



Gender

Gender Community



Solution Exchange for the Gender Community Consolidated Reply

Query: Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners in Trichy - Advice; Referrals

Compiled by [Malika Basu](#), Resource Person and [Dhivya David](#), Research Associate with additional inputs from [Dr. Murali Karnam](#), Prison Expert and Human Rights Activist

Issue Date: 18 June 2009

From [Beatrice Vanaja](#), **New Life, Trichirappalli**

Posted 23 April 2009

New Life is a registered non-profit organization in Tamil Nadu. Since 1993, it has been striving towards empowering socially and economically poor (rural and urban) women and working for child development.

For more than a decade now **New Life has been particularly interested in and focusing on the plight of 'prisoners' in Trichy Prison**. In 1997, it started working with them - both women and men prisoners, and their children. The focus so far has been to train the prisoners in some income generating vocations with the belief that once they are discharged, it may help them in dealing with life better and with confidence. The training on vocations that New Life organizes for e.g. ploy bag nursery, tailoring, vermicompost production, farming, hollow block manufacturing, etc. such vocations require minimum capital to start-up. During such training sessions, the effort is also made to try and counsel the prisoners to face the world outside with courage. In addition, crèche facility is provided for the children (below six years) who are kept inside the prison with their sentenced mothers. We intend to start imparting training in automobile mechanism; the other trainings planned this year are: Kundan work, screen printing, soap making, cleaning powder making, sambrani (dhoop) and candle making.

New Life's **engagement with the prisoners is a challenging task**. It has been our experience that once discharged the former inmates are often confronted with an attitude of indifference in the communities/families they return to. This indifference has also resulted in an increased 'returning rate' to the prison. The female prisoners in particular, many of them once they come out of the prison find themselves excluded not only from the community but also from their own families. We strongly feel that building their courage and self confidence while they are in prison and also showing them various possible opportunities (which can enhance their livelihood options) may reduce this rate of return to the prison.

Many of the women whom we have met in the prison also appear to have been arrested for no fault of theirs. They have been used as baits by their family members; forced to engage in illegal activities by their male counterparts.

This being the background to what we are currently engaged in, **we would request the Gender Community members to assist us in two ways:-**

1. Suggest possible ways or recommend measures which can further (adequately) rehabilitate the discharged women inmates of the prison?
2. Refer us to organizations working on similar lines and with experience, from which we can draw inputs in facilitating our work with the women prisoners.

New Life is also working towards drawing up an advocacy plan to highlight the plight of the women prisoners at various platforms including

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [R Priya](#), Researcher, Madurai
2. [Fr. Scaria Nedumattathil](#), Don Bosco Prison Ministry, Berhampore
3. [Shakira Scott](#), Savera, New Delhi
4. [Nikita Kaul](#), Indian School of Microfinance for Women, Ahmedabad
5. [Dr. Murali Karnam](#), Researcher on Penal Reforms in India/Human Rights Activist, Andhra Pradesh
6. [Asim Sarode](#), Ashoka Fellow/Sahyog Trust, Pune
7. [Alice Lakra](#), Directorate of Horticulture, Raipur
8. [Dr. M R Ahmed](#), Additional Inspector General of Prisons, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
9. [Madhurima](#), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), New Delhi
10. [Sunil Varghese](#), Prison Gospel Mission, Kerala
11. [Beeva Rice](#), Confederation of Community Based Organization (CCBO) of India, New Delhi
12. [Jayadev Sarangi](#), Prison Expert/Regional office for South Asia, United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), New Delhi
13. [Priya Jagdale](#), Baroda Citizens Council, Vadodara
14. Beatrice Vanaja, New Life, Trichirappalli ([Response1](#); [Response 2](#))
15. [Vivek Chaturvedi](#), Durga Gram Chetna evam Vikas Sanstha (DGCVS), Jabalpur
16. [Surekha Talari](#), Sudhaar, Social Work in Prison, Bhopal
17. [Sonia Pillai](#), Family Vision, New Delhi
18. [P.K. Maniyan](#), Organisation for Rural Development (ORD), Vellore
19. [C S Rama Lakshmi](#), Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad
20. [Arun Jindal](#), Society for Sustainable Development (SSD), Karauli
21. [Vinay Somani](#), R O Somani Charitable Trust, Mumbai
22. [Vibha Rani](#), Avitoko, Mumbai
23. [Trishul Makeswar](#), Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD), Amravati
24. [Sampath Thattai Ramesh](#), Crime Statistics and Communications, Karnataka

Further contributions are welcome!

[Summary of Responses](#)
[Comparative Experiences](#)

[Related Resources](#)

[Responses in Full](#)

Summary of Responses

Prison administration in India is a state subject; the responsibility of prison reforms and management is in the hands of the State Governments.

Dealing with prisoners is a challenging task. The plight of prisoners needs understanding within the human rights context. Women prisoners, especially Discharged Women Prisoners (DWP), are amongst the most vulnerable to **domestic, social, institutional exclusion and isolation**. Their rehabilitation must begin when they are still in the prison; they must also be equipped with skills required to earn their living, when discharged.

The background of prisoners is diverse; though most are illiterate and socio-economically backward. Thus, the need is for a **case sensitive** rehabilitation with a **two-pronged approach**. First, it involves **preparing** the inmates through individual or group counseling, which can help them to deal with the transitional period of exclusion and rejection by family and friends. In addition, impart **vocational training and life skills** to survive in the society.

A number of organizations work for the rehabilitation of prisoners, both inside and outside the prisons. Some of them cited here work in Delhi, Haryana, [Gujarat](#), [Madhya Pradesh](#), [Maharashtra](#), Karnataka, [Kerala](#), [Tamil Nadu](#) and West Bengal. Their aim is to enable prisoners become better citizens; equip them to lead a better life. The activities such organizations conduct for the prisoners includes: Art of Living sessions, sports and creative workshops, skill and vocational training, legal aid, support for education and shelter to inmates' children. In addition, these organizations conduct **counseling sessions** that help prisoners to deal with the incarcerated period; and prepare them for the future.

Prison departments run similar programmes. The departments, like in [Chhattisgarh](#), have also helped in starting a handicraft emporium, which promotes items made by the prisoners. In [Karnataka](#), the department's intervention helped prisoners who will be discharged soon, to get loans from development/finance corporations so that they can start some income activities.

Vocational and skill training in prisons create learning opportunities for prisoners. When they go out of prison, such trainings can help them to rehabilitate themselves economically. Vocational trainings are imparted on a wide range of activities such as pottery, tailoring, bakery, thread making, ploy bag nursery, bag making, screen painting, hollow block manufacturing, candle making, etc. However, experiences show that such trainings are not adequately helping discharged prisoners. They face difficulties in getting employment opportunities; procuring raw materials; marketing their products and maintaining the quality of their products. There is thus a need to revamp training programmes inside the prisons. In addition, mostly the women prisoners are from an agricultural background and poor families, with few marketable skills; they find it difficult to make a living in a competitive market.

One of the **biggest challenges** for (women) prisoners is **reintegration with the society**. While inmates are serving their terms in prison, many of their friends and family may have changed their attitude, opinion and loyalty towards them. Most inmates are not mentally prepared to face this change in attitude. **Stigma and discrimination erodes self-confidence**.

Several recommendations on rehabilitation of the prisoners exist; so far, there is very little action by the state governments. For instance, there is no follow-up done on the

recommendations made by the [All India Committee on Jail Reforms](#) (1980-83) and the [Report of National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners](#) (1987). In 2003, the [Model Prison Manual for the Superintendence and Management of Prisons in India](#) took note of the failures to implement the recommendations of Committee on Jail reforms. It streamlined prison administration and provided guidelines for rehabilitation of prisoners; its status is unknown. There is also no effort to revive the [Discharged Prisoners Aid Societies](#), which funded by the government existed until about 1970s.

The [National Criminal Research Bureau \(NCRB\)](#) records show an appalling figure of rehabilitated prisoners each year. No one questions this state of affairs. The rehabilitation of prisoners requires commitment and long-term interventions. On the one hand, it requires more attention from governmental agencies, community, NGOs and donor agencies; on the other hand, it requires close coordination among all these agencies. This discussion will hopefully lead to opening up further the discussions on the plight of the prisoners and lead to joint initiatives between concerned agencies.

Suggestions for Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners

Inside Prisons

- Mobilize philanthropist groups and small-scale employers to engage in rehabilitation programmes
- Design training programmes based on the educational background and potential (learning abilities) of the women
- Along with vocational trainings, provide additional trainings in procuring raw materials, marketing and management
- Raise salaries of women engaged in vocational trainings; in Vellore Prison apparently, women make less than 30% of their actual salary
- **Promote a sustainable model for rehabilitation of prisoners.** For instance, the Prison Department/NGO may identify an industry in the region and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Prison department may provide space in the Prison premises free of cost. The industry may provide machinery, raw materials and training to women prisoners. They shall also be paid wages at the prevailing market rate. This will create a scope for their absorption after release in the same industry.
- Tie up products made by prisoners with business firms; it will ensure continuity and better return
- Ensure frequent interaction with prisoners' children, family and relatives
- Engage prisoners in group discussions, interactions and group counseling; ensure proper counseling by professionals much before the release of the prisoners
- Establish Crèches and Nurseries in the prison premises for children of women prisoners; arrange for educational facilities for prisoners and their children
- Legal assistance to women under trials; legal aid for very poor prisoners
- Special consideration to women for grant of parole, furlough, leaves etc; considering the importance of women for family, implement a liberal policy of premature release from jail
- Share (and generate awareness) with prisoners any welfare programmes from which they can benefit

Outside Prisons/Released Prisoners

- Educate local community on the need for their involvement in rehabilitation process along with engaging government and other agencies
- Make Discharged Prisoners Aid Societies work at district levels

- Organize released prisoners (like in [Andhra Pradesh](#)) into a collective and fight for their rights
- Explore possibilities of placements (e.g. appointment as Anganwadi Assistants and Workers by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Karnataka); arrange a small quota of jobs in public sector undertaking; lobby with potential employers to address the problem of low credibility of DWPs
- Provide a certificate at the end of any training; discharged women/prisoners can show the certificate as 'qualification' when in the job market
- Impart vocational training skills in micro projects for income generation, which require minimum capital investment and has a market; help them start such projects from their homes. Since they can work from home, it helps them in forming social ties in the community.
- Make concerned departments like DWCD, development and finance corporations, banks, local industries, training institutions come up with special schemes or projects (e.g. [Modular Employable Skills](#) (MES) of Ministry of Labor and Employment)
- Provide financial assistance or help women access finance from various microfinance institutions, after they start earning an income; organize them into SHGs linking them to the mainstream market – NGOs can act as facilitators.
- Start Women's Creation Mart; the released can come and put their products for sale.
- Build a shelter home where the released prisoners can stay until they find an alternative and able to settle with a decent income. The shelter home can also provide vocational training/ skills and act as counseling centers.
- Provide legal assistance and support to sort out family, occupational and property related matters
- Monitoring is important; this task is difficult as released female prisoners stay scattered. Evolve a networking partnership, which will assure feasibility, continuity and moral support.
- Make available to discharged prisoners publications, which include case studies, past prisoner's testimonials on positive experiences, spiritual articles from all faiths and thought provoking insights on life after prison.
- (Men and) women who successfully struggle to find a decent place after release should be involved and engaged by NGOs to build confidence among prisoners' about their future life
- **Advocate for a 'rehabilitation scheme' and 'comprehensive state policy for prisoners'**

Comparative Experiences

Andhra Pradesh

Association of released prisoners demand penal reforms (from [Dr. Murali Karnam](#), *Researcher on Penal Reforms in India/Human Rights Activist, Andhra Pradesh*)

In Andhra Pradesh over 800 prisoners, who served life imprisonment, have agreed to come together and form an association following their release. The aim is to fight for their rehabilitation. In addition, the aim is to fight for penal reforms, better prison conditions, easing of prison regime and for a 'right to life' behind bars.

Chhattisgarh

Initiatives to market products made by prisoners, Raipur (from [Alice Lakra](#), *Directorate of Horticulture, Raipur*)

The Police department set up a permanent handicraft emporium near the prison, which houses handicraft items made by prison inmates. There are arrangements to take these handicrafts to trade fairs like the State sponsored Rajyotsav.

Gujarat

Counseling the families to accept released prisoners, Vadodara (from [Priya Jagdale](#), Baroda Citizens Council, Vadodara)

The Baroda Citizens Council (BCC) conducts regular counseling with family members of released prisoners. It has motivated a brother to take back his sister, released from prison. In another instance, a family had disowned a woman prisoner accused of murdering her daughter. Following counseling family members made efforts to understand her behaviour; the prisoner was suffering from mental illness.

Karnataka

From [Sampath Thattai Ramesh](#), Crime Statistics and Communications, Karnataka

Released women prisoners employed by the Government, Belgaum

The Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Government of Karnataka took initiatives to employ women prisoners. The DWCD appointed three female prisoners released from Central Prison, Belgaum as aganwadi assistants and workers. This has provided a source of livelihood for these women.

Write Petition to amend Prison rules for better facilities

A Writ Petition (Civil) 559/94 R D Upadhaya vs. Andhra Pradesh Government and others, led The Supreme Court of India to give a landmark judgment. The judgment led to an amendment of Rule 86 of Karnataka Prisons Rules, 1974. The new guidelines include instructions for providing diet/clothing to children of 0-6 years of age, special diet and extra clothing for pregnant and lactating women prisoners. Read [More](#)

Loan grants for released prisoners (from [Dr. Murali Karnam](#), Researcher on Penal Reforms in India/Human Rights Activist, Andhra Pradesh)

As part of its efforts to rehabilitate released prisoners, the Prison department in Karnataka has helped prisoners to get loans from National Scheduled Castes/Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporations. It will enable them to start some income generating activities.

Kerala

Promoting spirituality and livelihoods as part of rehabilitation (from [Sunil Varghese](#), Prison Gospel Mission, Kerala)

Many members of the Prison Gospel Mission were once criminals. They have now stopped their criminal lifestyle; leading a spiritual life. This is beneficial not only to their families but also to society. The Prison Gospel Mission has also financed some ex-prisoners to buy cows and goats, to help them find a suitable livelihood.

Madhya Pradesh

Training programmes for women in prisons, Jabalpur (from [Vivek Chaturvedi](#), Durga Gram Chetna evam Vikas Sanstha (DGCVS), Jabalpur)

In March 2009, DGCVS arranged an employment oriented training program for women prisoners with the objective of rehabilitating them. This program trained 40 women prisoners on "crafting of handmade paper bags". DGCVS plans to provide raw materials to the women and after the

sale of bags it will disburse fair wages between them. When released, these women can do the same work in their homes.

Maharashtra

Training programmes in Prisons in collaboration with ITIs, Amravati (from [Trishul Makeshwar](#), *Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD)*, Amravati)

VARHAD established the Savitibai Phule Rehabilitation Centre in Amravati Prison. The centre organizes workshops and training programmes for convicted as well as under trial women prisoners. Some courses like tailoring done in collaboration with Industrial Training Institute (ITI); trainees receive ITI certificates on completion of the course. When they leave the prison, they also receive a Tool Kit to help them start their tailoring business. Read [More](#)

Creative interventions to rehabilitate prisoners, Mumbai (from [Vibha Rani](#), *Avitoko, Mumbai*)

Avitoko provides inmates creative outlets through their art workshops and kavi sammelans (poetry readings). They exhibit or convert the artwork of prisoners into greeting cards or calendars. Avitoko awards prisoners for their artwork and encourages them to take up printing classes. Similarly, they send poems written by prisoners to magazines for publications. Once published, the poet (inmate) receives a copy and also the prison authority. Read [More](#)

Tamil Nadu

Counseling services for prisoners, Vellore (from [P.K. Maniyan](#), *Organisation for Rural Development (ORD)*, Vellore)

The Family Counseling Centre of ORD provides counseling services to women prisoners' in Vellore-2, Special Female Prison. Since 2002, ORD has counseled and rehabilitated 3653 prisoners. To monitor its programme, ORD also has a sub-committee comprising people from various fields including the District Collector and the District Social Welfare Office. The sub-committee meets quarterly and gives suggestions to improve prison programmes.

Related Resources

Recommended Documentation

All India Committee on Jail Reforms 1980-83 (from [Dr. Murali Karnam](#), *Researcher on Penal Reforms in India/Human Rights Activist, Andhra Pradesh and Madhurima*, *Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)*, New Delhi)

Report; by Justice A N Mulla; Government of India; New Delhi; 1980-83

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/gender/resource/res18050901.pdf> (PDF; Size 121 KB)

Vital document on prison reforms, constitutes a landmark in the movement for prison reforms; provides specific recommendations on the rehabilitation of prisoners

From [Dr. Murali Karnam](#), *Researcher on Penal Reforms in India/Human Rights Activist, Andhra Pradesh*

Report of National Expert Committee (under the Chairmanship of Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer) on Women Prisoners (1987; 2 Vols.)

Report; by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer. Government of India; New Delhi; 1987

Available at

<http://164.100.24.208/ls/committeeR/Empowerment/3rd/ANNEXURE.htm#annexure1>

Provides guidelines to include female staff in women's jails; operationalise Released Prisoners' Aid Societies; prisoners' rehabilitation; recommended for implementation

Rehabilitation of Prisoners

Report; House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee; London, Great Britain; 21 December 2004

Available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmhaff/193/193.pdf> (PDF Size 748 KB)

Suggests ways of ensuring that prisoners, following their release, get into work and have a home to go to; provides specific recommendations for rehabilitating prisoners

Modular Employable Skills (MES) scheme (from [Fr. Scaria Nedumattathil](#), Don Bosco Prison Ministry, Berhampore)

Report; Directorate General of Employment and Training; Ministry of Labour and Employment; New Delhi; 2005-2006

Available at <http://dget.gov.in/mes/index.htm>

Provides vocational training to school dropouts, existing workers, etc. to improve employability; suggested as a scheme to provide livelihood options to released prisoners

Community Participation in Prisons (from [Madhurima](#), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), New Delhi and [Surekha Talari](#), Sudhaar, Social Work in Prison, Bhopal)

Report; Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI); New Delhi; 2000

Available at:

http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/prisons/community_participation_in_prisons.pdf (PDF; Size: 2.5 MB)

Highlights the practice of NGOs working in prisons in 14 states in India; identifies examples of best practice that can be replicated

Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQUIP) (from [Vivek Chaturvedi](#), Durga Gram Chetna evam Vikas Sanstha (DGCVS), Jabalpur)

Report; Government of India; New Delhi; 1986

Available at http://www.npiu.nic.in/project_tech4.htm

Aims to improve quality of technical education and enhance existing capacities of the institutions; suggested as a training programme for prisoners

From [Malika Basu](#), Resource Person

Prison Conditions in India

Article; Kamayani Bali- Mahabal for Human Rights Law Network; New Delhi; 23 February 2000

Available at: <http://www.geocities.com/indianfascism/fascism/prison.htm>

Comments on prison system in India; focuses on committees, court verdicts, etc. which emphasize rehabilitation; treats prisons as correctional institutions

Correctional Administration in India

Discussion Report; 23rd Asian and Pacific Conference of Correctional Administrators; Hong Kong; December 2003

Available at: [http://www.apcca.org/Pubs/23/India/Discussion%20Paper%20\(India\).pdf](http://www.apcca.org/Pubs/23/India/Discussion%20Paper%20(India).pdf) (PDF; Size: 54 KB)

Gives insights into prison population including women in detention and state of rehabilitation in Indian Prisons

Women with Children in the Jails of Punjab and Chandigarh

Report; by Dr. Jyotsna Chatterji and Dr. Jyoti Seth; Report for National Commission of Women; New Delhi; 2008; unpublished
Available with: Dr. Jyotsna Chatterji, Joint Women's Programme, 301 Sri Ram Residence, Ahinsa Khand, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad – Uttar Pradesh; Tel: 91-95120-4567172/ 91-9810017523;
jwp@airtelmail.in

Reviews and Comments on the plight of women prisoners and the lives of their children (0-7 years) in the prisons; makes recommendations to improve their conditions

From [Dhivya David](#), Research Associate

Model Prison Manual for the Superintendence and Management of Prisons in India(2003)

Report; Bureau of Police Research and Development; Ministry of Home Affairs; Government of India; New Delhi; 2003

Available at <http://bprd.nic.in/index2.asp?slid=532&sublinkid=242>

Vital document for streamlining prison administration and prison reforms; provides guidelines for women prisoners' after care/ rehabilitation

Committee on Empowerment of Women (2001-2002) (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) Women in Detention

Report; by Smt. Margaret Alva; Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Women and Child Development); Government of India; New Delhi; 2001 -2002

Available at <http://164.100.24.208/ls/committeeR/Empowerment/3rd/3rd.htm>

Identifies the gaps and drawbacks of the existing facilities and services; suggests a more humane policy towards women offenders.

Committee on Empowerment of Women (2002-2003), (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) Women In Detention; [Action Taken on Third Report of Committee on Empowerment of Women (Thirteenth Lok Sabha)]

Report; by Smt. Margaret Alva; Ministry Of Home Affairs And Ministry Of Human Resource Development (Department Of Women And Child Development) ; Government of India; New Delhi; 2002-2003

Available at <http://164.100.24.208/ls/committeeR/Empowerment/11.pdf> (PDF Size 1.7 MB)

Reviews the implementation of the recommendations made by the Justice Krishna Iyer Report and the Report of the Committee on Empowerment of Women, 2001- 2002

Handbook for prison managers and policy makers on Women and Imprisonment

Report; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Vienna, Austria; 2008

Available at <http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/women-and-imprisonment.pdf> (PDF Size; 2.7 MB)

Focuses on gender-sensitive prison management; suggests measures to reduce the female prison population; health care, safety and their reintegration post release

Recommended Contacts and Experts

Dr. Kiran Bedi, India Vision Foundation and Navjyoti Foundation, New Delhi (from [Alice Lakra](#), Directorate of Horticulture, Raipur)

India Vision Foundation, 56 Uday Park (Basement), New Delhi-1100049; Tel: +91 11 26525741, 26525743 ; Fax: + 91-11-26525744; ivfindia@gmail.com;

<http://www.indiavisionfoundation.org/tiharproject.asp>

As the Inspector General of Tihar Jail, she initiated prison reforms; introduced yoga, meditation, redressal of complaints made by prisoners, and the Model Prison Manual

S T Ramesh IPS, ADG Police: Crime Statistics and Communications, (Presently posted as Additional Director General of Police, Recruitment and Training), Bangalore, Karnataka (from [Dr. Murali Karnam](#), *Researcher on Penal Reforms in India/Human Rights Activist, Andhra Pradesh*)

Office of the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Training & Recruitment, Carlton House, Palace Road, Bangalore-560 001, Karnataka; Tel: 91-80-22942231/ 22942238;
stramesh1@rediffmail.com

As ADG of Prisons, Karnataka, introduced new initiatives in jails, like grievance redressal, weekly phone call facilities for prisoners; other prison reforms

Dr. Rani Shankardass, Penal Reform International and Penal Reform and Justice Association (PRAJA), Gurgaon (from [Dr. M R Ahmed](#), *Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh*)

7 A & B Sector-14, Mehrauli Road, Gurgaon-122001 Haryana; 91-124 (from Delhi 95124) 2323564; Fax: 91-124-2323959; mail@prajaindia.org;
<http://www.prajaindia.org/prajainaction.html>

Has worked extensively on Gender and prison reform issues related to mental health and prisoners; published several reports on these issues

J. K. Tripathy, Indian Police Service (IPS), Tamil Nadu (from [Vinay Somani](#), *R O Somani Charitable Trust, Mumbai*)

IG, Enforcement, Chennai, No.18, Swamy Sivanantha Salai, Chennai-600 005. Tamil Nadu ; Tel: 91-44-2536 6565 / 2539 3309 ; Fax: 91-44-2536 6565; jkt_2001@rediffmail.com;

Introduced proactive community policing to prevent and reduce crime; enabled police to corner miscreants and draw them away from crime

Recommended Organizations and Programmes

From [Fr. Scaria Nedumattathil](#), *Don Bosco Prison Ministry, Berhampore*

Don Bosco Prison Ministry, Berhampore

P.B.-12, Berhampore, Pin - 742101, West Bengal; Tel: 91-3482-255556; Contact Fr. Scaria Nedumattathil; scaria@donboscoprisonministry.org, scaria1@sancharnet.in

Provides vocational training, income generating schemes, legal assistance & counselling, prisoners' family welfare schemes; organises music, sports

Prison Ministry India, Bangalore

PB 3410 Venketapura, Yuva Chetna Colony, IIInd Cross, Koramangala PO, Bangalore-560034; Tel: 91-80- 25520859, 25523722; pmi2005@rediffmail.com

Helps in the rehabilitation of released prisoners; works towards a more human penal system; lobbies for legislations that promote better criminal justice system

From [Shakira Scolt](#), *SAVERA, New Delhi*

India Vision Foundation, New Delhi

56 Uday Park (Basement), New Delhi-1100049; Tel: 91-11-26525741/ 26525743 ; Fax: 91-11-26525744; ivfindia@gmail.com; <http://www.indiavisionfoundation.org/weaving-behind-bars.asp>;
Contact. Mrs. Monica Dhawan

Promotes prison reforms; produced CD "It's Always Possible" that showcases the reforms in Tihar Prison; equips women prisoners with entrepreneurial skills

Human Rights Law Network, New Delhi

576, Masjid Road, Jungpura, Delhi-110014; Tel: 91-11-24374501/24376922 ; contact@hrln.org;
http://www.hrln.org/hrln/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=67

Works for civil and political rights of prisoners; opposes oppressive legislation that infringes on human rights, through the activities of its Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI)

Aids Awareness Group, New Delhi

119-D (Ground Floor), Humayunpur, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi – 110029; Tel: 91-11-26187953,/26187953.; india.aag@gmail.com, aagindya@yahoo.co.in;

http://www.aagindia.org/Prg_Health.html; Contact Ms. Elizabeth; Director

Advocates legal rights of prisoners; HIV/AIDS awareness; promotes women's education, improved living conditions of prisoners; rehabilitates adolescent drug addicts.

Navjyoti India Foundation, New Delhi (from [Shakira Scott](#), Savera, New Delhi and [Trishul Makeshwar](#), Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD), Amravati)

Head Office, Khasra No. 99, Village Mohammadpur, Majri Karala, Near Sector- 22, Rohini Delhi - 110 081; Tel: 91 11 - 25953095/56; <http://www.navjyoti.org.in/nif-at-glance.asp> (page on penal reforms under construction)

Runs a project on prison reforms; works with children of prisoners, preschool education, child health and nutrition; drug abuse prevention; and rehabilitation of prisoners

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), New Delhi (from [Madhurima](#) and [Trishul Makeshwar](#), Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD), Amravati)

CHRI New Delhi Office, B-117, Second Floor, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi - 110 017; Tel: 91-11-26850523, 26528152, 26864678; Fax: 91-11-26864688; info@humanrightsinitiative.org;

<http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/default.htm>

Monitors and promotes accountability in prison administration; organises workshops for prison officials, the judiciary and civil society; educates prisoners on their rights

Sisters of St Annes, Tamil Nadu (from [Madhurima](#), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), New Delhi and [Asim Sarode](#), Ashoka Fellow/Sahyog Trust, Pune)

Mahatma Gandhi School , Shrirangam Pillai Chetram, Near Nokia Company, Opposite PWD Inspection Bungalow, Shrepempudur, Chennai, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91 44-26701027; Contact Sis.

Herminie; herminx@gmail.com

Provides healthcare services, vocational training, small loans for self employment; supports children of life convicts and short stay facilities after release

Sudhar - Social Work in Prison, Bhopal (from [Surekha Talari](#) and [Trishul Makeshwar](#), Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD), Amravati)

HIG A/11, M.P.S.R.TC Building Complex, Nr. Bhadbhada Cross Roads, Bhopal-462003, Madhya Pradesh; Tel: 91-755-4221405, 4020079; sudhar_prison@rediffmail.com, research.cj@gmail.com;

Contact Ms. Surekha Talari; Director

Provides socio-legal counselling for prisoners and their families, educational support to their children and advocates for rights of prisoners through awareness workshops

From [Trishul Makeshwar](#), Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD), Amravati

Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD), Amravati

Teachers Colony, Ram Nagar, Post Rukhmini Nagar, Amravati-444606, Maharashtra ; Tel: 91-721-2567851 ; info@varhad.org; <http://www.varhad.org/program1.php>

Established Savitibai Phule Rehabilitation Centre for released women prisoners; initiated women's SHG inside the prison; provides vocational training, and adult education

PRAYAS, Mumbai

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, (a field action project of the Center for Criminology and Justice, Tata Institute of Social Sciences), 9/1 B.D.D. Chawls, Worli, Mumbai 400018, Maharashtra; Tel: 91-22-24947156, 24902285; prayas1990@rediffmail.com; <http://www.tiss.edu/ongoingfap.htm>;
Contact Mr. Vijay Raghavan.

Provides Legal aid, counseling services; vocational and occupational activities; post release rehabilitation; works with families and children of prisoners

Prayas Institute of Juvenile Justice, New Delhi

59, Tughlakabad institutional Area, New Delhi-110062; Telefax: 91-11-29956244, 29955505; prayas@del6.vsnl.net.in; http://www.prayasonline.org/Juvenile_justice.html;

Provides alternative education, vocational training, nutrition and recreation; provides custodial and non custodial services for children, through its shelter homes

SAHYADRI – Social, Educational & Youth Society, Solapur

House no 1055, Nath Chowk, Pandarpur, Solapur - 413304, Maharashtra; sahyadri987@gmail.com; Contact Mr. Purushottam Kadam; President; Tel: 91-9923446955; purushottam1055@rediffmail.com

Provides legal aid, counselling; help sustain contacts with family and community; equips prisoners with skills for their future rehabilitation

Majlis, Mumbai : Flavia Agnes, Mumbai

Litigation Centre, A 2/4 Golden Valley, Kalina-Kurla Road, Kalina, Mumbai 400098 India; Tel: 91-22-26662394; Fax: 91-22-26668539 majlislaw@vsnl.net; <http://www.majlisbombay.org/>; Contact Flavia Agnes;

Provides legal support to women in need, including women under trials

Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation, Mumbai

Udyog Sarathi Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai 400093; Tel: 91-022-26870052 / 54 / 73; Fax: 91-022-26871587 ceo@midcindia.org;
<http://www.midcindia.org/midcwebsite/default.aspx>

Supports VARHAD to find skilled and unskilled work for released prisoners; suggested as an example to show possible opportunities of employment and training to Prisoners

Swadhar – A scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances, Ministry of Women & Child Development, New Delhi

Ministry of Women and Child Development; Contact Smt. Surinder Kaur; Tel: 91-11-23745630; us-norad.wcd@nic.in

Provides financial assistance to women in distress, including women prisoners on release

Industrial Training Institute, Amravati

Govt. I. T. I. Amravati, Morshi Road, Amravati, Maharashtra; Tel: 91-721-2660983, 2665240, 2660983; iti_ambt@yahoo.co.in; <http://www.dvet.gov.in/nfvtp.htm>

Provides vocational training, certification and tools to discharged prisoners, after completion of the course; suggested as possibilities to explore in other places

Sahyog Trust, Pune (from *Asim Sarode*)

302, Anil CHS, Opp Kamala Nehru Park, Off Bhandarkar Road, Pune 411004, Maharashtra; Tel: 91-20-25667555; Fax: 91-20-25658512; asim.human@gmail.com;
<http://www.sahyogtrust.in/hrlid.htm>

Provides paralegal training; works in the Yerawada prison to give legal aid to the poor and marginalized under trials

Organisation for Rural Development, Tamil Nadu (from [Asim Sarode](#), Sahyog Trust, Pune and [P.K Maniyan](#))

Village: Murukeri, Post. Aryur, District: Vellore, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-416-2271477; 09443627238; ord-vellore@yahoo.com

Provides counselling and legal aid; facilitates meetings between prisoners and their family; refers released women prisoners to residential institutions

From [P.K. Maniyan](#), Organisation for Rural Development (ORD), Vellore

Society for Education and Economic Development (SEED), Tamil Nadu

Chennai-Bangalore High road (Opp. P.W.D. Inspection Bungalow), Venkatrangam Pillai Chatram Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu - 602 105; Tel: +91 44 954111 362322; seed4india@yahoo.com; <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=166>; Contact Shri. A.R. Palanisamy

Provides shelter to children of prisoners, both inside and outside the prison; provides education as well as occupational skills like tailoring and industrial training to boys

Guild of Service, Chennai

29, Casa Major Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600008, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-44-28194828,, 28194279; gosc@dataone.in

Provides vocational training, counselling, health care, job placements and short stay facilities for released prisoners; helps contact families and supports children of prisoners

Discharge Prisoner's Aid Society, Vellore

15 Bharatiyar Street, Fort Round Road, Vellore- 632004, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-146-2213916;

Runs Footwear Training Centre for Women (FTCW) for released women prisoners; provides support for their rehabilitation

From [Dr. M R Ahmed](#), Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

Penal Reform and Justice Association (PRAJA), Gurgaon

7 A & B Sector-14, Mehrauli Road, Gurgaon - 122001 Haryana; Tel: 91-124 (from Delhi 95124) 2323564; Fax: 91-124-(from Delhi 95124) 2323959; mail@prajaindia.org; <http://www.prajaindia.org/prajainaction.html>; Contact Dr. Rani Shankardass; ranishankardass@prajaindia.org

Undertakes research, addresses mental health issues of women prisoners and children; introduced 'Community service' as an alternative to imprisonment in Andhra Pradesh

Penal Reform International, United Kingdom

First Floor, 60-62 Commercial Street, London E1 6LT; Tel: +44 20 7247 6515 ; Fax: 44 20 7247 8711 ; info@penalreform.org; <http://www.pri.ge/eng/WomeninPrison.php>

In India, PRI with partner organisations provides counselling and psychological support; legal and social awareness for women prisoners

Family Vision, New Delhi (from [Sonia Pillai](#))

F-41 South Extension Part 1, 2nd Floor, U&I Building, New Delhi - 110049; famvis@vsnl.com; <http://www.familyvision.info/socialprojects.html>; Contact Sonia Pillai; Project Director

Provides development support for prison staff; character/spiritual development, vocational training and education for prisoners.

From [Dr. Murali Karnam](#), Researcher on Penal Reforms in India/Human Rights Activist, Andhra Pradesh

National Crime Records Bureau, New Delhi

East Block-7, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110066; Tel: 91-11-26172324, 26105353; Fax: 91-11-26186576, 26197984; comm@ncrb.nic.in; <http://ncrb.nic.in/prisonstat.htm>

Comprehensive compendium of information related to various aspects of Prison administration; provides data on the number of prisoners rehabilitated in 2006

Meed Academy and Reform of Oppressed Forum (MAROOF), Karnataka

32, Survey 131/2 1st cross, 1st main, Rama Tent Road, Venkateshpuram, K.G. Halli, Bangalore – 560045, Karnataka; Tel: 91-80-5465409; maroof.ngo@gmail.com; Contact Unme Aiysha; yaiysha@yahoo.com

Conducts awareness programmes on women's empowerment and sustainability; skill training programmes, counselling, legal aid and bail for women prisoners

Janodaya, Karnataka

No. 3, 9th Cross, 5th Main Jayamahall, Extension, Bangalore 560046, Karnataka; Tel: 91-80-23332564No.; Fax: 91-80- 23430155; janodaya@bgl.vsnl.net.in; Contact: Santosh Vas

Helps women access legal system and justice; provides care, support and shelter to children of prisoners and released women prisoners

Sneha Jyothi Rehabilitation Centre, Karnataka

Passionist Mission, Ghanahalli Village, Huskar PO, Anekal Taluka, Bangalore 560099, Karnataka; Tel: 91-80-57662229; snehajyothi@hotmail.com; Contact Fr. Biju; Job Director (Resident)

Rehabilitation and reintegration of released women prisoners; provides social counselling; facilitates meetings of prisoners with family members in prison

Avitoko, Mumbai (from [Vibha Rani](#))

302/A, Dheeraj Residency, Opp.Oshiwara Bus Depot, Goregaon (West), Mumbai-400104, Maharashtra; Tel: +91 22 56793938; info@avitoko.org; <http://www.avitoko.org/>

Supports children of prisoners, both inside and outside the prison; works with women inmates of Byculla District jail through the medium of Art and Theatre

From [Alice Lakra](#), Directorate of Horticulture, Raipur

Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA), New Delhi

B-32 Tara Crescent, Outab Institutional Area, New Delhi-110016; Fax: 91-11-6866031; tara@sdalt.ernet.in; <http://devalt.org/tnk/Training.aspx>

Provides technological support on skill development programmes, suggested for rehabilitating prisoners

Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), New Delhi

India Habitat Centre, Zone-V-A, 2nd Floor, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003; Tel: 91- 11-2464 2391, 24642393, 24642395; Fax: 91-11-24648607, 24625822; capart@caparthq.delhi.nic.in; <http://capart.nic.in/scheme/rural.html>

Suggested as a source for funding as well as technical support for providing livelihood skills to prisoners

Baroda Citizens Council, Vadodara (from [Priya Jagdale](#))

Baroda Citizens Council, Co-operative House, Above Bajaj Auto, Manisha Char Rasta, Old Padra Road, Vadodara-390015, Gujarat; Tel: 91-265-2350286 ; Fax: 91-265-2350662; info@barodacitizenscouncil.org; <http://www.barodacitizenscouncil.org/Activities07-08.html>;

Contact Priya Jagdale

Provides counselling, legal aid, vocational training and courses on education and health; support for education and shelter to inmates' children

From [R Priya](#), Researcher, Madurai

Central Social Welfare Board [CSWB], New Delhi

Samaj Kalyan Bhavan, B-12, Tara Crescent, Institutional Area, South of IIT, New Delhi-110 016; Tel: 91-11-26960059, 60, 61, 26562694, 26964447; Fax: 91-11-26960057, 26866485; cswb_1@yahoo.co.in; <http://cswb.gov.in/index1.asp?linkid=234&langid=1>

Under its Swadhar scheme provides training inside jail premises for women prisoners to help them develop some skills, and rehabilitate them after their release

Vyakthi Vikas Kendra, Pollachi

Pollachi Chapter, 1, S.R. Layout, Palladam Road, Pollachi-642002, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-4259-225235,224317; govindsamyk@sify.com; <http://www.aolcbe.org/pollachi.htm>;

Organises Art of Living workshops in jails for the spiritual development of prisoners

Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram (KYM), Chennai

Old. No. 10, New no. 19, 3rd Cross Street, RK Nagar, Chennai – 600028, Tamilnadu; Tel: 91-44-24937998 / 24933092; Fax: 91-44-24613341 admin@kym.org; <http://www.kym.org/mitra.html>

Conducts Yoga for the underprivileged through its KYM Mitra programme; has worked with women prisoners as well as with boys at the Juvenile Observation home, Chennai

From [Vivek Chaturvedi](#), Durga Gram Chetna evam Vikas Sanstha (DGCVS), Jabalpur

Durga Gram Chetna evam Vikas Sanstha (DGCVS), Jabalpur, Location

1832, Ground Floor, Spectrum, Adi Apartments, Right Town, Jabalpur - 482002, Madhya Pradesh; dgcavs@gmail.com; Contact Mr. Vivek Chaturvedi; Tel: 91-982708729

Provides employment oriented training to women prisoners for their rehabilitation; working to start 'women's creation marts' for marketing products made by prisoners

Learning Resource Development Centre (LRDC), Jabalpur

Kalaniketan polytechnic college, North civil lines, Near collectorate, Jabalpu, Madhya Pradesh; Tel: +91 761-2622952; Fax: +91 761-2626162; knpolyjbp@spfump.com; <http://kalaniketanpoly.com/OLRDC.HTM>

Provides training to rehabilitate prisoners (in Jabalpur Central Jail), under the TEQUIP (Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme) scheme

Vipassana International Academy, Igatpuri (from [Arun Jindal](#), Society for Sustainable Development (SSD), Karauli)

Vipassana International Academy, Dhamma Giri, P.O. Box No. 6, Igatpuri, Nasik, Maharashtra - 422403; Tel: 91-2553-2244076, 2244086; Fax: 91-2553-2244176 info@giri.dhamma.org; <http://www.dhamma.org>

Organises Vipassana meditation courses in prisons for personal development; undertakes research and documentation on the impact of Vipassana on prisoners

From [Sampath Thattai Ramesh](#), Crime Statistics and Communications, Karnataka

Akshaya Patra Foundation of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Karnataka

H K Hill, Chord Road, Bangalore-560010, India; Tel: 91-80-23471956, 23578346; Fax: 91-80-23578625; infodesk@akshayapatra.org; http://www.akshayapatra.org/our_approach.html

Distributes food to underprivileged school children and lactating mothers in several states; also provides food to inmates in Jails as part of its meal scheme

Department of Women and Child Development, Karnataka

M.S.Building, 1st Floor, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bangalore - 560001, Karnataka; Tel: 91-80-22353777, 22353766, 22386153, 22353780, 22353833; dirwcd@mail.kar.nic.in;
<http://www.karmayog.org/redirect/strred.asp?docId=17101>

Assists released women prisoners under the Swadhar scheme, for women in difficult circumstances; appointed released women prisoners as anganwadi workers

N. Ranga Rao and Sons, Mysore

" Sri Ranga " No.18 , 3rd Stage Industrial Suburb, Mysore- 570 008,India; Tel: 91-821-2481234,2489808; Fax: 91-821-2481185; info@nrreexports.com;
<http://nrreexports.com/Index.aspx>

Provided training on incense making for prisoners in Karnataka along with Clara Incense Institute; suggested as companies to involve for providing training and employment

Society for the Care of the Indigent, Bangalore

2642, 12th B Main, II Stage, Rajajinagar, Bangalore; Tel: 91-80-23325926; 23321864;
<http://socareind.com/home>

Takes care of children of prisoners; arranges parole money deposit for convicts so that they can visit their families; provides accommodation to released prisoners

Recommended Portals and Information Bases

Karnataka Prisons, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore (from [Sampath Thattai Ramesh](#), *Crime Statistics and Communications, Karnataka*)

<http://www.karnatakaprison.org/p17.html>; Contact; Additional Director General of Police and Inspector General of Prisons; Tel: 91-80-22262263; karnatakaprison@gmail.com;

Provides information on best practices initiated in Karnataka prisons; wage earning schemes to facilitate their rehabilitation; and skills training for women prisoners

From [Malika Basu](#), Resource Person

Official Website Delhi Prisons, Tihar

<http://tiharprisons.nic.in/>; Contact: Nodal Officer, Tihar Prisons; Tel: 91-11-28520605

Information on rehabilitation and recreational activities inside Tihar Prisons

Punjab Jails Department Webpage, Official Website of Punjab State

http://punjabgovt.nic.in/GOVERNMENT/jail_department.HTM; Contact: pws@punjabmail.gov.in

Mentions Punjab State Policy on Prisons – its aims and objectives including activities related to welfare of women prisoners

Work with Women Prisoners, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Website

http://www.unodc.org/india/woman_prisoners.html; Contact: P.O. Box 3059, New Delhi - 110 003; Tel: 91-11-42225000, 24104970-73

Information on activities and projects ensuring service and rehabilitation support to women in prisons

A Collaborative Women Repository – An initiative of Government of Kerala

http://www.keralawomen.gov.in/subcat.php?subcat_id=68

Highlights recommendations made under Kerala Jail Reforms Committee; other information on convicted women in Kerala Prisons

International Association for Human Values (IAHV)

http://www.iahv.org/our_work_socio_economic_prision.asp; Contact: india@iahv.org

Gives information on Prison SMART program, a joint initiative of IAHV and the Art of Living; Prison Smart offers possibility of rehabilitation, and integration into society

From [Dhivya David](#) Research Associate

The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi

<http://bprd.nic.in/correction.asp>; Contact Dr. B. V. Trivedi; Tel: 91-11-24360371/24365009/24365010; dgbprd@yahoo.co.in

Provides information and resources related to policies and practices on Police and Correctional Services

Prison India Growth Statistics Details Figures

<http://www.indiastat.com/crimeandlaw/6/prison/227/stats.aspx>; Information available only to registered members

State-wise information on prisons including women inmates – number, types, etc; also allocation of funds for prison improvement

Responses in Full

[R Priya](#), Researcher, Madurai

I would like to share my experiences based on my work in the Vellore Special Prison for women. This is one of the first prisons for women in Tamil Nadu.

In my experience there are different types of vocational trainings provided to women prisoners like, garden maintenance, pottery, tailoring, embroidery, bread making, thread making, bag making etc. Within the prison, this is workable as it is a pastime for these women. However, when they leave the prison they find them not easy livelihood options to exercise. The major difficulties they face relate to procuring raw materials, marketing their products and maintaining the quality of such products. It is also difficult to make a living in a competitive market for unskilled or semi-skilled women; and the women prisoners I met were mostly from an agricultural background and poor families, with few marketable skills.

There are several ongoing projects in the prison itself in an effort to rehabilitate prisoners for instance, the Vikthi Vikas Kendra conducts Art of Living sessions; the Krishnamacharya Training Institute organizes exercises and workshops with them; the Polytechnic college organizes vocational trainings in skills such as pottery, tailoring, making artifacts etc.

In addition, the Rural Development Centre under the supervision of the Central Social Welfare Board facilitates family counseling sessions for the new prisoners. Such sessions are meant to develop an understanding of the context and circumstances leading to the crime. Many of the women in this prison have been charged with murder of their husbands who, according to them, have exploited them by drinking, wife-beating/battering them as well as coercing their children into the same/bad habits.

On of the most difficult issues, as you have correctly pointed out, for women prisoners' remains reintegration with the society after their release as it is likely that they will face rejection and stigma from the community (they go back to).

Based on my studies and experiences, I would like to make the following suggestions for the rehabilitation of women prisoners:-

- Alongside vocational trainings, provide additional training in procuring raw materials, marketing and management so that the women can adequately make a living from their skills
- The prison/authorities concerned should provide a certificate at the end of any training which is also acceptable in the job market. This would also give women to show some 'qualifications' when they are in the job market
- Explore possibilities of placements for the women when they are out of prisons. And these placements can be based on the quality and output of the training women undergo in prisons
- Inside the prison, raise salaries of women engaged in vocational trainings. Currently Rs.45 is paid to unskilled workers; Rs.50 for semi-skilled workers; Rs.60 for skilled workers. However, the women have to pay about 50% of their salary for accommodation in the Jail and 20 % is 'adjusted' for crimes committed by them. Moreover, work is irregular. In brief, women make less than 30% of their actual salary.

I hope you find my information useful.

Fr. Scaria Nedumattathil, Don Bosco Prison Ministry, Berhampore

I am writing to you on behalf of Don Bosco Prison Ministry at Berhampore in Murshidabad District of West Bengal. We work towards rehabilitating the poor and needy prisoners, juvenile prison youth and destitute youth. We train and support them through vocational training courses; income generating micro projects; social awareness programmes; social development schemes; legal assistance; counseling; child-in-need educational assistance; prisoners' family welfare scheme. We also organize sports, games, music and entertainment programmes.

We are happy to learn that Solution Exchange for Gender Community has taken up the issue of prisoners, particularly women prisoners to highlight their cause, concern and plight. In response to the query from Beatrice Vanaja, New Life, a social organization working for the uplift of women in difficult circumstances and children at risk, we would like to make the following suggestions:

I. Possible ways or recommend measures which can further (adequately) rehabilitate the released women inmates of the Prison

After going through the background description of New Life, I find that it is on the right track as regards the measures taken for the rehabilitation of women prisoners. It imparts vocational training skills in micro projects for income generation such as ploy bag nursery, tailoring, farming, vermin-compost production, hollow block manufacturing etc. New Life has planned to start training in automobile section, kundun work, screen printing, cleaning powder, sambrani and candle making. Except automobile engine maintenance, all the trade skills mentioned are suitable for women prisoners. These trades require minimum capital investment and the return is sufficient to keep a family going. Success of an enterprise depends on market. Products mentioned by New Life have ready market.

We must take into consideration that majority of female prisoners are with less education and has economically weak background. Hence any planning for their welfare is to be done after taking into consideration ground realities. Don Bosco Prison Ministry suggests tying up these products (made by prisoners) with business firms which will ensure continuity and a better return.

Monitoring is also very important. But this task is difficult as released female prisoners stay scattered. Hence, a networking partnership is to be evolved which will assure feasibility, continuity and moral support. Wherever possible, released female prisoners may be encouraged to form Self Help Groups. Initially a released female prisoner finds herself out of place in the family and in society. She may require moral and financial support to get over the crisis. To achieve the desired target, it is advisable to start a Home which provides vocational training skills and production facilities, where released prisoners can stay for a couple of years to get adjusted.

Ministry of Labour and Employment has initiated several training and employment schemes. The Modular Employable Skills (MES) scheme proposed by the said department is very much suited to this category of persons since they will be paid by the department as trainees.

II. References of organizations working on similar lines. I would like to mention two names:

1. Prison Ministry India, PB 3410 Venketapura, Yuva Chetna Colony, IInd Cross, Koramangala PO, Bangalore-560034.
2. Sr. Alexia, Apostolic Carmel, 96 Moore Ave. Tollygunj, Kolkata - 700040.

Shakira Scott, Saveria, New Delhi

Thank you for sharing your query with me. I have read the query from New Life, Trichy and would like to share my views. I earlier worked with India Vision Foundation (IVF) as Project Director, Prison Reforms. After having worked in this field for over a decade in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab Prisons, I definitely feel that rehabilitation of released prisoners, especially women, is one that needs special attention.

Although there are quite a few NGOs/organizations working towards rehabilitation of prisoners, unfortunately there is no one dealing with the situation in a holistic manner, which is why there is still a high return rate. It is important for us to understand why this happens.

Inmates in prisons, normally and naturally have only one agenda that they focus on i.e. their RELEASE from the Prison. Their entire focus, conversations, thoughts and dreams are about just that - their release - and these are usually happy thoughts and pictures that they have. Very often they unconsciously paint rosier-than-normal pictures in their minds probably this is their effort to blot out the 'unpleasantries of incarceration'.

Meanwhile, while the inmates are serving their terms in prison, many of their friends, family and loved ones may have changed their attitude, perception, stance, opinion and loyalties towards them for the fear of being shunned and stigmatized by society. Most inmates are not mentally prepared to face this sea change in attitude towards them. My experience says that the stigma is some thing they cannot always face and it gradually erodes any self confidence and positive thoughts that they as individuals have. This in turn often leads them back to the crime circle - where they feel they can at least identify with people - and also easily accepted; they turn more bitter as well and negative towards society (and hence they get sucked back into crime).

The **focus of any rehabilitation programme therefore should be on addressing these vital issues**. Any educational, vocational or spiritual intervention in prisons has to go hand in hand with group and individual counseling, where inmates should be adequately prepared to deal with life after incarceration.

Probably **the most important part of the rehabilitation process is reintegration back into 'mainstream' society** - for this, it is important to have a support group of counselors, even released inmates and other individuals (also willing to employ these women prisoners).

Just as there is regular counseling in prisons, after release the same is needed. We may want the released individual to be reintegrated back into normal life - but we also ought to understand that the person has been away from such "normalities" for a long time and therefore, there are many issues that need to be dealt with. Let us not assume that an inmate gets back to everyday life like a fish will into water! There are many small issues, nuances that may seem insignificant to us but they are issues for a released prisoner (who needs to deal with it). Just for instance, how many of us realize that it is actually difficult for prisoners who are just released to deal with 'such normal things' - crowds and traffic?

As I said earlier, rehabilitation is incomplete without re-integration and unless we have aftercare facilities, it is less than half the battle won!

Friends, this is a subject I could talk on and discuss endlessly; I hope I have been able to answer the query to some extent.

Regarding other organizations working in prisons, you may wish to contact: India Vision Foundation; Human Rights law Network; Aids Awareness Group; Navjyoti India foundation.

Nikita Kaul, Indian School of Microfinance for Women, Ahmedabad

First of all I congratulate New Life for taking the initiative of working with the women in prison. This, I believe, is the most untouched issue and it is high time that we start focusing on women who are behind the bars for, in most of the cases, no fault of theirs. The problems/ issues you mentioned in your query related to plight of women prisoners is sadly the situation every where. I had done a research on 'Women in Prison' for which I collected my data from the various central jails in Gujarat. The research was a part of my Post graduation degree. What I saw there was the abject plight of women. They live with out proper sanitation facility, lodging, boarding or recreation. The roles of men and women convicts is also highly gendered - while men have a series of activities to keep them busy; women tend have comparatively less constructive jobs to put their heads into.

Rehabilitation of women must begin when she is still in the prison; she must be equipped with certain skills that are required to earn her living when she is released. I am really impressed by the income generating activities that you have initiated or plan to start.

Please find below **few suggestions** that may be helpful in rehabilitation of women prisoners:

- Advocate for building a shelter home for women who are released from prison. The women who are abandoned by their families may be housed here till they find an alternative and are settled with a decent income.
- New Life may help these women access finance from various microfinance institutions, after they start earning an income; you may also think of organizing them into SHGs, linking them to the mainstream market - New Life may act as a facilitator.

- In Gujarat, due to prevalence of industries, I had suggested to the administration of the prisons to liaison with various organizations and help the women in the prison get the contract of making food for them. You may think of something like this for the released prisoners as a continuous source of income.
- I feel that the biggest challenge is to convince their families to accept them after their release. There should be continuous follow-up as we never know what might change their attitudes.
- During my research, I had met a large number of women who are under trials awaiting their trials for years; legal assistance to them becomes inevitable.

Hope the points suggested would prove to be of some help to you.

Dr. Murali Karnam, Researcher on Penal Reforms in India/Human Rights Activist, Andhra Pradesh

Women prisoners receive the least attention even among the community that is incarcerated. A lot of ideas and recommendations exist regarding prisoner's rehabilitation but very little action has been undertaken by the Government. For instance, The Discharged Prisoners Aid Societies, funded by the government existed from 1920 to 1971 but it no longer does.

Further, if you access Chapter 22 of All India Committee on Jail Reforms 1980-83, it made 18 general recommendations for rehabilitation of prisoners. The Report of National Expert Committee (under the Chairmanship of Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer) on Women Prisoners (1987; 2 Vols.) also makes specific recommendations with regards to Women Prisoners.

If you wish, you can write to Central Secretariat Library, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, 'G' Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi – 110001 and request for the photocopy of the Jail Reforms 1980-83. The library staff can also be contacted at (011) – 23389684, 23389383. For the Justice Krishna Iyer Report, please contact Centre for Women's Development Studies, 25, Bhai Vir Singh Marg (Gole Market), New Delhi – 110001. (Kindly Cite as follows - Print Copy Call No. 365.43 R IND.R); Tel: (011)-23365541, 23366930; Email cwds@vsnl.com,

Like the references cited above, there could be many more references but the problem lay in converting them into practical and workable ideas! You may like to refer to a rehabilitation document produced by the lower house of British Parliament. This is just for the ideas! The document is available at

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmhaff/193/193.pdf> (PDF; Size 752 KB). It suggests ways of ensuring that prisoners following their release get into work and have a home to go to; it also provides specific recommendations for rehabilitating prisoners.

The point is all the departments and agencies of Government including the Banks never think of people behind the bars as 'Citizens', clients or stakeholders. So, the task before us is to make all concerned departments like Women and Child Welfare, Finance Corporations, Banks, training institutions to come up with special schemes or projects to address the specific rehabilitation problems of women prisoners. One good thing which happened in Karnataka in 2006 was that the Prison Department Chief roped in the National Scheduled Castes/Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporations well in advance before release of prisoners to grant loans at the time of release itself. This shows that lot of efforts is required by the prison department itself, which is currently lacking in India.

I would like to suggest the following institutions/names whom you can contact: 1. Sneha Jyothi Rehabilitation Centre (snehajyothi@hotmail.com); 2. MAROOF (uaiysha@yahoo.com); 3.

Janodaya (santosh_vas@rediffmail.com); 4. ST Ramesh, IPS (Ex-ADG Prisons) presently ADG Police: Crime Statistics and Communications, Karnataka (stramesh1@rediffmail.com)

In fact the rehabilitation of prisoners requires consistent long term work, using local community and resources. One suggestion is to make the prison department cooperate, by committed NGOs and individuals. I would like to add that in June 2009, Andhra Pradesh government will be releasing 854 life sentenced prisoners from 7 central prisons. Most of them are in touch with me and have agreed to come together as an association (after their release) to fight for their rehabilitation. They will also be involved to fight for penal reforms, betterment of prison conditions, against corruption, easing of prison regime and for the right to life behind bars (to contain the increasing deaths in prison due to lack of timely medical care).

To workout a policy document with specific workable ideas would require serious and concerted efforts. In this regard, if New Life is interested, I am interested to help.

[Asim Sarode](#), Ashoka Fellow/Sahyog Trust, Pune

The Prison being State subject each State has its own prison Manual. New Life will have to look at the policy of the Tamil Nadu Government on Rehabilitation of Prisoners. For example, in Maharashtra there is a Government scheme where the prisoner has to apply to the government for rehabilitation; then there is a (very meager) amount given to them as soon as they come out of the prison. But so far unfortunately none of the prisoners who have applied received this amount because of the lengthy procedures and unwillingness of the government in taking interest in rehabilitation of prisoners.

You may like to contact the following two organizations:-

Sisters of St Annes, Mahatma Gandhi School
Shrirangam Pillai Chetram, Near Nokia Company,
Opposite PWD Inspection Bunglow, Shrepempudur, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Contact Person: Sis. Herminie (Senior Sister)
Contact: 044-24961017
Email: herminx@gmail.com

They work on rehabilitation of released prisoners and general welfare of inmates and their families.

Organisation for Rural Development

Village: Murukeri, Post. Aryur, District: Vellore, Tamil Nadu
Contact Person: Maniyan (Founder President)
Contact Nos. 0416-2271477; 09443627238
Email: ord-vellore@yahoo.com

They work on social counseling, providing legal aid, and referring released women prisoners to residential institutes

Our organization, **Sahyog Trust** has been working on mental rehabilitation of the prisoners through Gandhian Thoughts exams. If we can be of any assistance to New Life, kindly let us know. For more details, please log on to www.sahyogtrust.in or contact me directly, asim.human@gmail.com

[Alice Lakra](#), Directorate of Horticulture, Raipur

I am touched by the efforts undertaken by New Life and its concerns towards the women prisoners. I am equally moved by the brilliant insights given by members of this community.

World over, women's empowerment is a major concern, as is also reflected through the globally mandated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Women in prison especially, Discharged Women Prisoners (DWP) are clearly amongst some of the most vulnerable individuals susceptible to domestic, social and institutional exclusion and isolation; which pushes them further into poverty and various other circumstances (and therefore, as you already mentioned, may lead them to return to the prisons).

Whilst talking of mainstreaming and placing DWPs in least restrictive environments, personally, I am skeptical about prisoners returning to the same family that might have played a role in their coming to the prison in the first place, unless the circumstances were unrelated to their homes or family. Perhaps, the women's 'will' or consent is necessary on whether she wants to:

- a) Return to her family and disengage from the rehabilitation programme or
- b) Return to her home but continue her association with the rehabilitation programme or
- c) Choose to be placed in a shelter home and continue with the rehabilitation programme

The strategies could then be customized accordingly. While the group (c) stated above will require the most concerted attention, planning, resources and action; in all the groups, spiritual, livelihood, health and social counseling must continue for the women prisoners (and also extended to their family members).

Linking the women to livelihood opportunities is a major challenge. For this, help may be sought from philanthropist groups, faith based organizations and also the wider community, especially those in close proximity to women in prison, such as wives of police officers and staff – they may be mobilized to get engaged in the rehabilitation programme. Dr. Kiran Bedi has already set a model of reform in prison in the past. Another initiative, I have seen is taken by the Raipur (Chhattisgarh) Police department, wherein a permanent handicraft emporium is set near the prison which houses all the handicraft items made by the prison inmates. Arrangements are also made to take these handicrafts to trade fairs. I have personally visited one of these stalls in the State sponsored Rajyotsav or the state festival, where these products were displayed and sold amidst encouraging public response.

Publications on prisoner's rehabilitation programme including case studies, past prisoner's testimonials on positive experiences or thought provoking insights on life after prison, spiritual articles from all faiths could also be made available to the discharged prisoner's (men and women).

As for setting up the micro-enterprise, clusters of women may be formed within the larger group. Specific skills and interests may be identified so that within themselves they may be able to assume various roles in the micro-enterprise. I would suggest that approaches adopted be configured recognizing their diverse socio-economic and psychological backgrounds and according to their:

1) **Educational background** i.e. engage them in skills and vocations that are suited to their educational levels so that some of the literate candidates are not under-engaged in activities that may be below their educational levels or capabilities. If some women can read and write or have a knack for accounts, maths, they could be trained in slightly advanced activities than in unskilled labour. I am not aware if this is already being done but the literate women may be trained in typewriting, computers, and secretarial work or even in keeping accounts that may enable these women in helping to manage the micro-enterprise of the DWPs, by the DWPs, for the DWPs.

Educated inmates can also assist or run teaching facilities for children of prison inmates or outward prisoners. Opportunities for undertaking Correspondence courses from recognized institutions could also be made available to them, if possible. The uneducated women may be engaged in the manual labour or unskilled/semi-skilled activities. However, they could also be linked to adult education programmes. 2) **Learning abilities** i.e. they are given right opportunities matching their learning abilities.

As for meeting the challenges of raw material availability, local resources and existing technologies should be explored along with market assessment of saleability of the products being manufactured by the inmates. Efforts should be on enhancing their skills which enables them to engage in vocations individually and at any geographic location.

New Life may explore NGOs like the Development Alternatives, specifically Tara - <http://www.devalt.org/TARA/index.htm> and http://www.devalt.org/TARA/tara_nirman_kendra.htm for technological collaboration/ support on skill development programmes. For funding as well as technical support CAPART and Department of Science and Technology could be explored; linkages with industry dealing in clothing, baby products, food processing, organic food and herbal products manufacturing, woollens, cosmetics etc. which are known to involve women workforce, could be another option.

Apart from livelihood activities and capacity building programmes, I would also like to add that there is a need to engage the DWPs in social activities (such as festivals, religious ceremonies, spiritual discourses, discussion with other women like them, competitions like rangoli, cookery, painting, jewellery making, mehndi application, needlework etc.) and recreational activities (movie/video shows, picnics etc) so that their social interactions may be improved.

The situation in which DWPs find themselves is unique wherein they are free to move in the open world but also face social exclusion, driven by social norms and conditioning. I would categorically say that it is good if the society accepts them back and they are mainstreamed into the so-called mainstream society. However, I also do not see why they should not create a parallel world for themselves where they can live a happy life on their own terms and with respect without depending on whether their family or past society accepts or rejects them. Capacity building and generating livelihood opportunities will eventually open the doors for them to the mainstream society.

My good wishes to New Life and all the women prisoners waiting (with hope) rehabilitation.

Dr. M R Ahmed, Additional Inspector General of Prisons, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

Thank you for sharing with me the Gender Community's query on Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners. I agree with Ms. Vanaja's observations about the difficulties faced by women prisoners in their rehabilitation. Given my experience with prisons and prisoners (currently, I am the Additional Inspector General of Prisons, Hyderabad), **I would like to make the following recommendations.**

- There should be frequent interaction with (prisoners') children, family and relatives
- Proper counseling by professionals is required much before the release of the prisoners and the same process should be followed for family members as well (especially the husband and children)
- Following release from the prison, legal assistance and support should be given to sort out family related, occupation related and property related matters (whichever is necessary)

- Existing vocational training programmes in the prisons needs to be revamped and modernized, keeping in view the market trends
- Suitable placement should be arranged as part of proper rehabilitation.
- A small quota of jobs for women in public sector undertaking should be provided
- Rehabilitation packages should be on the basis of individual needs (this should be decided much before the release)
- Development of liaison services between prisoners and communities especially through Discharged Prisoners Aid Society (DPAS) and other voluntary organizations. DPAS is headed by the Collector, the Jail Superintendent and civil society members; however, these DPAS' are not functioning in many states including Andhra Pradesh. In other words, provision of meaningful and workable communication between prison authorities, Government and NGOs, working in this field is required for implementation of rehabilitation measures.
- To avoid stigma, short term prisoners should be put on community service orders i.e. non-custodial measures should be adopted.
- Prison administration should adopt programmes and strategies which relate to gender specific needs of the women (rather than being crime or term of prison specific).
- Even after their release, prisoners ought to be monitored for atleast period of six months which would help in preventing recidivism (i.e. preventing their returning to prison)
- Women need to be given special consideration for liberal grant of Parole, furlough, leave etc.,
- Considering the importance of women for family, liberal policy of premature release from jail should be implemented
- Encourage education for women prisoners so that they can get better (quality) skill training.

Of late some organizations are taking interest in women prisoners' rehabilitation. Prison Ministry of India is one such NGO. Dr. Rani Shankardass, Chairperson, Penal Reform International and Secretary, PRAJA - has also done a lot of work in this field. She would definitely be able to provide more inputs. She can be contacted at ranishankardass@prajaindia.org; mail@prajaindia.org

Madhurima, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), New Delhi

I have gone through your query. It is my pleasure to respond to it.

Regarding organizations which work on issues concerning prison and prisoners in the state of Tamil Nadu, I am hereby attaching a copy of our publication '**Community Participation in Prisons**'. This lists out organizations working on prisons across India, including the state of Tamil Nadu. One such organization working in Chennai, Tamil Nadu is Sisters of St. Annes. The parent body of the organization is Prison Ministry India. Their key activity is working on the rehabilitation of released prisoners. The contact details can be found in our publication. Click the following link to read more: http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/prisons/community_participation_in_prisons.pdf (PDF; Size: 2.5 MB)

I hope this answers your query. For further information or clarification feel free to contact me. You can also visit our website www.humanrightsinitiative.org

Sunil Varghese, Prison Gospel Mission, Kerala

I am writing to you sharing the work of Prison Gospel Mission. It is a registered voluntary social organization and we work mainly in Prisons/jails in Kerala. Our work includes giving moral

correction based on BIBLE and through this we hope to help prisoners transform their lives and also equip them to lead a good life when they come out of prisons.

You may like to know that most of our members were once criminals. They have now completely stopped their criminal lifestyle; leading a spiritual life beneficial not only to their families but also the society. These transformed members of our ministry further help the current prisoners to take a decision; start a CHRIST centered new life (leaving behind all the criminal activities).

At present we do not run a rehabilitation centre for men or women but we do run a children's home where the inmates are the children whose father or mother are in jail serving the prison term.

Regarding the rehabilitation of prisoners we do not have much experience but in one or two cases, we have financed some ex-prisoners to buy cows and goats to earn a living! We Suggest that one could think on the lines of forming a 'society' which can be formed by involving the transformed prisoners, under the leadership of social workers to manufacture pickles, jams, and other fast moving consumer goods (fmcg) items.

[Beeva Rice](#), Confederation of Community Based Organization (CCBO) of India, New Delhi

Thank you very much for raising a query related to plight of prisoners. I am touched by your concern with the prisoners' upliftment (and also being open for further suggestions). I am basically doing the same but for the minority communities in India to improve their lifestyles. Following the discussion within Gender Community regarding prisoners, I think these prisoners' life styles are almost the same as those who are living below the poverty level. Though at least these prisoners are fortunate to have a meal (what ever it may be), but then no freedom!

My point is, irrespective of who it is or where s/he is located; the basic needs of every human being should be provided for by the government. That is what we are fighting for, may be we can work together and fight for the rights of the prisoners and those deprived. Please contact me if you feel like. God Bless!

[Jayadev Sarangi](#), Prison Expert/Regional office for South Asia, United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), New Delhi

Thanks a lot for sharing the good practices of "New Life" in improving the lot of the women prisoners, who are one of the most neglected sections of the society.

From my past experience in looking after the welfare of the women prisoners as Head of Tihar Prisons, I have learnt it hard way that **lack of empowerment** is the primary reason for the plight of women prisoners.

Any programme aiming at rehabilitation of women prisoners need to have big component of **life skill and livelihood training**.

Stigma and discrimination encountered by female ex-prisoners is enormous. Family and the wider community are equally responsible.

During my Tihar tenure I urged through a TV programme to all the participants of the programme to volunteer to **give employment as domestic help** to some former prisoners from the female prison whose conduct had been satisfactory and are certified by the prison authorities. To my dismay none of them came forward.

It is worth noting that most of us employ people in our homes without verifying antecedents of the prospective employees but we are not prepared to keep a reformed person just because the concerned person had a stint in the prison. Looking at the poor conviction rate one can not but agree that some of the people in the prison might be innocent.

Livelihood programme supported by **linkage with the community** through civil society handholding will go a long way in ensuring that the released prisoner does not go astray after release due to vulnerability.

[Priya Jagdale](#), **Baroda Citizens Council, Vadodara**

Greetings from Baroda Citizens Council (BCC)! Thank you for sharing your query with us. BCC works in prison with the objective of **counseling women** on various issues such as relationship problems with their husbands, children and family members. We also provide support for education and shelter to inmates' children. In addition, we provide for legal aid and advice, emotional support to women (while they are in prison) and help them develop self-confidence and self-esteem.

As to your query on Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners, based on discussions with counselors who are working with the women inmates, I would like to share some of our work and experiences particularly with reference to the family counseling programme (of which rehabilitation is a part).

Our **Family Counseling Programme** was initiated in 2004. In addition, we undertake various other activities with women prisoners like vocational training, (condensed) courses on education and health. As mentioned above, we also help them with legal matters and issues related to their children.

Till date we have dealt with 53 cases (solved these cases) and been able to undertake rehabilitation of 10 women prisoners. During the course of rehabilitation, we faced flak from family members; however our persistence (and also the interest of the women themselves) has helped us to deal with issues of rehabilitation. I would like to share an example. There was a case of a woman who was released from the prison. As she was not from Vadodara, we helped her with her stay first through the State Home for Women, and then through our organizational contacts. At the same time, we were in touch with her family members. With regular counseling, we were able to motivate her brother to come and take her back to the family.

There is another case of an inmate charged with the murder of her daughter. Her elder daughter had filed a complaint against her due to which she was convicted. Meeting her revealed that she was mentally disturbed. Regular counseling of the inmate as well as her family members was undertaken. Visits to her home also revealed a lot of information. Today after a year of counseling, her family has realized that they were also in some way responsible for her behavior as they did not take her mental illness seriously. We decided to provide legal aid and her hearing is now in the final stage but today her children, who never had any contacts with her, come to meet her and have also started giving positive responses about her in the court during hearings.

From our side there is one thing we regularly tell the inmates and that is, to keep in constant touch with their family members through letters. We insist that even if they do not get any reply they should not lose hope and stop maintaining the contact. On our behalf, we keep on trying with help of letters, telephonically or through home visits. Till date, you may like to know, barring one or two cases where the family members are very old or ill or in-laws are not ready to accept

(as the inmate has been convicted for murder of their son), we could rehabilitate most of the women prisoners successfully.

In case you would like to know any other details please feel free to contact us at any time. We would like to know the experiences of other NGOs working with prisoners. Please do share with us whatever information is made available through this Gender Community discussion.

[Beatrice Vanaja](#), New Life, Trichirappalli (response 1)

Through the Gender Community discussion on my query, Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners, I am happy to get connected to you all. I wish to thank every one for their contributions and will contact you individually so that we can have some meaningful collaboration.

Dr. Jayadev Sarangi in his response (posted 05 May) said it well about the discrimination the society inflicts on the ex-convicts. I would like to share that we arranged skill development training for the prison inmates with a Hyderabad based Human Resources training academy (imparting highly professionalized training). New Life paid for the training (Rs.7500/inmate). The inmates received 'hospitality training' and we are hoping that when inmates are released, they will seek jobs in housekeeping in the Hotel industry. But I sincerely hope the response of the Hoteliers is positive. Also, since the women have their families they can not shift to far away place (Hotel destinations). Your observation about discrimination has already made me think of the outcome of the training. Though still difficult, there is the absolute need to collaborate with the general public and (hope to) remove their apathy gradually and slowly. Following your response, I am even thinking of engaging a team of researchers to study the mind-set of the population here in our place to gauge whether they would like to employ trained but released 'prisoners'.

In Madhurima's response (posted on 04 May) I got well informed regarding organizations working in prisons or on prison reforms. Despite my busy schedule, I try and spend full two hours each day reading materials related to prisons, prisoners and prison reforms on the website. I must admit that I missed her organizations' website and also the report/document she has sent. Again, she too is right in pointing out that there is apathy everywhere – public, media, and prison officials. If anyone of you happens to do a study on Trichy Central Jail, I could cite several cases of human rights violations.

I would like to add that while prisoners face apathy from the society, the NGOs working with them and for them, face apathy from donors and international agencies! Though we have not approached many donors/funding agencies for supporting our projects, but I am not even sure whether there is anyone in India willing to support our kind of work!

Another thing I wanted to share with all members and that is, we have been doing advocacy, generating awareness on Right to Information, providing legal remedy to the poor women and engaging lawyers. The honorarium paid to the lawyers is seen as against the objectives of our trust by the Assessing Officer of Income Tax Department and we have now been awarded an order to pay Income Tax with penalty. We have appealed against the Order. But it left me wondering, does this mean that the assessing officer feels that the poor in this country do not require access to legal services?

I thank the Gender Community once again for actively getting involved with my query. I do feel that lot of development would take place and collaborative initiatives get going as a follow-up of these discussions.

Vivek Chaturvedi, Durga Gram Chetna evam Vikas Sanstha (DGCVS), Jabalpur

I was initially associated with the Learning Resource Development centre (LRDC) - a World Bank assisted project for Polytechnique Institutes in Madhya Pradesh. Through the LRDC, various programmes were convened under the scheme: TEQUIP (Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme) for the benefit of those seeking/undertaking/linking for training in Polytechnique institutes. Under the TEQUIP scheme, we included the programme for rehabilitation of prisoners (in Jabalpur Central Jail) as well.

Unfortunately, in December 2008 TEQUIP scheme was stopped. However, I decided to continue with many of the programmes of TEQUIP under the banner of an NGO, Durga Gram Chetna evam Vikas Sanstha (DGCVS) located in Jabalpur.

DGCVS was established in the year 2000 with a mission, "Vikas Ke Liye Samarpit Ek Abhiyan" (A Campaign dedicated to Development). It is working for almost a decade now for the people who are backward (due to lack of resources and opportunities) and marginalized. It has done lot of work for women to make them self-dependent. The NGO is also making efforts to make these people engaged in some income generating work through their employment oriented training program.

In March 2009, DGCVS arranged an employment oriented training program for women prisoners in particular with the objective of rehabilitating them. This program arranged at the Jabalpur Central Jail was intended to train inmates on "crafting of handmade paper bags". 40 women prisoners participated in the training programme.

DGCVS is also planning to provide raw materials to the women and after the sale of bags it will disburse fair wages between them. In the later stage when they are released, these women can do the same work in their homes.

In our country there is perhaps lot of NGOs working on rehabilitation of prisoners; they are also training prisoners on production of some consumable products. Though there are some outlets outside of jail, run by jail authorities, but perception of people towards the prison system and also due to lack of publicity of these types of outlets, these are not working all that well. Therefore, we think that "Women's Creation Mart" should be started where products prepared by these women can be made available for sale. After completion of their imprisonment they may come and put their stock at these Marts for sale. Also, after selling of products, dividends earned could be distributed to them. In this proposed system of marketing and management, I feel, responsibility should be taken up by an NGO.

For more information regarding this concept of 'Women's Creation Mart', please mail us or call on + 91-98270-87291.

Surekha Talari, Sudhaar, Social Work in Prison, Bhopal

I am happy to share Sudhaar's- Social Work in Prison experiences. Sudhaar initiated its work with women prisoners but gradually extended its services to male prisoners; it works in seven different jails of Madhya Pradesh. Working on rehabilitation of women prisoners, our experiences and learning has been as follows:

- The rehabilitation intervention is helpful if started at the time when women are in prison. Various kinds of skill training in prison enhance their opportunity for economic rehabilitation. In the case of Sudhaar, we support women prisoners through 'case work

intervention' which means providing for individualized rehabilitation support after their release. This is done taking into account their needs and plans of re-settlement.

- We have also supported women who have been released from prisons helping them to start small businesses from their homes like selling glass jars, saris, artificial jewelry, vegetables etc. These are easy to manage; and since they can work from home it also helps them in forming social ties in the community. Thus, it (indirectly) helps in social rehabilitation of women prisoners.
- Our experience shows that it is essential to have frequent meetings of the family members and the women prisoners; this helps a lot in rehabilitation process later.
- So far, there are no particular schemes with state or central government for rehabilitation of prisoners. Sudhaar has been advocating for a 'rehabilitation scheme' and 'state policy for prisoners' with all government departments in Madhya Pradesh. A policy level intervention is one way to help released prisoners.

I would also like to suggest the same link which Madhurima (response posted on 04 May) cited. This is a useful link which gives information about organizations working in prisons along with the nature of their interventions. Please visit www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/prisons/community_participation_in_prisons.pdf (PDF Size 2.4 MB) to read the helpful information therein.

These were few points I wanted to share with regards to the query. I hope you find it helpful. Please feel free to contact us further on the issue of prisoners.

Sonia Pillai, Family Vision, New Delhi

Thank you to Gender Community for sharing your query with us. New Life has put forth a very valid and pertinent question on 'rehabilitation of women prisoners'. Having worked for the last 14 years with women inmates at Tihar Jail we have found that among other initiatives like income generation etc. **taking a two-pronged approach** to the problem could yield a better result:

Preparation

It is good to prepare the women inmates for a difficult transitional period where they will face exclusion and be rejected by former friends, family, and society. This preparation can be done via individual or group counseling sessions. During these interactions, it is good to give the inmates a "reality check" and remind them that this transitional phase is the time in which they need to be strong and keep their morale high. A poem we often use and then build upon in our counseling sessions with the inmates is:

"Some will love you, some will hate you
Some will flatter, some will slight
Turn from man and look above you
Trust in God and do the right."

We often remind the women inmates that it is not just prisoners who have to take this course of action but also ordinary people in mainstream society have to make a conscious decision many times to lead an upright life "and do the right" even if their circumstances are not particularly encouraging. (Because of the unfortunate shunning of newly released prisoners by mainstream society) We also prepare the inmates not expect too much encouragement from the society (and

even be prepared for active antagonism). But we also realize that it is not enough to just give good advice. A concerned NGO needs to stay in touch with the released inmates for a period of at least 6 months to a year so that the inmate feels that she does have a support system and people who care about her. A helpline or a halfway house can also be a great help.

Soft Skill Training (relating to people)

Learning the basics of good interpersonal relations, we believe, is a great help in integrating back into society. Basics such as courtesy, conversational skills, dressing properly, and improving ones verbal and non verbal communication skills can play a great role in helping them to get good jobs or set up their own enterprises.

P.K. Maniyan, Organisation for Rural Development (ORD), Vellore

ORD is a registered Social Service Organisation working in Vellore District. We have various initiatives like Women's Self Help Groups, Short Stay Home for Women and Children, Old Age Home for Elderly Women and Family Counseling Centre. Through the Family Counseling Centre, we provide counseling services for women prisoners in Vellore -2, Special Female Prison. We have a Sub-Committee with members from various fields to monitor the programme. The District Collector is the chairman and District Social Welfare Officer is the Secretary. It meets once in three months and gives suggestion to improve the programme. Till date our counselors have provided counseling and Rehabilitation for over 3653 prisoners from 2002 onwards. **I would like to share some of our current activities for the welfare of Women prisoners at Special Female Prison. These are:**

- Individual Counseling (in general and also issue/need based; prisoners of different categories in terms of crime/prison term).
- Share (and generating awareness) with all prisoners any welfare programmes from which they can benefit.
- Engage prisoners in group discussions, interactions and group counseling etc.
- Arrange for educational facilities for prisoners and their children within the prison (provide notebooks for those who are studying 8 to 10 std. in the prison).
- Arrange Legal Aid for prisoners especially those who are very poor.
- Home visits and follow up.
- Organize sessions on the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 with families of prisoners with the help of District court, District Social Welfare Office and ORD service provider (on DV Act)

Rehabilitation

- ORD Counselors arrange for school admission for prisoner's children with help of an NGO called SEED in Sriperumbatur, Tamil Nadu.
- Arrange hearing aids for deaf prisoners.
- Conduct Computer and Embroidery Skill Training
- Provide accommodation for Prisoner's children at Short Stay Home during school vacations and also helps them to visit their mothers once in a week in prison.
- Admit released prisoners to the Skill Training Centre for apparel cutting and designing with the help of Balaji Trust, Chennai.
- Help prisoners get loans upto Rs.5000/- to start small business with the help of released Prisoners Welfare Association, Vellore.
- Conduct Sports events and giving prizes inside the prison on 26 January (Republic Day), 15 August (Independence Day) and 02 October (Gandhi Jayanti) to help them ventilate their emotions.
- Conduct Training Programmes for prison Staff on Human Rights and Human behaviour.

- Organize local festivals like Deepavali and Pongal (and also distributed sweets and dresses for prisoners and their children donated by Rotary Club, Vellore)
- Arrange staying facilities for released prisoners at ORD Short Stay Home and supporting them to find jobs for their economic development.

I would like to suggest that you could get in touch with companies like Bata, those in Textiles and Food processing etc. to get job orders for the prisoner's economic development. I would like to **recommend some organization working with Women Prisoners in Tamil Nadu:**

1. Mrs. Pazaniswami, President – SEED Trust, Sriperumathur, Kanchipuram (via), Ponthamalli, Tamil Nadu. Tele no. +91 9444902322
2. People Awareness Social Welfare Groups, Apparel Designing Centre, No 10, 5th Cross St, Hindu Colony, Nanganalore, Chennai.
3. Discharge Prisoner's Association, Fort Round Road, Vellore-4. Tele no. + 91 146 658992;
4. Guild of Service, No 12, Casa Mass Road, Egmore, Chennai -8. Tele no. +91 44 28194828/28194279; e-mail: gosc@dataone.in

Beatrice Vanaja, New Life, Trichirappalli (response 2)

I want to share something regarding the Tamil Nadu Prison Manuals. I think these are not updated. Take also for example the Discharged Prisoners Welfare Society (DPWS) and Prisoners' Cultural committee - the circulars regarding them to Central Jails were issued as early as in 1976. These circulars mention the constitution of 'members of the committee and their eligibility'. During 1970s, there were not many NGOs working - especially those who could be viewed as 'specialized' in Prisoners rehabilitation work. So, the circulars mention - members of Lions Club or Rotary club to be a member of the committees (it is possible that these were the only associations functioning that time). Since the circulars are not updated to involve specialized NGOs; therefore, the prison officials for (namesake) appoint somebody and finish off their routine rituals of appointing a committee.

C S Rama Lakshmi, Hyderabad, Government of Andhra Pradesh

Prisons need lot of reforms more so if we have to deal with women in prisons! First and foremost action, in my view, should be to take care of the young children below the age of 15 years. Women prisoners face both physical and mental trauma. Besides regular health check ups, teaching them yoga and meditation could allow them to have some inner peace (and peaceful life).

Any amount of training in self employment schemes is not going to yield results as getting finance for setting up an Enterprise always remains a challenge. It may be better if the women prisoners are trained in service sector and Jail authorities or NGOs take up the responsibility to certify their credentials. These women can then take up work in areas like house keeping, Geriatric care, etc.

One should also permit frequent interaction with family especially with their children (for stress relief); education and also learning (life) skills can make them better individuals, after release from Jail.

Arun Jindal, Society for Sustainable Development (SSD), Karauli

One institute which is working for prisoners' confidence building/development is "VIPASSANA" in Tihar Jail. Their results are very good. They also have research material on prisoners which could be useful. VIPASSANA can also take sessions with the prisoners' family.

Vinay Somani, R O Somani Charitable Trust, Mumbai

For Trichy, please do contact J. K. Tripathy, IPS jkt_2001@rediffmail.com . He is an upright officer, who I believe, has made a difference in Trichy.

Vibha Rani, AVITOKO, Mumbai

I am sharing with you some details of our organization - **AVITOKO's** work and initiatives with prison inmates.

AVITOKO is a Mumbai based socio-cultural organization and working for the benefit of *special* groups of people. Since its establishment on 01 May 2001, AVITOKO has engaged with diverse groups of (marginalized) people such as school going children (of people belonging to economically weaker sections); with the aged; with orphans; mentally challenged children and above all, prison inmates (both male and female prisoners) of various jails in Mumbai and Pune.

It is since 2003 that AVITOKO has been working with prison inmates. It started its work first with the women inmates of Byculla District jail through Art and Theater workshop. **Our medium of intervention is Art, Theatre, Culture and Literature.** These are the medium of mental 'entrepreneurship' and the result reflects both mental and physical benefits.

Through its Art workshop, AVITOKO provides inmates opportunities to not only reveal their inner talents but also remove their inhibitions; such workshops also provides them some joy and cheerful moments and above all to understand and look at their (inner) creativity. The works of art made by these inmates are later put up for exhibition. They are converted into greeting cards, calendars. AVITOKO has awarded one convicted prisoner for his work of Art; another was given an opportunity to take a class for Warli Painting. It gave him so much confidence that he thought of taking more classes.

Theater workshops also give real mental boost to the participants. Firstly, inmates get a unique opportunity within the boundary of prison walls. Secondly, they try to reveal their 'strength' as this is the power of theatre. Through theater, participants portray (to themselves) several incidents and messages learnt from their lives and then try to imitate these aspects in their lives. For example, through theater they are exposed to dangers of AIDS, child marriage, dowry deaths and other socially relevant (current) issues. When they act, they feel - and then start to realize the importance of certain principles in life (and also follow them).

In literature field, AVITOKO organizes *Kavi Sammelans*. In these, inmates are given an opportunity to recite their poems. After reciting these poems, these are taken by AVITOKO and are sent to different magazines for publications. After publication, the copy of the magazine is sent to the 'poet' (inmates) and the prison authority. AVITOKO's aim is to provide a platform to prisoners for them to enhance their creativity by writing poems, stories, etc.

These are some of the steps AVITOKO has undertaken to boost the prisoners - morally, mentally - so that they can be good human beings and also think for their betterment (thus serving their families, society and the nation in right spirits).

Trishul Makeswar, Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD), Amravati

I am sharing information regarding VARHAD based in Amravati District of Maharashtra. The organization is completely dedicated to Prisoners issues. I hope the following details would be useful for members, particularly our member, Ms. Beatrice from Trichy.

Voluntary Action for Rehabilitation and Development (VARHAD) is a registered organization under Bombay Public Trust Act with a vision to respond to the changing social reality by promoting social justice, liberty and dignity of all. Since 2001, its mission has been to prevent occurrence of crime and further criminalization of prisoners; and facilitate reintegration of prisoners with their family. VARHAD works extensively on criminal justice system in five districts of Maharashtra State. Programs are divided into following Initiatives:

- Prevention of Crime and Community Development Initiative
- Custodial Justice Initiative
- Family and Rehabilitation Initiative
- Children of Prisoners Initiative

Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners

After completion of their term in prison, women prisoners eagerly wait to go back to their homes. But they face problem of acceptance by society. Community members including close relatives hesitate to help them. Many women are rejected at their own homes. The stamp of 'a prisoner' remains with them; if prisoners reveal their identity when seeking livelihood, then society does not support and employ them. On 23 May, 2003 as part of its endeavor of skill development and rehabilitation, VARHAD established **Savitibai Phule Rehabilitation Centre** in Amravati Prison. The centre organizes series of workshops and training programs for convicted as well as under trial women prisoners in Amravati Central Jail.

Following regular programs are running by the Centre:

- Tailoring Courses conducted in collaboration with Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Amravati. On successful completion of course, trainees are awarded with ITI Certificate. And when they leave the prison, they are provided with Tool Kit so that immediately they can start their own tailoring business.
- Literacy classes as well as Standard Board Examination organized in Amravati Central Jail. Every year women appear for examinations (The Central Jail is offered as an Examination Centre by the Board).
- Beauty Parlor Courses in collaboration with ITI, Amravati. The successful candidates are provided with Pass Certificate. They also get Tool Kit when released from prison, so that they can start their business.
- Handicraft courses

Outside prisons - following programs have been initiated:

- In collaboration with Women and Child Development Department, women released from prisons are provided with Rs.5000 cash
- VARHAD supports in availing loans from Bank of Baroda under their scheme for released prisoners, the loan amount being Rs.25000
- Recently VARHAD organized a Workshop for starting Cooperative Society for released prisoners
- In collaboration with Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) industries in Amravati and Wardha, VARHAD supports released prisoners for getting skilled or unskilled work

Following Organizations also work on women prisoners' issues:

- CHRI, Delhi

- Prayas, Mumbai (TISS project); Contact Person: Mr. Vijay Raghavan
- Prayas, Delhi; Contact Person: Mr. Amod Kant (IPS Officer)
- Sudhar, Bhopal; Contact Person: Ms. Surekha Talari
- Majlis, Mumbai : Flavia Agnes
- Navjyoti, Delhi; Contact Person: Dr. Kiran Bedi
- Sahyadri, Solapur

Sampath Thattai Ramesh, Crime Statistics and Communications, Karnataka

The problems of women prisoners are special. I am sharing here some of the measures taken in the Karnataka Prison Department.

Special Facilities to Women Prisoners and their Children: Honorable Supreme Court of India, while disposing of Writ Petition (Civil) 559/94 R D Upadhaya Vs Andhra Pradesh Government and others, has given a landmark judgment. As per the guidelines issued by the Hon'ble Court, Government of Karnataka has amended Rule 86 of **Karnataka Prisons Rules 1974** and incorporated detailed instructions for providing diet, clothing to the children of age group 0-3 years and 3-6 years; special diet and extra clothing to pregnant and lactating women prisoners; diet and clothing/articles for the children of age group 0-6 years viz. stainless steel tumbler, bowls with lid, plate, spoon and milk feeding spoon; 500 ml water container with lid, cotton nappy pads, sweater with socks, rubber sheet, washable children's bed, mosquito net, baby powder, brush, soap, toys, etc.

Several training programmes have been conducted for the benefit of the prisoners. For instance, on 14.6.2006 Clara Incense Institute and Ranga Rao and Sons, Mysore, conducted a training programmed on *Agarabatti* manufacturing to male and female inmates of Central Prison, Mysore; a reformation programme for 8 days (26.8.2006 – 2.9.2006) was organized for the female inmates of Central Prison, Belgaum, by Mata Neelambika Devi, Hunshyal Math; The Art of Living, Bijapur Unit, organized computer training classes at the Central Prison, Bijapur on 6.11.2006.

The Prison Department also took **several initiatives to engage with the prisoners**. For instance, Jagadguru Mathe Gangadevi, Akka Mahadevi Anubhava Peeta, Dharwad, in her discourse appealed to prisoners not to repeat the mistakes they once committed; Spoorti Mahila Samaja, Hanumantha Nagara and Uttarahalli Mahila Seva Samiti jointly organized "Sankranti Festival" celebration at Central Prison, Bangalore; Rangoli competition was organized for the female prisoners at Central Prison, Belgaum.

Government of Karnataka has also sanctioned several items as follows:- In order to ensure greater dental and general hygiene of prisoners, the Government of Karnataka sanctioned issue of tooth powder and bathing soap to the prisoners at Government cost (GO No. HD187PRA2006, dt.15.09.2007); it also sanctioned the reduction of security deposit towards parole from Rs.6000 to Rs.1000. In addition, the Government sanctioned issue of different varieties of breakfast on weekdays instead of uppittu everyday (GO No.HD177 PRA 2006 dt.8.6.2007).

Three **female convict prisoners** who were released prematurely on 15.8.2006 from Central Prison, Belgaum, have been **appointed as Anganawadi Assistants and Workers** by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Karnataka.

Other initiatives include: Introduction of World Space Satellite Radio for the Recreation of Prisoners; introduction of petition boxes in various prisons in Karnataka for redressal of prisoners grievances; establishment of Crèches and Nurseries in the prison premises for children of women prisoners; programme on rehabilitation of released prisoners both men and women; launch of

'Meal Scheme' by Akshaya Patra Foundation of ISKCON; Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centre (VCTC) to conduct blood test to detect HIV infection at Central Prison, Bangalore.

Under Prison Rules, **prisoners may now communicate to their kith and kin, friends and advocates, through the telephone booths once a week** for five minutes. Shri. M P Prakash, Hon'ble Minister for Home, Law, Legal and Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Karnataka, inaugurated the Telephone booths at Central Prison, Bangalore on 16.4.2007.

Suggestions:

Though the vocational training in tailoring, embroidery, *agarbatti* making, candle making, Ikebana, bakery, etc. are provided at the prison to women prisoners, these are themselves not adequate for providing employment after women prisoners get discharged. Literacy programs and provision for distance education in the prisons are nevertheless proving useful.

A sustainable model for rehabilitation of women prisoners was conceived as follows but could not be implemented:

The Prison Department/NGO may identify a major industry such as garment industry which is popular in the region and enter into Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with them. The Prison Department may provide space in the Prison premises free of cost. The industry may provide machinery, raw materials and training to the women prisoners. They shall also be paid wages at the prevailing market rate. This viable model will be helpful for women prisoners to earn during their stay in the Prison and also learn a vocation. There is scope for their absorption after release in the same industry.

The Society for the Care of the Indigent (So care Ind), #2642, 12th B Main, II Stage, Rajajinagar, Bangalore (Phone No. 080-23321864) has been looking after children of prisoners (both men and women) by providing them food, clothing, shelter and education upto 10th Standard. There are several other organizations of this nature in Bangalore.

Please also visit www.karnatakaprison.org

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Gender Community in India at se-gen@solutionexchange-un.net.in with the subject heading "Re: [se-gen] Query: Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners in Trichy – Advice; Referrals Additional Reply."

Disclaimer: *In posting messages or incorporating these messages into synthesized responses, the UN accepts no responsibility for their veracity or authenticity. Members intending to use or transmit the information contained in these messages should be aware that they are relying on their own judgment.*



Copyrighted under Creative Commons License "[Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/)". Re-users of this material must cite as their source Solution Exchange as well as the item's recommender, if relevant, and must share any derivative work with the Solution Exchange Community.



Solution Exchange is a UN initiative for development practitioners in India. For more information please visit www.solutionexchange-un.net.in
