

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE ON

# Post Release Rehabilitation Facility for Prisoners in India

A REPORT



*Antarkranti*

*Prisoner Reformation & Rehabilitation Program*



As per Prison Statistics 2011 of National Crime Records Bureau there were 1382 jails in India on 31.12.2011. Against the available total capacity of 3,32,782 in the jails, the occupancy was 3,72,962. Of this population, 2,41,200 prisoners (i.e., 64.7% of total inmates) were under-trials, which means their offence was not proved. 15,94,716 persons were released during 2011.

As rehabilitation measure from Prison Departments of the States, out of 1594716 persons released during 2011 only 55350 (3%) got rehabilitation services. No information is available regarding the type of rehabilitative service needed or given. Legal service assistance was provided to 52042 persons (i.e., 2.01 %). At the time of release, 1532 prisoners (i.e., only 0.09% of the total number of persons released during 2011) were given onetime financial assistance (information on the amount not available). 1776 convicts (i.e 0.11% of total number of persons released), were rehabilitated. Not even 1% of persons released had access to education, mental health services, employment or short stay, because, no such service institution exists in the country.

'Antarkranti' is the lead initiative in prisoner reformation & rehabilitation, working in prisons across the country and contributing to crime prevention. The current report is a mark of the Antarkranti's lead towards raising the cause of prisoner rehabilitation and brings the subject in public domain for dialogue and planning of action.

The society assumes that it gets liberated of crime and its resultant dangers once the offender or criminal is sent behind the bars. We conveniently relax with a misplaced notion that perhaps the delinquent person would never return to the social system in which we stay. However, contrary to its at-ease approach the society needs to accept the reality that after the trial or passing the sentence the person sent to incarceration would return to it. We need to ask ourselves an obvious question – how do we want him to return? Do we want him/her to return as a criminal with vengeance in the mind or a transformed and positive citizen?

The duration of imprisonment is the time in which an incarcerated person can either be left to himself and fate or he could be given knowledge and opportunity to realize his/her powerful divine identity that can transform him into an industrious and valuable unit of humanity.

Mankind can never afford to ignore prison population just because they are temporarily secluded from mainstream society. Having done this we would rather create more miscreants. The punitive actions, also, cannot alone be understood as tools of correction. Retributory actions are effective as deterrents to offensive behavior but not sole measure for correction. With lacs of people coming in and going out of prisons every year the society needs to rise to the cause of prisoner correction and rehabilitation. Considering prisoners as a part of the community, giving them method & opportunity to change and a fair chance to return to the normal society is expected from civilized society.

An individual is the basic unit of society. Therefore, to establish a society free of apprehensions, threats and insecurity, individuals have to be set free from evil thoughts that culminate in evil actions. Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan believes in human potential and strives to awaken the divine powers of individuals through 'Brahm Gyan' (Direct Perception of Soul) to eliminate the evil from the mind. Antarkranti is a program committed to transform prisoners into potential peace makers through 'Brahm Gyan' & support them into social reintegration post their release.

Initiatives under Antarkranti are oriented with the aim to guide the prison population towards the discovery of their peaceful and progressive eternal being. It also aims to handhold them to become productive and responsible human beings. Antarkranti is dedicated to create services and infrastructure for the reformation and rehabilitation of this section of the community and it calls upon every member of human society to come and be a part of this reform movement.

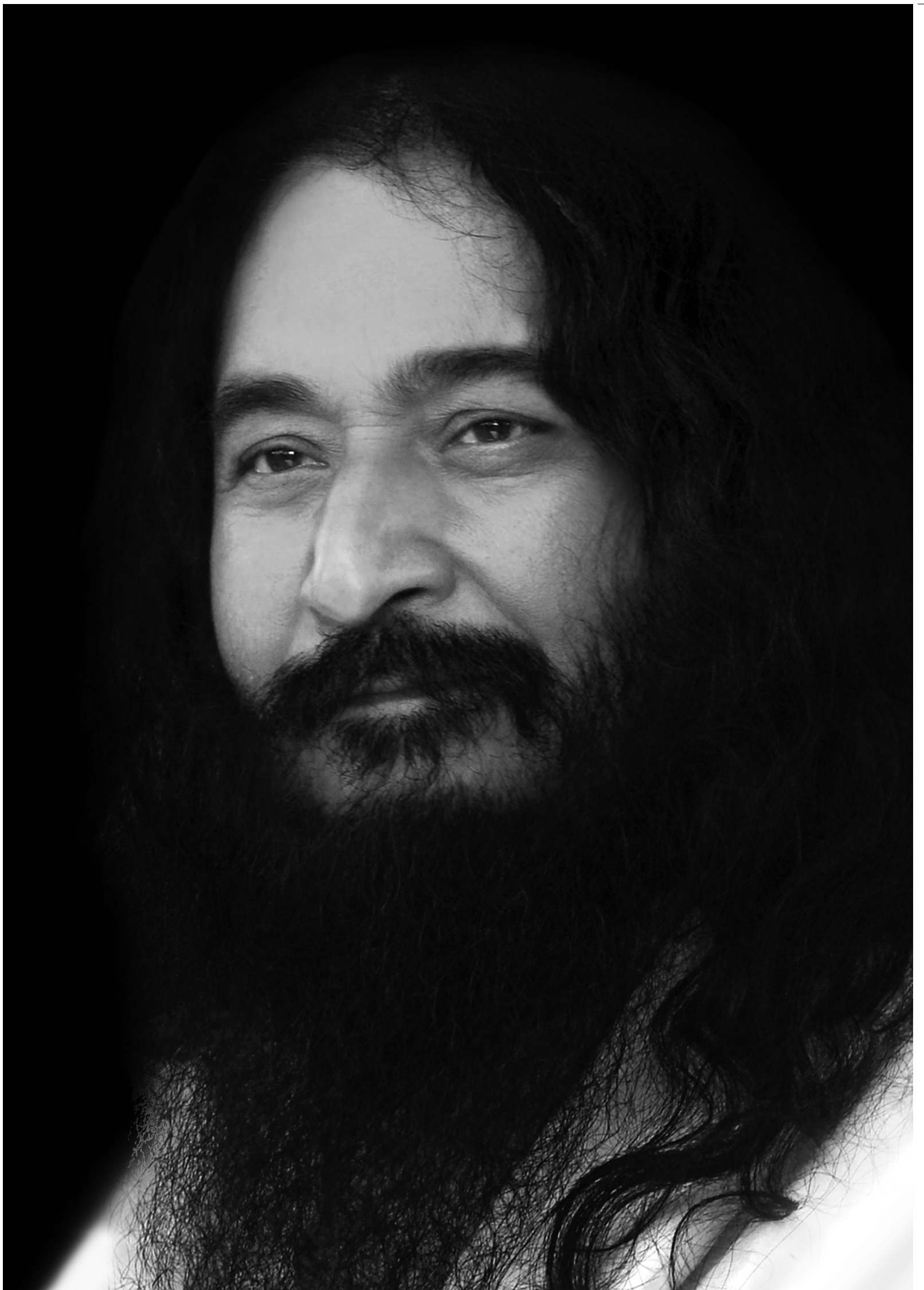
May we together build peace for speedy and perpetual progress.

To the right

SHRI ASHUTOSH MAHARAJ JI

Founder & Head

Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan



## NEED OF POST RELEASE REHABILITATION (PRR) FACILITY FOR PRISONERS IN INDIA

### PURPOSE

To stimulate and encourage various stakeholders particularly the media experts, CSR and corporate officials, philanthropists, academicians and strategists to consider the neglected issue of prisoner rehabilitation and crime prevention. The same is to be focused as an important social issue along with Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan (DJJS) to achieve the goal of checking crime in the society by preventing the reversion of releasing prisoners through post release rehabilitation facility. The concept of a consolidated post release rehabilitation facility that caters to varied immediate and gradual needs of released prisoners to help them join mainstream society as normal citizens does not exist in India or in South East Asia. Hence, the discussion is proposed for creation of sustainable facility that includes a short stay facility which provides immediate basic need of food, clothing, shelter and health along with corrective and rehabilitative interventions for education, skill development and employment post their release.

## BACKGROUND

Prison is a place to physically confine people who do anything wrong and illegal as per law. Depriving them of social interaction and personal freedom, with an aim to carry out investigation & trial or to incarcerate/punish those, whose offence is proved, with an objective to correct them. But, the question arises whether punitive actions are effective to correct the offensive tendencies of prisoners in general? A very important fact associated with prisoners is that, 'not all are criminals' and a huge number of prisoners are victims of circumstances and have committed offences in a momentary rage, some are framed and others helpless. Many instances prove that a significant number of prisoners not only develop a revengeful mind-set even during a small period of incarceration but also get criminalized to a major extent during long imprisonment. This is indicated by the prison records that many first time prisoners often come back to jails on charges of more or other offences and are then termed as repeaters, reflecting that this set of prison population did not get corrected rather, joined mainstream crime. Therefore, it is necessary to push for development of strong, effective and result oriented reformatory intervention instead of standalone punitive actions. This approach will certainly help the prisoner to correct their criminal tendencies and prevent negative orientation of mind-set who may otherwise have a potential to serve the society in a positive manner.

## PRISONERS POST-RELEASE REHABILITATION— A JUSTIFICATION

The population of the prison has two major categories - the under trials and the convicts. The convicts stay in jail for a period that can be anything from few weeks to life sentence. There are a total of 1,393 jails in India with a total population of 3,20,450 prisoners at any one point of time (Prison Statistics 2012). There is a huge turnover of prisoners in the jails. For example in Tihar jail only in the year 2011-12 total numbers of people who came in was 54763 and around 53495 people were released. Which means around 1,00,000 prisoners came in and went out of only Tihar Jail in this duration (Source Annual Review 2012 Delhi Prisons). However, the statistics from all the jails of India are huge with around 16,04,141 prisoners were released from jails in the year as per Prison Statistics India 2010.

A prisoner who is incarcerated for a long period whether a professional criminal or otherwise, gets disconnected from his family and society at large. The stigma of being a prisoner is a major reason, which plunders relationships with their families and insulates them from the social structure. Often inmates become victims of criminal networking during incarceration which makes it almost impossible get into normal life post their release. For those who are released on bail a legal battle that he/she has to fight becomes a lifelong challenge due to the lengthy judicial system.

Society neither accepts them after being released nor gives them a second chance for their correction and rehabilitation. Hence, there is an inevitable need for creation of a Post Release Rehabilitation (PRR) facility for released prisoners with the purpose to provide a transitory place for short stay, skill development, employment, education, psychological support, health services with more impetus on mental health. This would help to prevent them from reversion into crime and reduce the risk of criminal networking that one might do post his/her release if not rehabilitated. Also, risks like suicide by the released inmate can be averted.

Shri Ashutosh Maharaj Ji, Head & Founder; DJJS conceptualized the formation of systematic



post-release rehabilitation facility in India. There are not many initiatives for post release rehabilitation world over (A few exceptions of such initiatives in Iran & Singapore). In India, only 'Antarkranti' – the prisoner rehabilitation and reformation wing of DJJS is working for a systematic post release rehabilitation program which includes short stay, education support, health services, training & skill development, and psychological support along with correction programs inside the jail.

The existing setup with DJJS is falling short to meet the rising demands of basic minimum infrastructure required for Post Release Rehabilitation (PRR), that needs to be further developed. The real challenge is that no focus and importance is given to the issue of PRR. Most of prisoners to be released are estranged by their families and do not have a place to go once they are released. They require immediate psychological and health services, for which the basic provision does not exist. Significance of facilities like education/skill development, social linkages and employment post release in crime prevention is still waiting to be advocated at level of various stakeholders.

In the light of the above situation it is of vital importance that along with all judicial and law enforcement efforts, work should also be done to synergize rehabilitative programs with

reformation work.

This Round Table Conference was the first step in addressing the issue of "Need of Post Release Prisoner Rehabilitation Facility in India". The objective of the meeting was to discuss the issues and difficulties prisoners face after their release and get the opinion of various stakeholders on ways to support and reform the prisoner. The ultimate goal is to establish a Post Release Rehabilitation Facility for Prisoners in partnership and support with stakeholders including media and corporate. This conference focused on practical issues involved in a prisoner's life, particularly post his release.

25 participants from media, CSR, advocacy, law etc. took part in the conference from different organizations. A list of participants is appended. (Annexure 1)



## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

S wami Vishalanand, Director, 'Antarkranti – Prisoner Reformation & Rehabilitation Program' of the DJJS welcomed all the participants and gave a brief introduction of Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan. He mentioned that Shri Ashutosh Maharaj Ji Founder & Head of the organization identified the prisoners as potential human resource in need of direction and opportunity. He informed the group that His Holiness Shri Ashutosh Maharaj Ji formed Antarkranti - Prisoner Reformation & Rehabilitation Program as an amalgamation of spiritual, social and economic components, giving prisoners an experience of new dimensions of life taking route to their reformation & rehabilitation and initiated its work in 1995 from Delhi Prisons, Tihar. Antarkranti Program emerged as an initiative of its kind in India with its reach today to 27 jails in India and a lead agency in correcting prisoners and mainstreaming them as responsible and productive citizens in the society.

Sadhvi Jaya Bharti, Programme Coordinator of Antarkranti gave a visual presentation emphasizing "Need of Post Release Prisoner Rehabilitation Facility in India". She mentioned that all prisoners are not criminals, and most of them are victims of circumstances and have committed offences in momentary rage, and some are framed and suspects. Many instances prove that a significant number of prisoners not only develop revengeful mindset even during a small period of incarceration but also begin to develop a criminal mindset during long imprisonment. The prison records indicate that many first time prisoners often come back to jails on charges of offences and are termed as repeaters, reflecting that this set of prison population did not get corrected and have joined crime mainstream. The program Coordinator indicated that there is scope to correct criminal tendencies and prevent negative orientation of mindsets of such inmates who may otherwise have potential to serve the society in a more positive manner. The presentation threw light on:

- Reformatory and developmental projects of Antarkranti Program running in 27 jails of the

country

- Success stories of the Antarkranti Program for released prisoners.
- Case studies of released prisoners who faced challenges in joining mainstream society.
- Scope and need of Post Release Rehabilitation Home for reintegrating released prisoners in the society through education, employment, skill development, health (including mental health) and social linkages.

Two former inmates of Tihar Jail Shri Ajay Rai and Shri Arvind Akela were invited to share their post-release experiences and views. Their interaction with the participants was stimulating and tuned the gathering to brainstorm on the need and importance for a post release rehabilitation facility. They mentioned that the common experiences of such people are that they get thrown behind times and their development becomes stagnant with regard to the outside world as a result of their isolation behind the bars, and suspension with the development and happenings in the society.

While they expect understanding, empathy and affection from the society they are always looked upon as a suspect for any crime they might not have even committed. They often get picked up by the police for investigation for any crime or offence that takes place in the area they live.

This further stigmatizes them, creating an air of suspicion in their neighborhood and workplace, making them more prone to retaliation and reverting to crime. Often inmates find it difficult to get into a normal life post-release in face of financial and employability problems. With no legal support system in place a post bail case becomes a mammoth task for people from poor backgrounds. Many suffer from mental problems and develop suicidal tendencies.

Both Shri Arvind Akela & Shri Ajay Rai emphasized that a Post Release Rehabilitation Facility is inevitable for released prisoners as a transitory place for stay, skill development, employment, education, psychological support. This would help to prevent them from reversion into criminal tendencies.



Shri Ajay Rai



Dr. Arvind Akela



## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Shri C R Garg, former DIG (Prisons), Tihar Jail moderated the conference; which was presided over by Prof. P. S. Datta, Former Director, Nuclear Research Laboratory, IARI, New Delhi.

A concept note on Post Release Rehabilitation and a well-researched book 'Reformed Turned Reformers' published by DJJS was distributed before the meeting to each participant.

Shri C R Garg invited speakers to present their views on the problems faced by prisoners. Participants brought forward varied opinions and suggestions on key issues.

The issues raised and discussed were:

- Media's role in generating awareness for the cause "igniting public acceptance and action by civil society on the subject of prisoners" which has majorly remained ignored.
- Role of CSR in development and sustainability of rehabilitation facility for released prisoners.
- Inclusion of the issue of Prisoners Reformation & Rehabilitation on CSR mandates in India - the current status and what is needed.
- Bringing the prisoners under the cover of emerging skill development sector. Create provision for skill development training pre and post release, conduct skill, interest and aptitude mapping to enabling them for employment.
- Importance of PRR for first time offenders and prisoners.

The points proposed for discussion were intended to stimulate and guide the dialog on the subject. The discussion did touch on all the relevant issues to varying degrees. The new issues which emerged during deliberations were:

- The fallacies of lengthy judicial system resulting in long under trial period disturbing and damaging lives of those who get acquitted as innocents after long imprisonment.
- Non-existence of any criterion to distinguish the accused from the acquitted while the



Swami Vishalanand



Prof. P. S. Datta



Sh. C. R. Garg



Dr. K. K. Upadhyay



Sh. N.K Singh



Sh. S.C. Upadhyay

stigma of imprisonment is faced equally by both.

#### COMMON UNDERSTANDING & SUGGESTIONS

Following are points that emerged after a consensus:

- Establishment of Post Release Rehabilitation Centre.
- Intensifying the already existing programs for sensitization of the society by DJJS.
- Civil society should advocate for change in laws and CrPC provisions. Correct in the criminal justice system.
- Creation of leadership quality, entrepreneurship, skills, education, etc. in inmates.
- Change in mindset of both society and inmates.
- Focus on pre-release rehabilitation.
- Free Legal assistances.
- Advocate to the judicial system for issue of certificate confirming the innocence of that acquitted inmates.
- Coordination among NGOs and civil society bodies to promote prisoner rehabilitation as an important cause.
- Powerful role of media advocating the issue in the general masses
- Need of national policy for prisoners
- Effective role of corporate sector with reference to approach and implementation.
- Training by service sectors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- DJJS should take the lead for developing the road map in coordination with the interested stakeholders and Jail authorities on the following taking into consideration the points mentioned in the concept note – such as financial support, sponsorship, counseling, skill mapping and development, pre-release network for social reintegration, education and employment within the jails.
- The interested stake holders should help DJJS in establishment of sub-units in different stakeholder's organizations, liasioning with the DJJS Rehabilitation Center, and facilitating training, employment, health, education and other needs of the released / to be released inmates.
- Media in close coordination with DJJS and the stakeholders to predominantly partner and promote the cause with public, corporates and philanthropists.
- A Strategist Advisory Board may be constituted by DJJS with participation of the interested stakeholders having rich experience in strategic development of concepts into workable mission mode projects.

## CONCLUSION

Some important common themes arose during the discussion. Although these may not reflect all the important issues involved in post-release rehabilitation, they provide a reasonable portrayal of the current understanding in the important community of media, corporate and academicians, and provide a focus for avenues that might result in more widespread integration of pre and post release rehabilitation needs and work.

The moderator of the session – Shri C R Garg, concluded the discussion and handed the session over to Prof P. S. Datta, for remark, who invited partnership from the interested stakeholders to embark upon creating a Prisoners Post-Release Rehabilitation Facility as an avenue for rehabilitation of prisoners and to will ensure a safe and progressive society. He requested Swami Vishalanand and Sadhvi Jaya Bharti to fix the date of the 2nd Round Table Conferences after drafting the road map on development for the Post Release Rehabilitation Facility at the earliest.

The conference ended with a vote of thanks by Shri HCR Mallya, Vice President, DJJS.





Dr. P. C. Sen



Sh. A.K. Singh



Sh. V. K. Mahendru



Sh. Laxmi Shankar Vajpayee



Sh. Deepak Vasudeva



Sh. Onkareshwar Pandey



Prof. Usha S. Razdan



Sh. Kavee Kumar



Sh. Sudhir Kumar Sinha



Maj. Sandeep Datta



Dr. S. K. Datta



Sh. Mukund Trivedy

## ANTARKRANTI - Prisoner Reformation & Rehabilitation Program

### GOAL

To reform, rejuvenate, rehabilitate & reintegrate

### WHO WE ARE

Antarkranti the path breaking initiative of Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan for Prisoners' Reformation & Rehabilitation is the only of its kind program in India. The program works on a holistic model of transforming prisoners as productive citizens, and creating opportunities and support system for their post release rehabilitation for a crime free society.

The program, initiated in 1995 from Central Prisons, Tihar, has its roots in the vision of World Peace with which Shri Ashutosh Maharaj Ji established DJJS. Aligned with the great mission of DJJS, Antarkranti is now active in 28 jails of India and has created landmarks in reforming and transforming lives of millions of those behind bars and bring them to society as peace builders.

### WHAT WE DO

The important fact about prisons that defines the activities of Antarkranti is 'not all prisoners are criminals'. Among prisoners are those who are professional criminals, first time offenders, and innocents. The challenge remains to correct

and reform criminals, make first time offenders withdraw from offensive mindsets and prevent innocents from criminalization. Antarkranti is strategically working to provide tangible solution to these inmates bound by the prison walls giving them motivation, direction and prospects to live a life of virtue and dignity.

ANTARKRANTI runs on two strong and sturdy wheels that operate as vital components of the programme:

- Reformation of incarcerated prisoners through initiatives and activities 'inside the jail'. The Inside jail activities are driven by 'Brahm Gyan' based spiritual counseling, 'Dhyan Sadhna' (Meditating on inner perceivable light of soul), regular spiritual sessions and interactions. The all-encompassing approach institutes services for skill development & employment, positive engagement in sports, performing & visual art, and drug abuse prevention. Resounding success of Antarkranti in bringing remarkable attitudinal shifts in prisoners has resulted in DJJS Ashrams in many jails of India. The organization has been pioneering in reformation of hard-core criminals, through spiritual awakening.
- Rehabilitation of released prisoners through initiatives 'outside the jail'. The Outside Jail Activities aim rehabilitating the released prisoners and preventing them from reverting into crime. This involves provision of various services ranging from psychological support, employment, short stay, family reunion, education and social liaisoning.







## ANNEXURE 1

List of participants  
and their details

- Swami Vishlanand, Director, Prisoner Reformation & Rehabilitation Program, DJJS
- Sadhvi Jaya Bharti, Coordinator, Prisoner Reformation & Rehabilitation Program, DJJS
- Shri H C R Mallya, Vice-President, DJJS
- Shri C. R. Garg, Former DIG, Delhi Prisons Tihar; Joint Commissioner, South Delhi Municipal Corporation
- Prof. P. S. Datta, Nuclear Scientist and Former Director, Nuclear Research Laboratory, IARI
- Shri N. K. Singh, Channel Head, Sadhna News and President-News Editors Association
- Dr. K. K. Upadhyay, Head CSR, FICCI
- Dr. P. C. Sen (IAS), Former Secretary General, National Human Rights Commission
- Shri Guna Sekhar C. Rajaratnam, Director, Method Labs India
- Shri A.K. Singh, GM CSR, National Seeds Corporation
- Shri Laxmi Shankar Vajpayee, Dy. Director General, Aakashvaani
- Shri Deepak Vasudeva, Director, Pioneer Publicity Corporation Pvt. Ltd.
- Shri Onkareshwar Pandey, Managing Editor, Planman Media
- Shri Shikhar Saxena, Executive, Confederation of Indian Industries
- Shri S. C. Upadhyay, Chief Director, National Cooperative Development Corporation
- Prof. Usha S Razdan, Faculty of Law, Delhi University
- Shri V. K. Mahendru, Head Sports, ONGC
- Shri Kavee Kumar, CEO, Globe Capital
- Shri Sudhir Kumar Sinha, Country Head, CSR, Arcellor Mittal
- Maj. Sandeep Datta, GM, Ambience Facility Management Pvt. Ltd.
- Dr. S. K. Datta, Political and Economic Analyst
- Shri Mukund Trivedy, AVP - Head of Corporate Communications, SRF
- Shri Nitesh Kumar, CEO, TDI
- Shri Pankaj Gupta, Partner, Tayal Brothers
- Shri M. V. Narayana,

## ANNEXURE 2

Program schedule

- 11:00 am **Key Note Speech**  
Swami Vishalanand, Director,  
Antarkranti – Prisoner Reformation &  
Rehabilitation Program, DJJS
- 11:20 am **Presentation of Antarkranti and PRR**  
Sadhvi Jaya Bharti, Coordinator,  
Antarkranti – Prisoner Reformation &  
Rehabilitation Program, DJJS
- 11:35 am **Live Testimonies**  
Shri Ajay Rai and Shri Arvind Akela
- 12:00 pm **Opening & Moderation of Round Table Discussion**  
Shri C. R. Garg, Former DIG, Delhi Prisons Tihar
- 2:00 pm **Presiding Speech**  
Prof. P. S. Datta, Former Director,  
Nuclear Research Lab, IARI
- 2:15 pm **Vote of Thanks**  
Shri HCR Mallya, Vice-President,  
Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan



*An Initiative of Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan*

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