

Improving the Life Conditions of Jail Inmates of Arunachal Pradesh - A Social Work Perspective

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Abstract: *The present paper is a descriptive and analytical understanding of secondary data resources available on the subject and has been aimed at synthesising the study from correctional social work perspectives. Different perceptions about inmate's life in prison which leaves an individual to deterioration; reduced self - esteem, loss of self - confidence and disturbed familial life have been put together to arrive at suggestions that may prove effective to improve the overall life conditions of the jail inmates of Arunachal Pradesh with special focus on how jail inmates are treated. The overall interest however, in this paper is to find out how the life conditions of the jail inmates during their specified jail terms could be improved. In view of the dynamics of present - day punishment, change in prison administration is a need to move beyond the traditional way of functioning under the regime of punishment.*

Keywords: Jail Inmates, Life Conditions, Social Work Perspective, Arunachal Pradesh

1. Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh, located in the north - eastern India with its borders touching China, Bhutan and Burma (Myanmar), is known as the Land of Dawnlit Mountains and endowed with rich flora and fauna is a land of infinite tourist attraction. Arunachal Pradesh is the home to about twenty six distinct ethnic groups and has the lowest population in the country. Apart from its cultural and ethnic heritage, the state has a huge potential for tourism and related other sectors. Strategically very important because of its boundaries with other countries like China, Bhutan, and Myanmar, the state has also its own distinct indigenous knowledge system.

The imprisonment of convicted people and terms for the jail are meant to punish offenders for the crimes they have committed and deter others from committing crimes. Like it is found elsewhere in the country and the world, crime and jail terms for proven offenders of law are there in Arunachal Pradesh. This paper seeks to study the jail conditions in the state of Arunachal Pradesh with special focus on how jail inmates are treated. The overall interest however, in this paper is to find out how the life conditions of the jail inmates during their specified jail terms could be improved.

Objectives

The paper seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To have an comprehensive understanding of general nature of research recommendations on concerns involving the deplorable life conditions of the jail inmates; and
- 2) To share a sense of confidence that the analysis and description presented here in this paper regarding the possible improvement in jail conditions in Arunachal Pradesh to benefit the jail inmates.

2. Methodology

The paper, basically qualitative in nature is a descriptive data analysis of secondary data resources related to the state of Arunachal Pradesh and it incorporates the correctional social work perspectives.

Challenges that Inmates Face in Life

Arunachal Pradesh had its first jail which was inaugurated on 1st November, 2006. Historical changes and social upheavals in Arunachal Pradesh have drawn attention to the inmate's life in the prison. In the state, the ideal of rehabilitation as a critical element of criminal justice has been strongly favoured. The question in this case that is whether it works for correctional or rehabilitation purposes to benefit the inmates behind the walls. (Reynolds, 1997). In view of the dynamics of present - day punishment, change in prison administration is a need to move beyond the traditional way of functioning under the regime of punishment. It is necessary to enumerate risks posed by former prisoners and, accordingly, beyond incarceration there is urgency in this context to find out solutions.

Challenges in everyday life make one ever grow stronger. Problems always come with solutions. In successfully overcoming challenges people prove their capabilities. When life gets better because of learning the value of life through those challenges, they feel more at ease and that becomes the new order of living gradually. Jail inmates as human beings placed in special challenging situations are thus likely to gather confidence in due course to accept things and get ahead with hope.

Livelihood

Jail inmates with limited education and work experience have the general fear of insecurity of employment. The criminal justice procedures affect many former prisoners negatively on their release. Their former employers and their

colleagues and co - workers within their former work places look despondingly upon them. Also, ex - convicts find it difficult to secure a fresh job following imprisonment because new employers quite effectively dig into their past. When even they get new jobs, the question of character and antecedent sometimes renders their prospect to continue in the said job impossible.

Family Front

Regular contact and connection with their families during their sentences helps in lowering reoffending tendencies of the inmates. Keeping cut off from family is devastating. Reconnecting with the family for effective parenting experience requires the jails to come up with programmes on nurturing parenting skills inside the jail. Family acceptance of an inmate's past deeds is of maximum positive value. Assistance in getting into a new path of life in near future creates in the inmates fresh confidence to live life with hope. The children's mental health is also affected when their parents are jailed. Thus, both the cases of the inmates and their children and family need to be properly judged in planning jail programmes for inmates' psychological security and balance as it has much to do with their future when they have got their release.

Security consequences

Ex offenders on release from jail have many legal restrictions that at times go to create fresh disabling challenges for people who do not have financial support from any source. This also hampers the spirit to struggle for life and even negates the hope created on account of release. Re - planning legal restrictions in this case is highly desirable if crucial social and criminal consequences for them are seriously considered. Experts from a host of related disciplines and fields need to be pooled in for a positive consequence from any such well - meaning exercise.

Emotional Stress

The inmates without any hope of release face lots of difficulties and problems inside the jail. The conditions affect their physical and mental health. Emotion and social relationship come under stress and inmates find it stressful to think of being back in the family itself and in the society. There is also a lot of stress when there is no clearly visible hope of release from jail and for a distinct and happy future.

Personal Stress

Inmates without the hope for release became susceptible to personal stress. The thought of their future relationship with near and dear ones leaves them scared and they feel it proper to remain isolated from home and social life. That increases stress in their life and makes them feel utterly helpless. A gloomy attitude strikes them and they become bound to live in stress where for them sharing their state is increasingly made impossible.

Social Stress

Inmates of the jail find their changed social status in the eyes of the society. This makes inmates face lots of social stress inside the jail as they fear humiliation in facing discrimination that compels them to avoid public appearances and prevents them from any meaningful participation in social activities.

Planning Rehabilitation and Reintegration of the Inmates

The inmates on release from jail face the society when embarrassing questions on their past deeds are asked. The delinquent behaviour ego in ex - inmates causes more harm than positive change. In this context lots of future challenges arise. An understanding of this provides much insight and relief (Bentham, 2017).

Feeding Inmates with Hope

The inmates' voices behind the walls often go unheard. In this context it is important to be guided by the fact that a 2011 United Nations report noted the practice is tantamount to torture and should be limited to 15 days, (Conover, 2015). As human beings with equal human rights, they need to be sympathetically heard. The inmates of the jail have to be fed with hope to help them find motivation again to lead life. That would keep them engaged in creativity and activities to help them develop proper problem - solving skills.

A positive influence on the inmate psychology has a lot to offer inspiring and motivating inmates to stay hopeful in relation to their goals in life. This would take them away from felonious behaviours. Also higher suicide tendencies, depression, decreased cognitive abilities, and sometimes hallucinations would hopefully be prevented when a clear purpose of living is available to them and they are increasingly made conscious of it and are made ready to actively achieve the said purpose.

Reform Efforts to Re - Assimilate Inmates to the Changing Environment

There various coping strategies have to be applied on evaluation of their experience where each case is to be taken as a unique example.

Present trends of an acute absence of love in human relationships make the feeling of isolation on part of the jail inmates when they are kept separated from their family and friends. In such cases reform efforts should be ensured to re - assimilate them to the environment and the new society where ordinarily they are likely to fall victim to much unwanted and avoidable awkwardness and disabling anxiety and stress.

A robust coping mechanism to manage external and internal stress with various coping strategies or skills to reduce stress is necessary for the inmates inside the jail. Learning to develop various coping strategies and skills in order to overcome the stress level is important in this case. Surviving inside the jail without stressful news etc. is possible. Inmates usually tend to feel increasingly becoming worthless when they are not socially acknowledged. As a matter of real concern, such feeling needs to be effectively offset with proper coping management training arranged and imparted to inmates in jails.

Social Work Approach to Curing the Diseased Crime Mentality

Social Work concerned about improving the living conditions of the jail inmates stands to gain in more ways from such an understanding of the awareness - generation

programmes, workshops, sharing sessions and training activities that are vital intervention mechanisms.

To be aware of positive aspects to cope with the problems faced inside the jail is very important. The inmates require positive attitudes to reduce stress and analyse good things around them and appreciate them. To cope with stress, inmates in jails require meditation to release their anxiety and stress.

The humanity of the inmates of the jail is of supreme importance to be acknowledged. Love, care, support, protection, respect and proper guidance can make the inmates develop a positive frame of mind when there is least hope of release.

Jail inmates serving long term imprisonment face a silent death. Proper improvement in jail conditions can address their feeling of isolation and helplessness when they serve life sentence.

The Way Forward for Jail Administration in Arunachal Pradesh

Readjusting Traditional Social Practices to Psychological Needs of the Inmates

After the returns from the jail, the way of life of an inmate becomes handicap to the community. Social norms and expectations around questions of decency and gentlemanliness are very delicate matters to meet. The set standards of the traditional society and its age - old practices somewhere have to be readjusted to help in this context.

Abnormal ambience of the prison may cause growth of certain oddities in the prisoner's behaviour. The inmate may face difficulties his readjustment in the society. He has to make a conscious effort to improve himself otherwise it will be difficult for him to get readjusted in his social environment. In this case, a jail with its subculture of the most enlightened type can be a place conducive for the re-socialisation of the wrongdoer or shifting his approach.

Contextualising Education

Improving the personality of inmates is an important need which can be possible with education. Education makes an inmate capable of living cooperatively in the society. Change of attitudes, elimination of complexes and development of willingness to adjust in society are requirements that education for inmates during jail days in this context should ideally cater to.

The role of a good library in the prison is very important. The inmates can broaden their outlook and interests. It reduces monotony and morbidity prison life, stimulates the social instincts and contributes towards reformation of the inmates. Writing letters to ensure an increase in their level of emotional and intellectual involvement during the jail term is to be encouraged as part of jail education programme with due recognition to the individual privacy.

Reformulating Religious Instructions

In "The Sociological Study of the Prison Community", Haynes (1949) observes that "The adoption of religion

usually occurs among a few men who are relatively unprisonized. They take up religious teachings because they are prisonized only to a mild degree and the adoption of religion, in turn, prevents further prisonization. We have no information to offer as to the permanence after release of the religious influence, although it is important in the penal community because it reflects the attitudes and adjustment of men in references to prisonization." This religious or moral training as an important part of prison education and inmates become capable of repentance. This goes to bring the positive change in their personality behaviour in due course.

Designing Innovative Vocational Training

On release it is difficult for inmates to face a highly competitive and rapidly changing world. It is necessary here to enable him to earn a living by honest means. Thus, he must be trained and equipped adequately to be able to get gainful employment for efficiently find food, shelter and clothing for him. This makes programmes of vocational training in the jails a unique necessity. He should acquire such usable skills to which he must be devoted for getting more satisfaction from them. The entire thrust is on gradually taking him away from criminal activity and create in him the character of a decent social - being.

A wide variety of vocational skills to meet the needs of personal satisfaction and for future purposes of economic utility should be offered. In this context, vocational aptitude of each inmate scientifically studied should be on the basis of vocational skills training to help inmates become well - adjusted individuals. Good work habits this way could be developed in them as a matter of practical necessity (Paramasivan, 2020).

Vocational training is crucial to enlarge the self - employment activities of the unemployed or the underemployed and make the inmates viable manpower. Skills and vocational training help to promote employment opportunity for all. Providing vocational training to the prison inmates is one innovative way to make the prisoners useful as valuable resource. Also, it makes them get an income to provide for their dependents. It will make them self - employed entrepreneurs when their imprisonment term ends. Vocational training to prisoners thus should be strengthened while introducing various types of vocational training programmes.

3. Conclusion

Humanity of Jail Inmates is to be acknowledged in all respects in view of their unquestionable and inalienable human rights. Jail conditions in this context have to be improved in all the ways recommended by research studies and government reports that are nationally significant and that also respond to the international concerns and expectations. Jail conditions in Arunachal Pradesh are no doubt hopefully in the gradual and continuous improvement based on all aspects covering infrastructure, training of personnel, jail administration and management, provision of inmates' education during the term of imprisonment in the overall planning of upgrading facilities to make inmates benefit from the pro - inmate jail reform exercises.

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