitative and restorative jurisprudence replaced deterrent jurisprudence in our criminal justice system a long time ago. But because some states lack sanctioning agencies like welfare/protection observers, psychologists, attorneys, counselors, and social workers, many states do not think in these terms. The inmates cannot be successfully rehabilitated by the prison administration on its own. Its efforts to set the prisoners free will only be successful if our social institutions, economics, education, and values are appropriately incorporated into a cohesive and harmonious whole that is founded on our understanding of the human institution.

The government should create National Committee on Prison Education & Training to look into the matter more thoroughly and not only make policy but what is important is their revision and updating which should take place annually and every five year overall major changes should take place. We should take a leaf out from the Japanese system where they have The Centre for Prisoners' Rights was established in March 1995 and its goal is to reform Japanese prison conditions in accordance with international human rights standards, we can also form such body who could act as a catalyst to prison management and policy making and set the tone right at the national level through some uniform directives for all states as prison is a state subject as per our constitution.

Some states are doing a wonderful job with regard to prison education and training and other states should also buckle up themselves for this noble cause. The issue of very less budget for prison education is a big issue only 0.6 percent of total prison budget was spent on educational and vocational training. So things like funding's and CSRs should also be focused by prison department. To conclude I would like to quote Mahatma Gandhi who rightly said "By education, I mean an all-round drawing of the best in child and man, in body, mind and spirit." So, what is required for good prison education is a good overall

environment inside the four corners of a prison then only the object of educating and training mind body and spirit could be attained. The vicious circle of inadequacies needs to be broken to reform and overhaul the prison system.

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