

Transformation of Jail to Correctional Home

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Modern behavioral sciences have critical relevance with the human interaction throughout the ages. But all these interactions are neither socially desirable nor recognized by the law of society. When they cross their limit of the norm of the society, they are traced as anti- social behaviour.

In all the countries there are socially accepted rules and regulations and those rules are imposed to sustain the stability of the society violating their rules and regulations is called as crime. Crime is old phenomenon and a value incept.

Historical Perspective of Rehabilitation of Correctional Home:

The phenomenon of crime was an age old problem throughout the history of mankind. But the system of custodial punishment came into existence from the very ancient time. The classical literatures of India were the most prominent documentary evidence in the context of reform or rehabilitation.

In 'Manu Smriti' we found punishment was 'dharma'. By dharma was meant an act which was according to law, by 'dharma' the act against or violation of law.

In 'Mahabharata' (Shanti Parva), 'Matsya Purana' it was said that fear of punishment was very much effective to control the social disorder.

A prison / jail is a facility in which individuals are forcibly confined and denied a variety of freedoms under the authority of the state as a form of punishment. The most common use of prisons is as part of a criminal justice system in which individuals officially charged with or convicted of crimes are confined to jail / prison until they are either brought to trial to determine their guilt or complete the period of incarceration they were sentenced to often being found guilty at their trial.

In times of war / conflict, prisoners of war may also be detained in military prisons / prisons of war camps, and large groups of criminals might be imprisoned in internment camps.

According to 'Artha Shastra' prison should be established in capital city and separate apartment should be installed for male and female prisoners. The prisoner could free himself by giving physical labor, daily or every after 5 days.

During the medieval period the old houses and forts, were used for confinement. There was no sound system of prison or the rationality of punishment.

It was Emperor Akbar the great who liberalized the punitive system in the then prisons.

The Transformation:

During British period, Lord Macaulay, drew attention of East India Company to the horrible condition of Indian Prisons. Later on several committees were appointed in 1836, 1838, 1844, and in 1889 and 1892. These committees recommended separation of juveniles from adult prisoners and educational facilities.

In ancient and medieval age, the system of isolation of anti - social person / criminals was complete annihilation. But in modern age the philosophy of punishment has got a new dimension .Criminals are the product of social structure, economic condition and legal complexity. The poor opportunities of jobs are also responsible to arrive criminals among the students and unemployed. So a criminal originates from our society. It is the duty of the society to resocialize and rehabilitate those deviated persons to the main stream of society in order to make them responsible citizen of society.

The first comprehensive enquiry during the 20th century was carried out by Indian Jails Committee (1919-1920). Their suggestion was regarding education for convicts and after care programme for helping the convicts, physical care, library services, probation, and parole system and progressive system of awards of rehabilitation programmes.

After independence many state govt. like U.P , Bombay, Punjab, set up reforms committee, developmental activities, humanize prison treatment and meet the basic needs, food, clothing, medical facility , educational and vocational training , recreation facilities. State Jail Reformer Committee suggested offering training in modern agriculture, animal husbandry, poultry and dairy farming & other handicrafts.

The All India manual Committee in 1957 was appointed and the establishment of Central Bureau of Correctional Services was initiated in 1961. This Committee facilitated proper education, literacy, programme & recreational activities.

Particularly, in west Bengal the correctional services, has been accelerated with the passing of Correctional Services Bill, West Bengal 1992. But it was affected from 1995. Now all the jails of West Bengal are transformed into correctional Homes.

Prison Reform is a movement today .The enactment of progressive and modern prison law – The West Bengal Correctional Services Act 1992 and its enactment with

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effect from 14th April 2000 has unshared a paradigm shift from the age of old theory of retribution towards the well – thought out new philosophy of correctional approach for the moral reformation and correction of inmates through education in order to facilitate their reintegration with the main stream society on release.

This gradual transformation results in a wholesome healthy environment in our correctional homes. This is sought to be achieved by providing a healthy ambience and modern facilities to the inmates for their moral education, recreation and vocational trainings. Steps have also initiated for bringing about an attitudinal change in the mind set of the prison staff. Every day we are taking new steps in the field of prison reforms mainly regards to the welfare of prisoners. Such as the open jail at Lalgola , is functioning for readjustment of the prisoners in the main stream of society.

Such a stupendous task can't be achieved only by the very limited manpower and resources without help of many NGO partners. There are many NGOs working in the correctional homes in different fields of reformative and rehabilitative activities. They are serving in the field of counseling, health, education, vocational training, crèche activities, rehabilitation, yoga and meditation, drug de – addiction, legal – aid, moral upliftment etc. The following is the list of some NGOs who are helping the Prison administration in correctional activities:

1. AASRA
2. Academy of Tableegh
3. Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya
4. Care Today Fund
5. Family Vision
6. Muskan Foundation
7. Prison Ministry India
8. Prison Fellowship India
9. Ritinjali
10. Vedanta (Sterlite) Foundation etc.

Besides, in spite of an ever increasing interface with the community, the correctional homes still by and large remain closed organization. There is a vast necessity of active community participation in the correctional services which is for the interest of the inmates, the correctional services as well as the community itself.
