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Government of India/Bharat Sarkar
Ministry of Home Affairs/Grih Mantralaya

North Block, New Delhi

Dated the 8th November 2010.

To

The Principal Secretary (Prison) / Secretary (Home) (In-charge of Prisons) - All State Governments / UTs

DGs/ IGs incharge of prisons- All State Governments / UTs.

Subject: Best Prison Practice- regarding

Sir,

As you are aware, an all India conference of Correctional of Correctional Administrators was held in New Delhi on 8th-9th September 2010. One of the agenda of the conference for discussion was the Best Prison Practices being adopted all over India. During the conference, an attempt has been made to identify the best practices in different prisons of the country. It is very essential to share this knowledge in order to bring about improvements in the system. Various State Governments/ UT Administrations have, accordingly, disseminated their knowledge towards the best prison practices being followed in their respective States/ UTs.

It was found that best practices in prisons exist in a number of areas broadly relate to security, use of technology, staff development, prison management, women prisoners, correctional programmes, and community participation and reintegration of offenders. These are given under the following heads:

- (a) **Prison Security** covering technology use. **CCTV Surveillance** System in Delhi Prisons which has a control room set up in the Prison Headquarter. 258 C.C.T.Vs cameras installed in Tihar and Rohini Jail complex. The controlling officers of the Central Surveillance Unit are working in three shifts of eight hours duration. West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar also have CCTVs systems.
- (b) Hand-held metal detectors, X-Ray Baggage Scanners, Multi zonal door frame metal detectors, laminated photo identity card for Prisoners in Thane, Maharashtra, breathing analyzers, mobile jammers system, public address system and staff training on prison security were other good practices.

Three tier security, quick reaction teams and Model Test Identification Parade Room at Tihar, and Tamil Nadu which has an Intelligence-cum-Vigilance wing.

- (c) **High security wards** and prison architecture were found in Tamil Nadu to be a good practice. The Puzhal Prison complex with the high security block has been specially designed as being self-sufficient unit with a three gate system.
- (d) **Use of Technology in Prisons – Biometric identification system** to store photographs and biometric finger prints of all inmates was found in Tihar Jail, and is a good practice that has been picked up by Jharkhand as well.
- (e) **Video-Conferencing** system for production of undertrials in courts was originally started in Andhra Pradesh in 2001. It is now in use in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, West Bengal, Jharkhand, New Delhi and some more States and is a best practice as it prevents untoward incidents like escape and reduces expenditure on police escorts and vehicles. It also ensures the production of undertrials. Conducting of trials through video linkage is also being seriously thought and possibilities explored. The court has allowed it in a few cases.
- (f) **Prison information system or prison management system**, a software to record and keep all prisoner information and prison movement activities in Goa, Tihar, Delhi and Tamil Nadu.
- (g) **Visitor Management system** in Tihar, Delhi Prisons. This software has been developed to register the visits of friends and relatives in advance. This good practice has been picked up by Jharkhand as well.
- (h) **Information Dissemination and Websites. Newsletters** / magazines publications by New Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh. In other places like Amritsar and Chandigarh, this is not a regular feature. Websites of Prison Departments of 18 States were found. Tamil Nadu has a very detailed Website that covers information under R.T.I. Act. So does the Puducherry prison. Tihar prisons cover a complete list of appellate authorities under the RTI Act.

- (i) **Citizen's charter** has been put on the websites of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tihar and Andhra Pradesh.
- (j) **Staff Development and welfare** – Tamil Nadu has nominated the maximum number of officers for the **President's Correctional Service Medals** for Distinguished Services, Meritorious Services, and Gallantry. Apart from this, the State has also instituted State Level Awards for commendable performance. These include the Chief Minister's Prison Service Medal for gallantry and a medal for outstanding devotion to duty. Karnataka has introduced a comprehensive **medical insurance scheme** for the staff and their family. Prison **Staff Welfare Fund** exists in Tihar and Karnataka. Andhra Pradesh conducts an annual retreat, a meeting with the prison officers to review an introspect for better administration.
- (k) **Managerial Practices, Participative Management** in Tihar. Prisoners' Panchayat though found to be existing in almost all States has different levels of effectiveness. Mahapanchayat is organized once a year in Tihar.
- (l) **The Prisoners Contact with the outside world** – Tele-booking at Tihar, booking through e-mails was started at Central Jail, Amritsar but discontinued after sometime. ISO Certified Visiting system of Tihar prison. Model Interview halls at Tihar.
- (m) **Telephone facilities** at Bangalore Central Prison. Prisoners public call booths have been set up in the prison complex with prisoners being provided with BSNL calling calls purchased from their own money. To streamline visits an alphabet mulaquat system at Haryana has been started.
- (n) **Grievance Redressal System.** Complaint boxes exist in all prisons but their usage depends on the faith prisoners have with their grievances being properly redressed. Tamil Nadu has a Chief Minister Grievance day meeting wherein petitions are received and specific periods have been mentioned for senior officers to conduct grievance day for disposing of grievances at the earliest.
- (o) **Liberalised Parole** - The Government of Madhya Pradesh has started a system of liberalised parole wherein the duration of parole has been increased from 21 days to 60 days, to be split into four quarters equally. This was done to facilitate prisoners in attending to agricultural needs to earn for their dependants. *The surety, once furnished by the prisoner, was made*

acceptable to the Jail Department for all future paroles till withdrawn by the maker. All convicts, having spent 6 months in prison, were declared eligible for parole. Refusals or delays, beyond 90 days of parole by the District Magistrate have been made appealable before the DG Prisons. A provision of a second appeal to the State Government has also been made.

- (p) **Modernization of Kitchen.** Model Jail, Chandigarh and Tihar, New Delhi. Variety of food in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka West Bengal. Food outsourcing at Karnataka. Healthy Food at Prison canteens in Gujarat, Patna and Bangalore.
- (q) **Best practices exist in the areas of Making the best use of Prisons** – Some Unique work programmes including **Prison Shops outside** the prison (at Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Lucknow). Other Innovative work Programmes include petrol pump at Central Jail, Raipur and Dal Bhati restaurant in Central Jail, Raipur. In other Activities – Education. Religious, Meditational and Spiritual Programmes and Recreational Activities / Sports Activities, Community Involvement. Creative Arts / Cultural Therapy was found as a best practice in West Bengal. Prison industry – the highest average production per prisoner was found in Maharashtra. Highest earning per inmate was reported from Gujarat.
- (r) **Solar Energy in Prisons:** Prisoners of Central Jail, Bhopal have fabricated hot water solar plant with a capacity of 2500 liters per day. A Solar Geyser of 200 LPD capacity has also been fabricated. The hot water is being used for cooking. It saves Rs 36,000/- per month as fuel cost in Bhopal Jail. Approximate cost of 2500 liter plant is Rs. 2,00,000/- and that of 200 LPD Solar Geyser is Rs 20,000/-. The technology adopted by the Central Jail Bhopal can be replicated by various State Governments.

MAJOR CORRECTIONAL INITIATIVES IN INDIAN PRISONS

A number of correctional activities have also been started in different prisons in the country in association with NGOs and other State agencies. Some of the notable correctional programmes being run in Indian prisons are enumerated as under:-

Educational Programmes

More than three-fourth of the prison population in Indian Prisons is below high class while the remaining prison population has comparatively better educational qualifications. The less literate prisoners are not only given basic education but they

are also encouraged to upgrade their vocational qualifications. Formal education programmes are offered to the prisoners with the help of National Open School, Indira Gandhi National Open University, State Open Universities, Distance Education Boards and technical courses in collaboration with the Technical Training Institute of various states.

The Government is giving training to educated prisoners to enable them to teach less educated and illiterate prisoners. Special attention is given to illiterate inmate so that he may be able to read and write his name within a week time. Advance educational avenues are available to prisoner so that if they want to pursue higher studies they may do so through open universities/ technical institution. Special attention is given for the prisoner appearing for various competitive examinations. Examination fee and course fee are borne by the Prison administration in case of poor prisoners.

The IGNOU Study Centres are running inside some of the jails which is providing higher education to the inmates as well as to the prison staff in different academic as well as professional Courses.

A convocation for prisoners was held at the Palayamkottai jail in Tamilnadu wherein 17 prisoners got post graduate degrees.

In one of the jails, i.e. Central Prison, Tiruchy, Tamilnadu, **a programme for cent percent literacy under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** was started in January, 2009 for the inmates.

During the year 2007, a total of 29107 prisoners were imparted elementary education and 60029 prisoners benefited by the adult education programmes in prisons. It is encouraging to note that 2564 prisoners had undergone higher education and 2778 prisoners completed Computer courses during their period of incarceration in prisons.

Stress Relieving Programmes

The prisoners are regularly sensitized on health issues like HIV and Drugs. A number of programmes of spiritual/moral education are also run in most prisons with the active help of the community and NGOs. Classes of

- Yoga and Meditation courses for the Prisoners with the help of NGO's, Charitable Trust, Religious leaders and Institutions.
- Moral lectures / Religious discourses conducted by spiritual leaders of various organizations.
- Art of Living Courses
- Pranic Healing courses

- vipasana,
are being organized in Indian prisons to reduce stress in prisoners.

Cultural Programmes:

The prisoners also actively take part in cultural and sports programmes in the prisons.

- ✎ All important festivals irrespective of caste, creed and religion like Dussehra, X-mas, Id-ul-Fiter, Ratha Yatra, Raksha Bandhan etc. are being celebrated by the prison inmates in the jails.
- ✎ National days like Independence Day, Republic Day and Gandhi Jayanti are being celebrated by the inmates of all jails.
- ✎ Sports meets, Quizzes, Essay & Song competitions and other cultural programmes are being organized among the inmates.
- ✎ T.V. sets have been provided to the prisoners for their awareness on daily news events, entertainment, knowledge enhancement and momentary engagement.
- ✎ Drama, Sangeet Samaroha, Melody Programme, Dance, Palls song and Bhajan Samaroh etc. are also being organized among the inmates of different jails.

Skill Building Programmes

The incarceration of sentenced person in prison not only lead to his stigmatization but also causes his social disorientation owing to his having remained practically cut-off from social intercourse with the rest of the society. Loss of job, if employed, and loss of means of livelihood are also one of the prime ill consequences of the incarceration. Hence, the most important single factor which can facilitate his reintegration with the society and prevent his relapse into the crime after release is the economic rehabilitation.

Training of prisoners in various vocational skills in the Prison has received a lot of importance in almost all the States/UTs. These training programmes provide opportunities for the prisons inmates to engage themselves in fruitful pursuits during the term of their sentence in prisons. Training for prison inmates not only affords value for one's work but also makes the prisoners learn skills which would enable them to follow a vocation after their release from the prison. The training facilities available in Indian prisons depend on the local conditions. Availability of raw material, local market needs, demands and marketing of finished products mainly decide the vocational training facilities available in any prison premises.

- Vocational training programmes are being run in conventional trade like,
- carpentry

- blacksmithy
- tailoring
- plumbing
- bakery
- foot wear making
- leather goods
- latest avocation like Data Entry Operations
- typing
- desktop printing
- electrician,
- beauty parlour
- soft toy making
- wheel chair refurbishing
- yoga teaching
- telephone repair & maintenance etc.

All these vocational training programmes enhances employability potential of the prisoners after their release and help in their rehabilitation.

The training of prison inmates in vocational trades has led to the production of articles which have good market value, resulting in gainful productivity of the prison inmates. The gainful work done by the prison inmates not only provides a corrective approach to the psyche of the offender but also goes a long way in developing in them a responsive and respectful attitude towards the society. The prisoners not only develop self confidence and self esteem out of the valuable labour put in by them but these activities also lead them towards earning a honorable livelihood after release from the prison. Vocational training is, therefore imparted, in such trades as shall fetch employment to the prisoners easily after their release from the prisons. Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) have been opened at Central Prisons, Jaipur and Ajmer by Department of Technical Education. One year and two year Diploma courses in Fitter v& house wiring, Carpentry, Cutting & sewing, Fitter and Diesel mechanic are being run for inmates.

Some of the items being produced in the prisoners run industry/workshops are given below:-

- (i) Agricultural produce in prison farms,
- (ii) Furniture in carpentry workshops,
- (iii) Furniture and handicrafts making in woodwork workshops,
- (iv) Readymade garments producing in tailoring sections,
- (v) Furniture and handicrafts making in black smithy workshops,
- (vi) Clothes, rugs, towels etc in weaving sections,
- (vii) Soap, phenyl and detergents,

- (viii) Handloom products,
- (ix) Confectionary items in bakeries,
- (x) Shoes and leather goods in leather workshops.
- (xi) Stationery and paper products etc.

Agriculture, Horticulture and Medicine Plant cultivation

Cultivation is done in the jails at Keonjhar, Bolangiri and Bhanjanagar. The inmates are learning new type of skills and ability in trades like Agricultural farming, vegetables and Horticulture. These have been taken up in many jails across the country, some of them being Bhawanipatna, Choudwar, Bhubaneswar, Puri, Koraput, Bolangiri, Keonjhar and Biju Patnaik Open Air Ashram, Jamujhari etc.

Medicinal plant cultivation is taken up in a 40 acre land at Biju Patnaik Open Air Ashram, Jamujhari. Besides, Jatropha has been planted for production of Bio-diesel Plant. Tissues culture programme has been taken up extensively in many jails and banana has been made a profitable source. Ready-to-eat food packets are also prepared by women prisoners in Bhubaneswar Special Jail in collaboration with W.& C.D. Deptt. and ICDS Organization.

Female Prisoners And Welfare Of Their Children

Female prisoners are allowed to keep their children with them in the jail upto six years of age. The children lodged in prisons are provided with clothes, diet, bed, medical care and education by the Prison Department and the help of NGOs is also taken. The children are also taken to the picnic outside at regular intervals.

In many jails, there is a separate Crèche and a Nursery run in association with the NGO. There are adequate recreational and educational facilities for the children including a toy garden. Every possible step is taken for all-round development of children. The Prison department in association with NGOs ensures the complete education of the child no matter whether the mother is in jail or released. There are trained workers and nursery education is provided to them in the crèche. When the child attained the 6 years of age, the child is admitted in a boarding school with assistance from NGOs after the consent of the mother.

In some of the prisons, marriage ceremonies are arranged and solemnized by the jail staff in association with the NGOs. In some cases, the prisoner have shown desire to marry with the victim. Such marriages have been encouraged and solemnized in prisons.

NGO'S In Reformation And Rehabilitation

Community participation in the Jail correctional programmes is a trend setter for the Jails worldwide. In jails community participation is achieved through NGO's whereby many of the reformation and rehabilitation activities are conducted in jail in addition to own efforts of prison administration. NGO's have been providing various kind of services like providing community aids and sponsorship for the children of prisoners for their education, providing educational aids in prison and outside, facilitating in getting admitted in hostel for the children who are above six years of age.

The Prison Department in association with NGOs, ensures the complete education of the children of inmates, no matter whether the mother is in jail or released. The further education is given to the child only when the mother agrees for the same

Women Prisons/ special initiatives

Exclusive women prisons have been set up in certain states for security and earlier rehabilitation of women. In the State of Tamilnadu, these prisons are exclusively administered also by women.

Different marriage ceremonies were arranged and solemnized by the jail staff in association with the NGOs. In tribal - dominated societies like Orissa, females under the statutory age of 16, co-habit with young men of their choice, which technically falls under the mischief of section 376 IPC.

Open Jails

Open jails/ open camps or wall-less prisons are a result of scientific pre-meditation and these can be considered as useful "missing link" of correctional process. The primary motive is to fill the gap between incarceration and responsibilities of a free society. In Rajasthan, prisoners are allowed to stay with their family in these open camps. There are 29 open jails in India of which 13 are in Rajasthan.

The only Open Air Jail in Orissa is now renamed as "Biju Pattanaik Open Air Ashram". Various activities relating to agriculture, horticulture and cottage industries are going on this Open Air Ashram. Apart from this aromatic & medicinal plants are also cultivated here.

All the State Governments/ UT administrations are advised to adopt the best prison practices being followed by various State Governments which will not only

improve the management of prison system in a better way but also will go a long way in reformation of prison inmates.

The receipt of this letter may please be acknowledged.

Yours faithfully

Sd/-

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