



Round Table Consultation
On the theme of



***“Reintegration Policy and Rehabilitation Scheme for the
Women Prison Inmates”***

In collaboration with

**The Department of Social Security & Women and Child
Development, Punjab State**

13th June 2023

At ICA, Chandigarh

**Recommendations for ‘Reintegration Policy and Rehabilitation
Scheme for the Women Prison Inmates’ in Punjab State**

REINTEGRATION POLICY

Reintegration Policy for Released Women Prisoners

Bearing in mind that any person who is denied freedom has a right to human dignity, the detrimental effects of imprisonment should be minimized so that prisoners do not lose their self-respect and sense of personal responsibility;

Mindful further that the social rehabilitation and reintegration of persons deprived of their liberty shall be among the essential aims of the criminal justice system, ensuring, as far as possible; that prisoners are able to lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life upon their return to society.

Model Prison Manual 2016 (p. 255) *“Prison authorities, in cooperation with probation and/or social welfare services, local community groups and non-governmental organizations, shall design and implement comprehensive pre- and post-release reintegration programmes which take into account the gender-specific needs of women. After care services/ programmes should include all kinds of help which could result in proper readjustment of the released women prisoners in the society.”*

Women prisoners have gender specific needs, which need to be taken into account while planning for their reintegration. Promoting the reintegration of prisoners into society is important for societal growth and development. Greater effort should be made to make positive use of the period of imprisonment to develop the potential of prisoners and to empower the women inmates to lead a crime-free life in the future. This should include rehabilitative programmes focusing on the reintegration of prisoners and contributing to their individual and social development.

All prison rehabilitation programmes require the engagement and institutional support of relevant departments to ensure short-term success and long-term sustainability. Programmes for the treatment of prisoners should be individualized and aim at providing them with opportunities for diversified education, development of work habits and skills, change in attitude, behavior modification, and life skills for leading a law abiding and socially productive life after release. Government recognizes that the process of reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners is an integral part of the total process of social rehabilitation and reintegration, and therefore, the development of prisons shall find a place in the State development plans.

The following recommendations that have emerged from the roundtable related to the rehabilitation policy have been divided under various needs.

A. Support inside the Prison for Women Inmates by the Prison Administration:

1. Risk Need Assessment and treatment programs should be conducted inside the prison to study individual inmates and to design correctional interventions accordingly.
2. Women prisoners shall have access to a balanced and comprehensive programme of activities, which take account of gender appropriate needs.
3. There should be no gender discrimination and female officers should be appointed at the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent levels.
4. Gender mainstreaming should be a policy followed by the department .
5. The Board of Visitors having Non-Official Visitors with women members should be appointed to all prisons having women inmates.
6. Both the physical and mental health of prisoners and staff needs to be in focus. Psychologists/Counsellors and Social Workers should be attached to each prison to provide counselling services and to take care of the mental health of prison inmates.
7. Prison Administration needs to focus on basic literacy programmes for women inmates in association with NGOs, university students, etc., and can motivate the women inmates to opt for available educational programmes in association with IGNOU, and other related educational institutions.
8. The State shall endeavor to develop vocational training and work programmes for women prison inmates eligible to work. The aim of such training and work programmes shall be to equip inmates with better skills and inculcate work habits for their rehabilitation.
9. Payment of fair wages and other incentives shall be associated with work programmes to encourage inmate participation in such programmes. Economic empowerment of women prisoners should be in focus.
10. Women prisoners should have the right to dress according to their cultural background and be allowed to use cultural markers of their marital status.
11. There is a need for developing partnerships with community-based organizations working for prisoners' rehabilitation. The involvement of other stakeholders both Government and NGOs is essential to the reintegration process. A directory of NGOs engaged in the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners may be made available to the state prison department.

12. The incentives of leave, remission and premature release to women convicts shall also be utilized for the improvement of their behavior. Particular attention needs to be given to strengthening of family ties and their early return to society.
13. Probation, aftercare, aspects of rehabilitation of women prisoners shall form an integral part of the functions of the Department of Prisons and Correctional Services.
14. Decisions regarding early conditional release (parole) shall favourably take into account women prisoners' caretaking responsibilities, as well as their specific social reintegration needs.
15. Before a woman prisoner is released, sufficient advance notice shall be given to her relatives or friends to be present at the prison and receive her. If no relative appears on the day of the release, she shall be sent to her home under the charge of a female escort. The Deputy Superintendent shall record in her report book about arrangements made for the safe release and escort of woman prisoner to her home.

B. Support outside the Prison for Released Women Prisoners by the Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development and Other Departments:

1. The Department should ensure that children of women prisoners who live in correctional homes are able to visit their mothers or the women prisoners are allowed and able to visit their children in the correctional homes for short interviews.
2. The State should look into adding 'Children of Persons in Jail' as another category in the Child in Need of Care and Protection (Section 2, Sub-clause 14) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
3. There should be no disqualification for getting government jobs for the prisoners who have served their sentence and have been released.
4. Women prisoners should be considered as a special category for reservation in government jobs.
5. Life Convict Prisoners who have served their sentence and have been released should be treated at par with those below the poverty line so that they may be able to get the benefit of all the government related schemes.
6. A comprehensive Rehabilitation Grant Scheme should be launched by the State government.

7. Self-help groups of women prisoners should be formed and supported by the Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development.
8. Legal aid and counselling should be available to the women prisoners and pre release legal counselling needs to be provided.
9. Appointing Social workers and Probation Officers can be very effective for the follow of the released prisoners.
10. Released Prisoners Unit within the Prison Department and the Department of Women and Child development. A registered society having some of successfully reintegrated women prisoners can be formed, in order to assist and guide the other women prisoners and to help in continuous monitoring of the scheme for rehabilitation.
11. Housing and Short Stay Homes must be set up to accommodate release women prisoners for a specific time who face difficulties in finding accommodation and adjusting with life after release.
12. The State shall endeavor to secure and encourage voluntary participation of the community in prison programmes and in non-institutional treatment of prisoners on an extensive and systematic basis. Such participation is necessary in view of the objective of ultimate rehabilitation of the prisoners in the community. The Government shall open avenues for such participation and shall extend financial and other assistance to voluntary organizations and individuals willing to extend help to prisoners and ex-prisoners.
13. Efforts shall be made to organize and promote comprehensive, result-oriented research on the offences committed by women, the reasons and trigger women's confrontation with the criminal justice system, the impact of secondary criminalization and imprisonment on women, the characteristics of women prisoners, as well as programmes designed to reduce reoffending by women, as a basis for effective planning, programme development and policy formulation to respond to the social reintegration needs of women prisoners.
14. The Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development and the Prison Department can sponsor research projects related to women prisoners, which should be conducted on a regular basis to see the effectiveness of social reintegration programmes.
15. The media and the public shall be informed about the reasons that lead to women's entrapment in the criminal justice system and the most effective ways to respond to it, in order to enable women's social reintegration.

16. Publication and dissemination of research and good practice examples shall form comprehensive elements of policies that aim to improve the outcomes and the fairness to women and their children of criminal justice responses to women prisoners.

REHABILITATION SCHEME

Rehabilitation Scheme for Support inside the Prison for Women Inmates by the Prison Administration:

Risk Need Assessment

1. The prison administration should particularly focus on three core areas i.e. education, vocational and work programmes inside the prison to make the best use of time spent inside.
2. A profile should be made as soon as the woman prisoner enters the prison as part of the first phase of the reintegration process. It should contain all pertinent information regarding the woman prisoner and should be periodically updated. It should be used towards individualized sentence planning.

Women Staff

1. The staff for these institutions and annexes shall comprise women employees only. Women prisoners shall be protected against all exploitation.
2. Women prisoners feel more comfortable talking to the senior female staff than the male staff, hence at senior level –Superintendent level also women staff at the Women Prison.
3. The staff should maintain a positive attitude towards the women prisoners.
4. Gender sensitization and counselling sessions should be conducted for both inmates prison staff.

Physical and Mental Health of the Women Inmates

1. Individualized, gender sensitive, trauma informed and comprehensive mental health care and rehabilitation programmes shall be made available for women prisoners with mental health care-care needs in prisons or in non-custodial settings.
2. Prison administration needs to focus more on health services and continuity of treatment for women prisoners, as it is a part of community health.
3. A panel of female doctors, gynaecologists, paediatricians, psychiatrists, and counsellors should be constituted from the nearest government hospital to visit the prison on a weekly basis.
4. There should be some recreational activities for women inmates in prisons in order to normalise them and reduce the negative impact of imprisonment.

5. Counselling sessions for managing the stress and mental health needs of women prisoners can be arranged by the prison department with various experts. The prison authorities can identify cases that need urgent counselling and refer them to the counsellors, which could also be provided to the inmates through online/telephonic communication.
6. Empowerment programmes/ workshops should be conducted on life skills, self-worth and confidence building
7. Women prisoners must be provided basic menstrual hygiene products, and facilities. They need to be motivated from time to time to maintain personal hygiene,
8. Facility of telemedicine can be initiated in prisons for women inmates with the link-up with PGI or any other government hospital.
9. A meditation centre inside the prison will be helpful for the emotional, mental, and physical well-being of the prisoners.
10. Support and treatment facilities to release women prisoners having drug addiction problems should be made available in the community.
11. Awareness sessions on damaging effects of drugs and other stimulants should be conducted.
12. Awareness sessions should be conducted on the prevention of both communicable and non-communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, Tuberculosis, STDs, Measles, Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, Chronic Respiratory Diseases, etc.

Literacy and Education Programmes

1. Books and newspapers should be provided to women prisoners through prison libraries, which can be linked with the district libraries for lending books and magazines.
2. Library facility for women inmates in women's barracks.

Skill Learning through Vocational Training Programmes

1. Each prison must have some vocational training programmes in association with the Skill Development Initiative for women inmates like beautician course, tailoring training, soft-toy making, hairdresser, farming techniques, computer courses, English learning course, technical skills, Electronic repair, etc.

2. Vocational training programmes can be organized in collaboration and partnership with government skill development missions & institutes, local industries, and public & private enterprises to provide non-traditional skills training.
3. Capacity building training should be conducted for those interested in social entrepreneurship or opening up their own business/startups after their release.
4. Training programmes should be conducted on enhancing knowledge on individual and micro financing and managing the same.
5. Character Certificate should be given to all inmates to increase their credibility and eligibility to get employment after their release.
6. **Mentorship:** Women released from prison may require mentoring to become self-reliant and to start their normal life afresh after release for a certain period of time.

Employment and Wages:

1. Women Prisoners should be given work inside. The prison department needs to provide a few types of work/employment facilities to women inmates in their prisons.
2. The Prison Administration should revise prisoners' wages from time to time. At present Punjab State provides Rs/- 40 (unskilled), 50 (semi-skilled) and 60 (skilled) wages to different categories of prisoners. Earlier Haryana also had similar wages, however, they have revised the wages in 2022 as Rs/- 80 (unskilled), 90 (semi-skilled) and 100 (skilled). Model Jail Chandigarh has also revised wages from Rs/- 90, 100, 110 to Rs/- 130, 140, 150 in the year 2023. Himachal Pradesh is the only State which has similar wages for all three categories of prisoners i.e. 300 for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled as per All India Prison Statistics, 2021.
3. Financial assistance should be provided for women prisoners whose family members have not visited for more than 3 months.

Contact with the Outside World and Family

Rehabilitation and social reintegration are possible by positive engagement between staff and prisoners and by promoting the contact of inmates with their families and community. Women prisoners should be given the opportunity to maintain and develop links with their families and the outside world.

1. Prison department should encourage both personal meetings, phone calls /virtual meetings between the prison inmates and their family members.

2. Family *mulaqat* should not be done through screens separating the prisoner from their family. Instead both the inmate and their family should be allowed to be in the same room and meet whilst all sitting together.

Post Release Support

1. Release plans should be made for each inmate released from prison. This should include, at a minimum: housing, facilitating transport, financial support, measures to ensure personal safety, especially for women and children, and links with community-based support organizations.
2. Women inmates leaving prison should be recognized as a vulnerable group and be given priority access to any available services including housing support. Needy women inmates should be given a **ration kit** at the time of their release.
3. Emergency preparedness and response plans should be developed or enhanced to include post-release support for women inmates released from detention.
4. The **department can make a cell** to provide extended support to women prisoners willing to start their own work, complete education/diploma courses, and vocational training, and willing to get married after their release. Moreover, the department may also run **awareness camps** for the women inmates inside the prison to make them aware of various schemes available for them and their children.

Support outside the Prison for Released Women Prisoners by the Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development:

Documents:

1. **One Certificate for all types of Document Verification:** Reduce the number of documents required to produce by women released from a custodial home to one certificate for all types of verifications.

Children of Women Prisoners

1. The State should look into revising the guidelines issued in R.D. Upadhyaya v. State of A.P and Others by the Supreme Court in line with the recommendations given.
2. District Child Protection Unit and Probation Officer should plan for children of prisoners living outside

3. An *Anganwadi*-cum-daycare centre for children of women prisoners should be opened outside the prison premises with the collaboration of the Social Welfare Department.

Financial Assistance and Rehabilitation Grant Scheme:

1. **Emergency Financial Support**- like in case of a woman's or her child's medical emergency, failure of a new start-up, to support legal matters, building a house, getting married etc., may be provided up to a certain period of time.
2. The District Administration can take the help of *Sarpanch* to link schemes with the released prisoners and their families.
3. **A fixed Stipend for six months after release for women inmates.**
4. There should be no disqualification for getting government jobs for the prisoners who have served their sentence and have been released.
5. Life Convict Prisoners who have served their sentence and have been released should be treated at par with those below the poverty line so that they may be able to get the benefit of all the government related schemes.
6. The prison department should recommend the cases Grant-in-Aid scheme for released prisoners to the DWCD who are to be released within 6 months. Also, the prison department should refer cases to shelter homes and rehabilitation so that organizations and institutions are willing to accept and work with released women prisoners.
7. A rehabilitation grant should be provided to the women inmates at the time of release so that they are able to start their own work after release from prison.
8. Following is given the 'Rehabilitation Grant to Released Prisoners Rules' of Delhi Prisons, this can be taken as a reference model to make rehabilitation grant rules for the prisoners of Punjab State as well.
 - a. ***"Quantum of rehabilitation grant to female released prisoners. - Rehabilitation grant to female released prisoners shall be as under:***
 - b. *(1) Quantum of Rehabilitation grant, to released prisoners who have spent a period under incarceration between 6 months and above up to five years shall be rupees thirty five thousand only.*
 - c. *(2) Quantum of Rehabilitations grant, to the released prisoners who have spent a period under incarceration above five years and up to ten years, shall be rupees forty five thousand only.*

- d. *(3) Quantum of Rehabilitation grant, to the released prisoner who has spent a period of incarceration above ten years, shall be rupees fifty five thousand only.*”

Alternatives to Imprisonment

1. The system of open and semi-open prisons, which has been running very successfully in some of the States, needs to be started for women inmates as well.
2. A system of graded custody ranging from special security institutions to open institutions shall be provided to offer proper opportunities for the reformation of prisoners according to the progress made by them.
3. Suspension of sentence of pregnant women and women with child caring responsibilities helps in minimizing the harmful impact of incarceration.

Parole, Furlough and Early Release

1. Any women prisoner above the age of 70 years of age should be considered for premature release.
2. Parole should be provided for women prisoners for the purpose of conjugal visits.

Community Based Help:

1. Transition Centers, manned by persons with a background of incarceration, can be set up for released women prisoners to help and support them after release.
2. A Helpline Number can be set up which the released women prisoners can contact in case they need any help/ assistance after their release.

NGOs

1. The State shall endeavor to secure and encourage voluntary participation of the community in prison programmes and in non-institutional treatment of prisoners on an extensive and systematic basis. Such participation is necessary in view of the objective of ultimate rehabilitation of the prisoners in the community. The Government shall open avenues for such participation and shall extend financial and other assistance to voluntary organizations and individuals willing to extend help to prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Legal Aid

1. The District Legal Services Authority and the Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development can be a nodal agency between the prison department and district administration to help link released prisoners and their families to the various welfare schemes. Thus, the families would get some relief from their crisis situation.
2. Women Inmates should be made aware of free legal aid facilities, and they should be supported by the Convict Para Legal Volunteers to avail the facility of free legal aid for them.

Research, Planning and Evaluation

1. Efforts shall be made to review, evaluate and make public periodically the trends, problems and factors associated with offending behavior in women and the effectiveness in responding to the social reintegration needs of women prisoners, as well as their children, in order to reduce the stigmatization and negative impact of those women's confrontation with the criminal justice system on them.
2. Research internships should be actively encouraged by the Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development.
3. The Department of Social Security & Women and Child Development, Punjab Shall also encourage and sponsor research on the issues of women prisoners and particularly on 'post-release rehabilitation' and 'reintegration needs' of women prisoners' from time to time.

ACTION BASED PLAN

Support inside the Prison for Women Inmates by the Prison Administration and Other Departments:

1. The prison department should collaborate and partner with government skill development missions & institutes, local industries, and public & private enterprises to provide industrial & technical training and vocational trainings in contemporary fields/skills like:
 - a. **Operator:** Excavator, Pump, Stone Mining Machine And Advanced Machine Tools
 - b. **Technician:** Foundry, Radiology, Spinning, Rubber, Physiotherapy, Weaving And Textile Processing
 - c. **Mechanic:** Consumer Electronics, Machine Tools, Medical Electronics, Motor Vehicle, Air-Conditioner, Lift And Escalator
 - d. **Painter:** Domestic, Industrial And General
 - e. **Building Maintenance:** Carpenter, Mason, Plumber, Electrician And Fireman
 - f. **Machine Shop:** Welder, Draughtsman, Sheet Metal Worker, Machinist, Tuner And Tool And Die Maker
 - g. **Computers:** Computer Operator, Desktop Publishing (Dtp), Web Designing, Multimedia Animation And Medical Transcription
 - h. Driving A 4 Wheeler/ 2 Wheeler/ Rickshaw
 - i. Hospitality And Tourism: Food service, Catering, Hotel Management, Bakery and Confectionary, Travel and Tourism management
 - j. Office Assistant/ Administration
 - k. Crèche and pre-primary school management
 - l. Etc.
2. A monthly purse with a minimum of Rs 500 or Rs 1000 should be provided to women prisoners whose family members/ friends have not visited for more than 3-4 months. The money for the same can be taken from the prison welfare fund or under the gender budget of the State.
3. A translator should be arranged for Foreign National prisoners if needed and meeting with family members should be arranged sooner than later.
4. A desk should be set up in each prison that can be manned by a committee consisting of the prison staff, the Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development and women prisoners. This desk can do the following:

- a. Provide different types of services
 - b. Address all kinds of grievances
 - c. Arrange programmes/ workshops/ sessions on different topics as needed by the women prisoners
 - d. Work towards improving conditions inside the prison for women prisoners and prison staff alike
5. Convict women who are working as paralegal volunteers under the DLSA should be provided with honorarium and also certificates of appreciation for their service.
6. The Internal Complaints Committee should be made more effective.
7. Local NGOs should be allowed to visit the prison and urged to help women prisoners towards rehabilitation and reintegration.