

# EMPOWERMENT OF PRISONERS THROUGH VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND WORK PROGRAMMES: A STUDY OF PRISONS IN KERALA

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## Abstract.

*Prison is an important and integral part of the Criminal Justice system. It is the agency mandated by the society and constituted by the Government to administer sentences and reform the offenders and enable their integration into society. The underlying principle is that successful reintegration of offenders into the community is the best security for the society. Prisons are actually serving a noble purpose by containing the bad and unruly elements in the society and then engaging them into various correctional programs so that they would return to the society as reformed citizens. This paper is the study of how the prisons in Kerala are conducting various programmes for the empowerment of prisoners so that they can lead a normal life after their prison term.*

*Key words: Prisons, training, rehabilitation, reintegration, prisoners*

## Introduction

Imprisonment is the most common method of punishment resorted to by almost all legal systems. Initially the purpose of imprisonment was twofold: deprivation of prisoner of social life and his segregation from the society as a security measure. Prison and Correctional Services is one of the three main constituents of Criminal Justice System. Prisons are no longer considered only as a place of punishment. Instead, they are considered as reformatories and greater attention is given to provide training to prisoners.

Training of prisoners in various vocational skills in the Prison has received a lot of importance in all states and Union Territories of India. The Kerala prisons department is carrying out vocational training programmes for benefit of prisoners. These training programmes provide opportunities for the prison inmates to engage themselves in fruitful pursuits during the term of their sentence in Jails. Training for prison inmates not only affords value for one's work but also makes the prisoners learn new skills which would enable them to follow a vocation after their release from the Jail. This paper is the study of how the prisons in Kerala are conducting various programmes for the empowerment of prisoners so that they can lead a normal life after their prison term.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the different vocational training programmes offered to the prison inmates in Kerala
2. To analyse the benefits of the Vocational training programmes of the Prisons Department

## Review of Literature.

Banamali Barik (2018) in his study vocational training says that vocational training plays an important role in the social and economic rehabilitation of prisoners after release. He also stresses that payment of wages must be reasonable, equitable and hence should be revised so that it can help in rehabilitation of prisoners after their release.

In Comprehensive Report on Prisons in Kerala (2018) by Kerala State Legal Services Authority the physical conditions and welfare measures of all the prisons in Kerala is recorded. It also mentions about the vocational training being imparted to the prisoners and wage payment for prisoners

Paramasivan (2016) in his study "A study on the performance of vocational training to prisoners in prison in India" expresses the opinion that vocational training is one indispensable training to enlarge the self-employment activities of the prisoners. He says that providing vocational training to the prison inmates is one of the innovative schemes which makes the prisoners a valuable resource and it also helps to generate income for them.

Vineetha S and Vijayaraghavan (2018) analyse that vocational training programmes offered in Indian prisons with the intention of rehabilitation of offenders are not only supposed to train prisoners in vocational knowledge and skills, but also strengthen their will to work, sense of self help and spirit of cooperation by having them work with others in a regulated environment.

## Data collection

Primary and Secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data was collected by visiting different Central Jails, Open Jails and District Jails. Information was collected from the staff members of the Prison Department. Secondary data was collected from the Official website of the Kerala Prisons and Correctional services, National crime records Bureau reports, Newspaper reports etc.

## Prisons in Kerala

Imprisonment is the most common method of punishment resorted to by almost all legal systems. Initially the purpose of imprisonment was twofold: deprivation of prisoner of social life and his segregation from the society as a social measure. Prison and its Administration is a State subject in India as covered by item 4 under List II Schedule VII in Constitution of India. Prison establishment in States or Union territories comprise several tiers of Prisons.

The most common Jail institutions which are in existence in the States or Union territories are known as Central Jails, District Jails and Sub Jails. The other types of Jail establishments are Women Jails, Borstal schools, Open Jails and Special Jails.

The history of Jails in the state begin in the year 1861 with the establishment of first District Jail at Kozhikode. There are 3 Central prisons, 3 open prisons, 03 women special jails, 13 District jails, 15 Special sub jails, 16 sub jails and 1 Borstal schools in the state functioning under the Prisons and Correctional Services department.

During the past two hundred years, the practice of punishment and public opinion has seen a wave of transformation mainly due to the rapidly changing social values of the people. Till the beginning of nineteenth century, prisons have been places where offenders have been kept captive and punished for the wrong doings, but in the past few decades they have been reformed into rehabilitation centres where more emphasis is laid on improving the conditions of the prisons so that they have healthy impact on the inmates in developing a positive attitude towards the society and their own life

The prison is so prominent an institution in present day society that it is difficult to remember that the prison as a place of punishment is little more than 200 years old. In India, the early prisons were only places of detention where an offender was detained under trial and judgement and the execution of the latter. The aim of imprisonment was to keep away the wrong doers, so that might not contaminate the members of social order. The prison system as it operates today in our Country is a legacy of the British rule. The prison reforms in India were initiated in 1836 on the recommendations of Lord Macaulay. The management and

administration of prisons fall exclusively in the domain of state governments and are governed by the Prisons Act, 1894 and prison manuals of the respective state governments. Thus, the states have the primary role, responsibility and authority to change the current prison laws, rules and regulations.

**Table 1. Prisons in Kerala**

In Kerala, there are Central prisons, open prisons, district prisons, women prisons and high security prison at Viyyur apart from Special Sub jails, sub jails and Borstal School.

SL.No	Type of Prisons	Number of prisons
01	Central jails	03
02	Open jails	03
03	District jail	13
04	Special sub jails	15
05	Women jails	03
06	Sub jails	16
07	High security jail	01
08	Borstal school	01

### Vocational training programmes

The reformation and rehabilitation of offenders is the ultimate objective of prison administration. To pursue this objective, many states/UTs have been taking number of initiatives in the field of rehabilitation and welfare of prison inmates. The most important single factor which can facilitate the reintegration of prisoners with the society and prevent their relapse into crime after release is economic rehabilitation.

With a view to ensure rehabilitation of prisoners after their release from jails, the prisons department has been imparting training of prisoners in various skills in the jails. These training programmes provide opportunities for the prison inmates to engage themselves in fruitful pursuits during the term of their sentence in prisons. All these vocational training programmes enhance employability potential of the prisoners after their release and help in rehabilitation.

The training of prison inmates in vocational trade has led to the production of articles which have good market value resulting in gainful productivity of the prison inmates.

Prisons are nowadays expected to function as centre of reformation and rehabilitation where prisoners undergoing sentences are to be provided a conducive environment for their physical and mental development so that they can reform themselves with a positive outlook towards the society and be integrated into with mainstream of society.

**Table 2. Vocational training and work programmes**

Sl no	Vocational training and work programmes
01	Weaving
02	Carpentry
03	Smithy
04	Tailoring
05	Printing
06	Book binding
07	Soap making
08	Brick making
09	Jewellery making
10	Horticulture
11	Embroidery
12	Mushroom cultivation
13	Masonry
14	Mat making
15	Electrical wiring and plumbing course
16	Bag making
17	Coconut tree climbing
18	Beautician training
19	Food processing/training in culinary skills
20	e-literacy programmes
21	Aluminium fabrication training
22	Steel fabrication training
23	Dairy farming
24	Poultry farming
25	LED Bulb making
26	Interior decoration
27	Vermi composting
28	Kennel breeding
29	Fish rearing
30	Screen printing training
31	Paper bag making
32	Sericulture
32	Solar panel repairing training
33	Cloth bag making
34	Rubber tapping training
35	Two-wheeler mechanic course
36	Short film making training
37	Panchakarma
38	Musical instruments training
39	Note book making
40	Sanitiser preparation
41	Mask preparation

42	Steel furniture making
43	Candle making training
44	Videography training
45	Beehive

The Department of Prisons, Kerala provides vocational training in various vocations to the inmates. The department provides training to the inmates in traditional vocational training programmes like weaving, carpentry, smithy, tailoring, printing and binding, soap making, masonry, brickmaking, horticulture, etc. Prisoners are also trained in playing drums. The department has also taken various measures to provide training to the prisoners in innovative training programmes like two-wheeler mechanic course, interior decoration, LED Bulb making, Paper and Cloth bag making, Mask and sanitiser preparation etc. The prison department has also allocated lakhs of rupees to the various prisons for the training programmes in electrical wiring and plumbing course, e-literacy programmes, Beautician course, Computer course, Training in culinary skills.

### **Benefits of Vocational training programmes**

There are benefits which accrue not only for the prisoners but also for the prison management and wider society. Publicizing the advantage and benefits that prison-based rehabilitation programmes brings in this way can be useful way of generating and maintaining political will to reform prisons as well as fostering public support and understanding.

Giving prisoners opportunities to learn new skills and build work experiences will help them to stay away from crime when they leave prison, thus contributing to the overall mission of the prison administration to contribute to public safety. Providing work for prisoners is important to make their stay in prison more constructive and to help them retain the motivation needed to follow a regular pattern of activity.

Vocational training and work enable the prisoners to improve the quality of life within the prison, save funds to pay debts which they may have accrued and to send money to support their family outside.

Prisoners have low level of education and basic skill and improving the skills can have positive impact on recidivism, social reintegration and employment outcomes. Prison based rehabilitation programmes help to make communities safer and reduce the levels of dependency of former prisoners.

The provision of constructive activities in prison assisting in rendering life in prison more similar to life outside. Leading a busy life in prison can reduce the risk of prisoners 'developing depression, other mental health problems or limitations in prisoners' ability to lead a self-supporting and independent life.

The provision of education, vocational training and work programmes can support order, safety and security in prison facilities and help them to develop into positive environments. Prisoners engaged in constructive activities are less likely to become disaffected and cause problems. This may be particularly true if there are incentives and privileges attached to their involvement in activities offered, such as financial remuneration and sentence reduction. Well run rehabilitation programmes actually enhance the safety and control inside the prisons.

Work can produce financial and other resources for both prisoners enrolled in such programmes as well as for the prison system. These might be direct resources, for example in prisons which cultivate their own food or through the work which prisoners may undertake to clean and maintain the prison. There might also be indirect resources like the sale proceeds received from sale of the products or services. The income generated thus can be used for improving the prison conditions and support the sustainability of the rehabilitation programmes.

## 7. Conclusion

Vocational training plays an important role in the social and economic rehabilitation of the prisoners after release. Providing education, training and work opportunities may be the most straightforward way of assisting prisoners to put crime behind them. However certain steps need to be taken to make it more effective. Offering courses carefully selected on the basis of local market needs should be the priority. It is also important for prisons to strengthen links with local stake holders within the community, who may be able to offer employment opportunities directly or assist offenders to find self-employment. Offering training in setting up a business may produce positive results. The Kerala prisons department serve the public by keeping in safe custody of the prisoners, treating them with humanity and helping them lead a useful life in society as law abiding citizens after their release from prisons. The Prisons department proactively support the successful rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners.

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