
ANALYSIS OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PRISONERS WITHIN THE STATE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Dr. D.P.Verma, Professor, Department of Laws, Regional Centre Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh & Mr. Nitish Kumar Sharma, Research Scholar, P.hd (Pursuing), Department of Laws, Himachal Pradesh University, Summer Hill, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Vocational training is a training that focuses on the knowledge and abilities required for a particular profession, craft, or job function. Earlier, this training was restricted to certain trades like welding, automotive services, and construction, but as time has passed, the scope of vocational training has broadened. These days, a wide number of occupational responsibilities are also being categorised under this heading, including retail training, tourism management, paralegal training, property management, food and beverage management, computer network management, and floral design. Therefore, as part of the prison correctional programs, the vocational training and skill development program plays one of the most remarkable role in bringing positive reforms within the behaviour of the inmates. There have been various provisions incorporated within the Himachal Pradesh prison manual, 2021 which are dealing with the vocational training and skill development programs. In our study, we will try to study those provisions in order to gain a better understanding and to make an analysis on how these programs are being implemented and what benefits they are providing to the inmates in order to help them lead respectable and a good social life in the coming time.

I. Introduction

The prison manual is one of the most important documents which facilitates the day-to-day administration of the prisons within India. It includes all the requirements with regard to the management as well as all the programs which are essential to be executed within the prisons in order to bring reforms within the lives of the prisoners. The current Himachal Pradesh Jail Handbook, 2000 is abolished per the Hon'ble Supreme Court's directives, and the New H.P. Prison Manual, 2021 is approved for administration and control of the State's jails in order to bring the manual in line with the most recent specifications. To ensure uniformity in the supervision of jails across the country, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, distributed a draught of the Model Prison Manual 2016 to all States/UTs. The inhabitants' cuisine preferences, weather trends, and geographic considerations have all been taken into account when modifying or altering this Model Prison Manual. In addition to emphasising the deployment of new technologies to make prisons more transparent and efficient so that inmates can contribute more constructively to these activities, the handbook places a heavy emphasis on the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. Chapter 15 of the HP prison manual, 2021 contains the detailed provisions regarding the vocational training and skill development.

1.1 Objectives Behind Vocational Training And Skill Development

Programs for skill development and vocational training are considered as key components of jail correctional initiatives. Such programmes aims to:

- (i) Instil discipline and a work ethic among prisoners.
- (ii) Forming positive attitudes about work and the value of labour.
- (iii) Fostering the inmates'
 - (a) Physical and mental health;
 - (b) The proper development of their minds through intelligent manual labour;
 - (c) A spirit of camaraderie and a cooperative way of life; and
 - (d) A sense of group adjustment;
- (iv) Increasing their capacity for sustained hard work; and

- (v) Forming the work habits of concentration, steadiness, regularity, and accuracy.
- (vi) Providing and enhancing employment skills,
- (vii) Helping prisoners rediscover their sense of self-worth and independence, and
- (viii) Preparing prisoners for long-term social reintegration and rehabilitation.
- (ix) Giving prisoners a perception of employment status and so enhancing their sense of financial stability.
- (x) Keeping prisoners actively employed in worthwhile and beneficial activities.
- (xi) Preventing a lack of discipline, idling, and chaos among them.

Maintaining a high level of morale among them will help them develop a sense of self and adhere to institutional rules.

1.2 Board of Skill Development Programme And Training

At the prison headquarters, there is a provision for the establishment of "Board of Skill Development Programme and Vocational Training" given complete financial and administrative authority, with the Director General of Prisons & Correctional Services serving as its Chairman. The Board's duties includes:

- a) Planning and implementing programmes for skill development and vocational training,
- b) Securing funding for such programmes,
- c) Establishing a production policy,
- d) Looking at the economics of such programmes,
- e) Putting prison skill development programmes on a firm commercial footing, and
- f) Ensuring coordination at all levels are among the things that must be done
- g) Evaluate the performance of the skill development programme of each institution,
- h) Introduce practices and procedures of modern management of production,
- i) Guide, supervise, direct and control all matters relating to institutional skill development programmes and vocational training,
- j) Organize workshops in after-care homes for discharged prisoners, and
- k) Promote marketing of prison products.

- 1) In consultation with the Skill Development Agency of the state may identify certain trades as suitable for the inmates to be trained in so that once they are released, they may be gainfully employed.

According to guidelines from the Department of Prisons and Correctional Services, government agencies, semi-government departments, cooperatives, and public undertakings are required to purchase items made in prison industries. To reduce the possibility of waste or misappropriation, clear guidelines have been established for the acquisition of raw materials, consumables, tools, and equipment. When inmates are released from jail, a policy has been established for their employment in public enterprises, State-run cooperative farms, and cooperatively run agro-based businesses.

1.3 Vocational Training For Prisoners in Himachal Pradesh

As per the H.P.Prison Manual, 2021, every central and district prison is required to set up vocational training programmes in self-supporting trades and occupations for the employable inmates. These programmes need to be accessible to convicts awaiting trial who volunteer to participate after having their aptitude for work assessed. In larger prisons, an Industrial Training Institute should be formed wherever possible. If one cannot be established, local Industrial Training Institutes can assist in educating the inmates. The prison needs enough personnel to manage different training initiatives effectively. To meet the training requirements of its inmates, it should be well furnished with classrooms and teaching tools for executing a variety of tasks.

In terms of forming homogeneous groups and establishing a routine and timetable for projects, the prison is required to have a well defined organisation for training programmes. The costs associated with training initiatives, including spending on personnel, supplies, and equipment, are considered to be of vital investments for the purpose of offender training and resettlement. The vocational training of juvenile offenders, young adults who have committed crimes, and other people who might gain from the training projects receive special attention.

Every production unit and every vocational training programme is having a sufficient number of qualified technical employees. These individuals could be transferred or deputed from the State's Industrial Training Institutes to the penitentiary.

Programs for vocational training are to be created to meet the demands of offenders serving short, medium, and lengthy sentences. To develop vocational training programmes on a

practical and pragmatic basis, active links are to be established with the Department of Technical Education, Directorate of Industries (including Cottage Industries), Industrial Training Institutes, Polytechnics, and Vocational Training Institutions. After completing their vocational training programmes, convicts should be tested by the state's or union territory's department of technical education. If they pass, they should be given a regular Certificate or Diploma by that department.

1.4 Employment of Prisoners

The directions given in the Prison Manual clearly says that in addition to offenders, prisoners awaiting trial who volunteer to work should also be hired on skill development programmes and get vocational training within their confines. Under-trial inmates who work in agriculture or the prison business should be paid fairly and equitably according to the same scale as convicts. They should also be provided with labor-intensive food and other amenities. Under no circumstances should remand and under trial inmates be permitted to speak with convicted inmates. Except in an emergency and with the Superintendent's permission in writing, no criminal prisoner condemned to labour, employed on labour at his own request, or engaged in labour while awaiting trial shall be forced to work for more than nine hours per day.

The Medical Officer must periodically check on the inmates while they are working and must have their weights documented in their history tickets at least once every two weeks. When the medical officer believes that a prisoner's health is being negatively impacted by employment in a particular type or class of labour, the prisoner must be transferred to another kind or class of work that the medical officer deems more suited for him.

Training in a variety of skills should be provided to inmates who have been given medium- and long-term sentences so they can compete on the outside job market.

The following considerations should be taken into account when planning skill development programmes for intended inmate employment:

- a) Inmates' mental and physical well-being
- b) Security, custody, and discipline requirements
- c) Age
- d) Sentence length
- e) Inmates' skills and talents and potential for skill acquisition
- f) Inmates' urban and rural backgrounds

Prisoners who have received a term of less than a year should be engaged in gardening, work centres, and work camps, and should be paid an appropriate compensation for their job. In closed or open prisons, inmates who have received sentences of one year or more should work in production units.

Images of Products made by the Prisoners in Himachal Pradesh:



1.5 Skill Development Programmes

It has been laid down in the Manual that the prison economy ought to be structured on a business-plus-commercial basis. The different government departments should give preference to prison products when buying items for use in offices. The skill development programmes should also cover crucial institutional upkeep services including food, sanitation and hygienic, hospital, other prison, repairs, and maintenance. Prisoners may also work in the upkeep and development of prison buildings, for which they will be paid appropriately in accordance with the Public Works Department's regulations.

Construction, masonry, carpentry, plumbing, electric fitting, tailoring, fabrication of ready-made garments, leather work, driving, prison servicing, agriculture, horticulture, dairy, poultry, floriculture, maintenance of diesel engines, maintenance of electric pumps, tractor repairing, automobile servicing and repairing, cane work, basket making, pottery, book binding, and other services needed by the community should all be included in prison skill development programmes.

Every prisoner sentenced to simple imprisonment who chooses to perform labour will typically be assigned to hard labour of the kind that is most appropriate for him or her and for which they are now qualified. No prisoner who is physically capable of performing hard labour, medium labour, or light labour shall be assigned to medium or light labour.

Any offender who has been given a sentence of hard imprisonment cannot ever have their class or kind of work dictated by considerations of profit or convenience. It will only be determined in light of the convict's health and the prison's rules governing the employment of prisoners.

Each production unit should always have a standard list of equipment, tools, accessories, and spare parts, which should be prepared and kept up to date.

Every institution ought to have a separate, well-run maintenance department. Workshop to quickly fix broken machinery and equipment and avoid breakdowns. On business lines, the way that accounts and inventory are organised needs to be updated.

A standard list of equipments, tools, accessories and spare parts, which each production unit must always have, should be prepared and maintained.

In every institution there should be a separate and properly organized maintenance workshop to repair the machinery and equipment in time and to prevent breakdown.

Wages should not just be little and unfair; it should also be equitable and fair. These rates need to be uniformed while taking into account the minimum salaries announced by the government from time to time. The pay should be evaluated every three years and updated as needed in order to keep the wage system in prisons in line with that in the free population.

According to guidelines that the State Government will establish for this reason, a portion of the convict's salary shall be withheld for his general maintenance in jail (including nutrition, clothing, and bedding) as well as a portion for the victim compensation fund and other amounts. Every month on a set date, the pay should be paid into the prisoner's savings account, and the passbook should be kept with the particular prisoner.

The tasks to be imposed on females or young offenders respectively shall not in any case exceed two thirds of the maximum task for hard and medium labour, prescribed in respect of adult male convicts.

Under the premise that sufficient security measures are taken and no male staff is deployed, female prisoners may be sent to work in open prisons specifically created for female prisoners.

At no point in time may a jail official or any other individual hire a prisoner for any type of private employment or service.

If the capacity and know-how are there, private parties or industrial units may be permitted to approach prisons to hire inmate labour for their manufacturing needs. It should be ensured that these private parties and industrial organisations pay the proper wages and other expenses.

1.6 Agriculture Related Facilities

The following agricultural infrastructure facilities should be made available to the prisoners:

- a) When developing skill development programmes and vocational training in correctional institutions, great attention should be given to agriculture, agro-based

industries, and other related activities.

- b) In order to use the land most effectively, it should be thoroughly examined in terms of soil analysis, availability, fertility, salinity, and demand for drainage. In this regard, assistance from Block Development Officers, State Agriculture Department employees, and other affiliated organisations should be sought.
- c) Where land is available, each new prison building in a rural area should have a well enclosed farm.
- d) Appropriate irrigation infrastructure need to be present on the farmland. On each farm, the necessary building structure should be built, and internal roads should be laid.
- e) Each farm should have all of the necessary tools and spare components on hand. Large farms should also have a maintenance shop set up.
Prisoners assigned to agricultural farms for labour should be distributed across the farm in groups, with a leader chosen for each group.
- f) Prison Headquarters should create regulations outlining the requirements for an offender to be placed on open agricultural farms.
- g) Prison farms should have access to the same subsidies that farmers receive for buying electricity, equipment, and fertiliser.
- h) For the development of agriculture and related activities, adequate funding should be made available, and its accounts should be kept separate.
- i) Each agricultural unit should have the necessary security staff on hand, and their roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined.
- j) The farm goods should be used in the prison first before being sold to other government agencies and being sold on the outside market.
- k) Each unit's effectiveness should be assessed yearly in relation to the goals set and attained.
- l) The prison authorities will decide how many inmates are involved in farming activities in closed prisons based on the demand.
- m) Prison staff should get training in a variety of agriculture and related fields. In the prison farms, biogas plants, windmills, solar cooking ranges, etc. should be installed.
- n) Produce costs for agriculture and other industries should be determined strictly on a commercial basis.
- o) Open agricultural institutions and institutions with associated farms should vary their skill-development initiatives in accordance with different cropping strategies, such as mixed farming, irrigated crops, dry farming, etc.

- p) Agricultural employment, industrial work, and agro-based manufacturing units can all be found in certain open jails.
- q) Wherever possible, steps must be done to promote horticulture, floriculture, the production of medicinal plants, and similar endeavours.

Analysis of Vocational & Skill Development Programs:

As far as the vocational & skill development programs are concerned, they seem to be extensively incorporated in the Prison Manual to provide a particular direction to the prison authorities to train the prisoners. And no doubt efforts have too been made to implement these programs. But there are various issues faced at different levels to implement these programs. It mainly includes the following issues:

- 1) **Overcrowding:** Due to the problem of overcrowding in the prisons there are issues to provide the skill development opportunities to each and every inmate. For example, in Model Central Jail, Kanda, Shimla, there are 548 inmates including both the men and women while the capacity is to entertain 438 inmates. Similarly, in other jails too this remains a major problem.
- 2) **Inadequacy of Funds:** As prisons are considered a burden on the State, the lack of availability of funds is also an issue in providing opportunities to the prisoners to get constant vocational training and develop their skills.
- 3) **Less Coverage:** Only major prisons are covered, as far as small prisons are concerned, they don't get adequate attention and as a result inmates in such prisons don't get the opportunities to develop their skills.

Suggestions & Conclusion

The goal of the vocational training programmes provided in Indian jails for criminals who need to undergo rehabilitation is to assist build the inmates' desire to work, feeling of self-help, and cooperative spirit by allowing them to collaborate with others in a controlled setting. Vocational training and prison labour are two examples of the rehabilitative approaches used in Indian jails. In the criminal justice system in India, incarceration is intended to rectify, rehabilitate,

and reintegrate offenders into society. Can also be inferred by going through the above-mentioned provisions contained in the HP prison manual that a lot has been done to improve the skills of the prisoners and to develop the sense of responsibility, corporation among the prisoners by providing vocational training to them.

One of the best possible solutions to the problems being faced in the implementation of these programs is to overcome the problem of overcrowding. If it gets reduced, automatically each inmate will get some opportunity to become part of these programs and gain something good for their livelihood.

Other possible remedy is to take help from various organisations like NGO's working in providing vocational training & skill development to get attached with the prison authorities and provide opportunities for the prisoners.

Though it cannot be denied that there have been lots of issues regarding the work being assigned to the prisoners and other prison administrative related issues but still there has been a ray of hope as can be inferred from the provisions that the Indian criminal justice system is heading towards rehabilitation and reformation of the inmates through these programs which if implemented properly will prove a boon for building good character and converting the inmates into responsible citizens which will help to offer their contribution for the growth of the country.

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