PROCEEDING OF THE CONFERENCE

A two days National Conference on “Positive Engagement of Inmates in Prison” was organized at The Marina Hotel, Shimla on 18th and 19th September, 2019. The Department of Prisons and Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh along with Bureau of Police Research & Development, Government of India, New Delhi hosted this Conference.

2. The conference was attended by more than 100 delegates from 20 different States and Union Territories, Officers of BPR&D, Institute of Correctional Administration Chandigarh, members of civil society, domain experts, academia, eminent writers, bureaucracy and captains of industry.

3. The Conference was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Sh. Bandaru Dattatreya on 18/09/2019 with lighting of the lamp in the presence of the Mayor of Shimla Kusum Sedrate, Chairperson of State Women Commission, Smt. Daizy Thakur, Sh. Somesh Goyal, IPS, Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services, the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Himachal Pradesh Sh. Manoj Kumar and the Inspector General BPR&D, Sh. Tajinder Singh Luthra.

Retired Directors General of Police, serving officers, members of Prison Visiting Boards and media in full strength were present during the inaugural function.

4. An exhibition of the products made by the inmates of Himachal Pradesh, Prisons was also organized at the venue.

5. Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General of Police (Prisons & Correctional Services), welcomed the Hon’ble Governor, Himachal Pradesh. Before the commencement of his address a video clip prepared by the History Channel on the Shimla Book Cafe was played for the
Conference on “Positive Engagement of Inmates in Prisons”

audience. Shimla Book Café has become an icon of positive engagement of inmates as it is fully run by life convicts. Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General of Prisons, expressed his heartfelt gratitude towards all the dignitaries, participating states, invitees and media for gracing the Conference.

6 Speaker: Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General of Police, Prisons & Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh.

- After welcoming the guests, Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General of Police (Prisons & Correctional Services), Himachal Pradesh, introduced the subject of the Conference in detail. He set out by defining the prisoners as one of the most marginalized sections of society. A prisoner undergoes tremendous emotional, psychological and financial stress. It poses a formidable challenge to all prison administrators to find ways and means to engage the inmates in such activities that develop a positive frame of mind.

- Sh. Goyal, went on to share the data compiled by NCRB in 2016. He informed the gathering that there were 4.33 lakhs prisoners in 1400 plus prisons across the country. The percentage of convicts and undertrial prisoners happened to be 31 and 68 in the Country. Himachal Pradesh was slightly better with percentages of 40 and 60 of convicts and undertrials respectively. The occupancy rate in the prisons all over the country remained at 114 %, whereas in Himachal Pradesh the overcrowding was barely 5 %. With new prisons coming up, in a couple of years, Himachal Pradesh prisons should have zero overcrowding for the next few decades.

- Further elaborating on women prisoners, he informed that they constituted only 4 % of the total prison population and Himachal Pradesh was no exception. There were only 20 prisons exclusively for women in the Country that too only in 13 States. He also mentioned that most of the prisons in the country had an exclusive block/barrack reserved for women prisoners.
- Coming to the crucial aspect of the demographics, Sh. Somesh Goyal, shared that almost 90% of the prisoners were either illiterate, under matriculate or had not completed their degree courses. Out of this 30% were illiterate and another 42% were under matriculation. This horrible situation of levels of education is further compounded by the age group of the prisoners. As per the NCRB data 87% prisoners are in the age group of 18 to 50 years. It indicates that this age group should either be working or receiving education. This is also the group that needs to work to support their families. This prisoner population of 3 lakhs plus needs to be supported not only by the prison administration but by the State and by the Civil Society in every which way so that upon their release they step out as skilled individuals and useful citizens of the society.

- Sh. Somesh Goyal, emphasized that a lot of people may have misgivings about the prisons in the Country. Some perceive prisons to be seminaries of crimes. While, it may be true in a few cases, it must be highlighted that a lot of good work is being done across the country in skilling and rehabilitating the prisoners. On an average 1500 released convicts are rehabilitated by the prisons departments and financial assistance under state policies is given to nearly 2000 prisoners on their release, every year. States like Assam, and some southern States have a defined policy to extend financial assistance to convicts upon their release. Himachal Pradesh also follows the practice of providing tool kits to the released prisoners and helps in marketing of their produce through Himkaara Stores under the aegis of Himkaara Unnayan Samiti.

- Sh. Somesh Goyal, further informed that nearly 60,000 prisoners are provided vocational training every year in different trades like weaving, soap making, handloom, agriculture and carpentry. New trades like plumbing, electrician, motor mechanics and data operators are also being taught to prisoners.

- To address literacy and lack of education prison departments have played their role quite effectively. 55,000 prisoners were provided elementary education, whereas 13000 were provided higher education and another 8000 prisoners were trained as data operators.
• Further Sh. Somesh Goyal expressed that states needed to learn from each other in engaging the inmates to enrich their lives to take them to a step closer to reintegration with society. Sh. Somesh Goyal shared that he had invited data from all the States about the factory output and wages. It would be gratifying to note that in 2016, the overall factory output was pegged at Rupees 200 crores. The per capita factory output was the highest in Bihar at Rupees 2 lakhs which was followed by Telangana and Himachal Pradesh at Rs.1.8 lakhs and 1.5 lakhs respectively. However, when it comes to paying wages to inmates, the per capita wages paid by Himachal Pradesh are the highest in the country at Rs. 46,200 which is followed by the Maharashtra.

• Thereafter Sh. Somesh Goyal, apprised the house that Chapter 25 of the Model Prison Manual of 2016 makes it mandatory for every State and UT to have a clear policy for skill development and vocational training of prisoners. The Manual also provides for creation of a board for running skill development programmes in the prisons. He lamented that there were very few states that had adopted the model prison manual and wherever the draft manuals for approval were forwarded to the Home Departments, no urgency has been shown to get these approved from the competent authority. Some Southern States have these boards with political executive as head. It was found that regular meetings of these boards had not taken place for years rendering the mechanism redundant.

• Sh. Somesh Goyal brought to the notice of the house that states like Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, supported the prison industries by declaring them as approved source of government supplies. States like Rajasthan have opened the regular ITIs in their larger prisons for skill development of inmates.

• Referring to Himachal Pradesh, Sh. Somesh Goyal informed that he has cultivated good interaction with captains of industry and around 150 inmates including women are employed by them. Himachal Pradesh has also created an institutional mechanism by forming Himkaara Unnayan Samiti for skill development and rehabilitation of inmates.

• Sh. Somesh Goyal suggested that skilled prisoners should be enrolled with employment exchanges to get jobs after they are released. He insisted that instead of training prisoners in traditional crafts, vocational training should be imparted only
after market research by a professional agency so that chances of finding employment upon release are increased. He informed the gathering that new prisons in Himachal Pradesh were coming up near industrial areas to ensure better coordination with the industry.

- He emphasized that India needed to learn from the Yellow Ribbon Project of Singapore for the rehabilitation of released offenders. For offenders undergoing imprisonment, the delegates could learn from Har Haath Ko Kaam project of Himachal Pradesh. It is imperative that rehabilitation and re-integration are made state sponsored projects because these involve different departments like social welfare, labour, industry, etc.

- Sh. Goyal regretted to point out that the modernization grant which was given to the prisons was stopped sometime around 2009. Modernization grant was stopped for the police also, but has been restored. The same needs to be done for the prisons.

- Sh. Goyal, also brought up the point that in the absence any institutional mechanism for skill development, rehabilitation and re-integration of inmates, most of the good work was being done at the individual initiative of officers at various levels and at the directions of the Courts. Some benefit is being taken from Government sponsored schemes under Skill India Mission, National Urban Livelihood Mission and NABARD. But the number of beneficiaries under these schemes remains insignificant.

- In the end Sh. Somesh Goyal, once again welcomed delegates and hoped that the deliberations would provide a roadmap to the prison department.

7. Speaker: Sh. Tajinder Singh Luthra, I.G. BPR&D

- He thanked Director General of Police (Prisons and Correctional Services), Himachal Pradesh Sh. Somesh Goyal for agreeing to host the Conference and choosing the subject i.e., Positive Engagement of Inmates in Prisons.

- Sh. T.S. Luthra dealt upon the importance of introducing psychological understanding of
prisoners and treatment. He suggested that psychological support could help the prisoners in overcoming their emotional and psychological challenges. He elaborated that optimism can be cultivated or learnt over a period of time by continuous engagement, which can create positive emotions.

- He thanked and welcomed all the delegates and hoped that this Conference will deliberate on all the different facets of positive engagement and with pragmatic recommendations.

8. Speaker: Sh. Manoj Kumar, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Himachal Pradesh.

Sh. Manoj Kumar, IAS ACS Home, welcomed the Chief Guest and participants. He thanked Director General of Police, Prisons and Correctional Services, Sh. Somesh Goyal, I.G. BPR&D T.S. Luthra for co-hosting this Conference in Shimla.

- Sh. Kumar talked about three challenges that prison administrator faces in the country.

- The first according to him was humane treatment of prisoners besides behavioral changes in the attitudes of the prison staff. Overcrowding also prevented from providing humane environment to the inmates. He emphasized that Himachal Pradesh was fortunate in this regard as overcrowding was minimal and new prisons were being constructed.

- The second challenge faced was that of radicalization of prisoners and running of crimes syndicates from the jails. Himachal Pradesh was lucky as there were no organized gangs in the state. The state, however, suffered from drug menace. The prison administrators need to evolve strategies to counter radicalization, organized crimes and drugs.

- The third and most important challenge was rehabilitation of prisoners. A person with a broken confidence and emotionally stressed cannot be easily re-integrated with the society. Multi-disciplinary approach was needed for this purpose.

- Prisoners who are low on self-confidence and self-esteem need careful handling, he lavished praise on Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh, Sh. Somesh Goyal for launching Har Haath Ko Kaam Project which has been instrumental in rehabilitating a number of inmates in Himachal Pradesh. He admired the products made by
the prisoners showing high level of creativity and craftsmanship. He pointed out that Himachal Pradesh Prisons did not take any grants from the State Government for running these programmes and generated their own resources.

- He ended his address by welcoming all the delegates to the historic city of Shimla for productive deliberation.

9. **Speaker:** **Smt. Daizy Thakur, Chairperson, State Women Commission, Himachal Pradesh.**

Smt. Daizy Thakur welcomed the delegates to the state of Himachal Pradesh, which offered an ideal venue for holding such deliberations.

- She claimed she had the opportunity of visiting all the jails of Himachal Pradesh and found the conditions to be quite good. She stated that her role required to visit only women dwelling areas, but she was impressed by the high standard of hygiene maintained in the barracks.

- She added that special and women specific vocational training courses needed to be tailor made for women inmates. She hoped that all the heads of prisons present in the conference will take note of her suggestions. She complemented Director General Police, Prisons and Correctional Services Sh. Somesh Goyal, for finding jobs for women prisoners in private establishments.

- She lastly stressed on the need for creating more opportunities for women prisoners and sharing all best practices.

10. **Speaker:** **Sh. Bandaru Dattatreya, Hon’ble Governor of Himachal Pradesh.**

- Sharing his experience of Jails, Hon’ble Governor, revealed that he remained in jail in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh for 13 months during the emergency in the year 1976. While in the jail, he had the opportunity of interacting with different
prisoners. He found that loneliness was the biggest challenge for prisoners. If a prisoner is given work, he will remain busy and negative thoughts will not cloud his mind. Emphasizing on the need of rehabilitation, the Hon’ble Governor said that the State Governments should bring more reforms in the jails.

- He highlighted that huge human resource was available in the jails which needed to be used properly in a positive manner. There was no doubt the prisoners are the most marginalized section of the society and they need to be mainstreamed. He lauded the efforts of all the prisons department for working towards this goal.

- He appreciated the products put in the exhibition on the venue by Himachal Prisons. He thanked Director General of Police, Prisons and Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh and BPR&D for organizing this conference on such an important subject.

11. **Presentation of Memento**

- Sh. Somesh Goyal presented a memento, a Charkha made by inmates to Hon’ble Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Smt. Daizy Thakur Chairperson Women Commission and Additional Chief Secretary Home, Sh. Manoj Kumar.

12. **Vote of Thanks was presented by Sh. Sher Chand Sharma, Sr. AIG Prisons.**

- Sh. Sher Chand Sharma, Sr. AIG, Prisons in his speech welcomed Chief Guest Hon’ble Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Sh. Bandaru Dattatreya and all the participants from different states and UTs including media. Sh. Sher Chand Sharma said that it is because of tireless efforts of Sh. Somesh Goyal, DGP Prisons, Himachal Pradesh, that we are able to conduct this two days National Conference. Sh. Sher Chand Sharma also thanked BPR&D, Government of India for allocating two days’ conference for Himachal Pradesh, Prisons & Correctional Services.
• All the delegates had a group photograph with the Hon'ble Governor which was followed by high tea.

Session –II

Topic: Digital Assessment of Social Value Metrics.

• Sh. Ajay Kashyap, D.G. Home Guard, Delhi gave an experience based presentation on Digital Assessment of Social Value Metrics and need for a digital platform. He shared his experiences while working as D.G. Tihar and gave an insightful presentation for rehabilitation and psychological upgradation of prisoners. His presentation mainly focused on high impact and low sustainability and low impact and high sustainability programmes. In his presentation Sh. Ajay Kashyap, stated that there are lots of NGOs and members of civil society who look for entry in the prison premises. Some suggestions are as under: -

• As a jail administrator one has to look at the effectiveness of the programme which proposed to be run in the Jail by Civil Society and NGOs.

• He said that there is a need of engaging Civil Society and NGO for various scheme it allows us the domain expertise, it allows us traditional resources and method which we cannot use as a prison administrator and which we do not have in our set up.

• It allows us to traditionally use resource domain experts which we have no competency within our set up.

• Effectiveness of social programme should be looked before allowing their entry in prison premises.


• Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General of Police, Prisons & Correctional Services initiated the panel discussion outlining the Model adopted for revitalizing the prison factories and process of rehabilitation without seeking any support from the State Government. He
informed that an institutional mechanism for positive engagement of prisoners was put in place by forming Himkaara Unnayan Samiti, registered with the department of Cooperative Societies. This society provides total financial freedom to the department and respective jailors have also been empowered to incur expenditure on purchase of machinery and raw material. Sh. Goyal, informed that Himachal Pradesh prison has reached a stage where equipment and machinery worth around Rs. One Crore installed in the jails through self-generated funds.

- Sh. Somesh Goyal, shared that Himachal Prisons has gone all out for standardization of its products by taking licenses and certification from FSAAI, Ministry of Textiles and NITRA lab at Panipat. Himakaara is the registered trade market of Himakaara Unnayan Samiti.

- He further informed that unlike Haryana, Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu there was no formal arrangement for purchase of products made by prisons by the Government Departments in Himachal Pradesh. Whatever has been achieved has been due to excellent quality, price competitiveness and brand recall and aggressive marketing. 10 Himkaara stores and online portal www.himkaara.in have been selling the products made by Himachal Pradesh prisons.

- D.G. Prison West Bengal, Sh. Arun Kumar Gupta also gave a short presentation during the panel discussion and discussed the different ventures in Bengal Prisons like Bakery, Jewelry making, Puffed Rice which is urea free, Ghani mustard oil, costume designing etc. He further informed that we have launched a clothing brand “Parole” as prisoners always look for parole. He shared some best practices like in tailoring we are stitching all the warders’ uniform in Jails. High quality jute bags is also manufactured kit boxes for police and jail staff is also made in Jails. He further said that we have large prisoner’s population of twenty-five thousand so the production is keeping in mind the consumption.

- He pointed some drawbacks, things cannot be sold in open market because we have no institutional mechanism as Himachal Pradesh and Telangana has.
• D. G. Prison West Bengal Sh. Arun Kumar Gupta gave some suggestions that skilled prisoners should be given more wages comparatively to unskilled. And prisoners should be imparted with those skills which prisoner knows or he can further develop in future for his betterment. He also emphasized on the upgradation of the existing skill of inmates.

• Sh. K. Selvraj thanked Sh. Somesh Goyal and said that we were also influenced by the Telengana, prison development board but the Society made by the Himachal Pradesh Prisons Department seems to be better option. He further said that they are in process of making Harikaara Unnati Samiti. He also informed different products like Ayurveda products lots of furniture and different ventures being run in the State.

• In the end Sh. Goyal commented that welfare of prisoner’s staff is very important and prison staff needs to be given salary and other perks at par with the police counterparts as per the directions of the Apex Court.

• Dr. JR Gaur, former Director Forensic Science, Himachal Pradesh after congratulating the Director General of Police Prisons & Correctional Services for conducting conference commented that the boards are not very efficient as their meetings are not held regularly. Sh. Chander Shekhar informed that they had this problem of irregular meetings of the board because of which the functioning of the prisons suffers a lot.
• Dr. Gaur wanted to know that how while collar criminals who caused maximum damage to the economy were engaged in the prisons. Answering the question Sh. Somesh Goyal, said that such criminals were put through the same routine as other criminals and were engaged in prison activities and factories as per their capabilities.

• Session ended with the recommendations that best practices in the matter of available institutional mechanism in different states should be compiled by BPRD&D and shared with all the States.

15. Session –III.

Speaker: Dr. Upneet Lalli, Dy. Director, Institute of Correctional Administration, Chandigarh on the theme of Introduction of Retributive Justice.

Dr. Upneet Lalli, spoke on the topic Restorative Justice in Prisons and acquainted the participants on this new area and developments around the world centred on restorative practices. The Criminal Justice System in India faces many challenges. It is all about the criminal where focus is on who did the crime and what punishment needs to be given. The limitations and shortcomings of conventional criminal justice have led to a relook and reexamination of the relationships between offenders, victims and the State in criminal cases. The idea of restorative justice has moved in many countries to the forefront of public discourse concerning crime and criminal justice.

In the adversarial model, a major focus during the trial remains on trying to prove one’s innocence. So the natural inclination is to deny, until the very end. The primary goal in restorative justice is to heal and repair the damage suffered by the victims, wider society and indeed offenders themselves.

Restorative justice reflects basic universal principles of truth and reconciliation endorsed by the United Nations in 2002 (UN Declaration of Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice in Criminal Matters). Its processes create safer communities by transforming offenders and ensuring that the needs of crime victims are not ignored.
Restorative Justice can be introduced at various stages of the criminal justice process – pretrial, during the trial and post trial. She argued for its introduction in the prison setting as well as to take responsibility for the offences. Introducing restorative justice within prisons is adding a dynamic dimension to the static nature of prisons. Prisoners can be asked to consider how their offence has affected the victims and also their own family. The Sycamore Tree Project which is running in prison organizes conversations between prisoners and surrogate victim. Restorative outcomes like apology and amends to victims and community can be achieved with these prisoners. Prisoners can work for the community as well and engage in service for the welfare of the most underprivileged. Innovative work programmes like Braille books and recording for the blind, repair of wheel chairs, cleaning of parks, etc. could be introduced in prisons. This would help the community and facilitate reintegration of offenders.


- After the presentation of Dr. Upneet Lalli, the house was opened for discussion. Initiating the discussion, Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General of Prisons, Himachal Pradesh wanted to know how restorative justice could be introduced without requisite legal framework. He suggested that victim and offender’s meetings could be organized after due approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs. BPR&D could take up this matter with the Ministry. It was also concluded that restorative justice could be introduced by higher judiciary till legal framework for the same was put in place.

- Rajesh Chopra, DIG Prisons, Tihar Jail, expressed his concern on mobility of the victims to pass on the benefits of victim compensation to them.

17. Skill Development India

- Deputy Director, Skill India Mission, Sh. Negi at the outset thanked the organizers and participants for giving him an opportunity to share the objectives of the Skill India Mission. He gave an overview of the vocational training being in the jails by the Mission. He informed that several ITIs have been established in jails. He invited all the
States to approach the State heads of Skill India Mission to engage in vocational training of inmates.

18. **Yoga and Spiritual Engagement of Inmates.**  
   **Speaker:** Mrs. Rimple Verma, Art of Living.
   
   - Officers from Himachal Pradesh, shared that instead of having occasional yoga and meditation classes for the prisoners, they were engaging in long standing engagement with NGOs like Art of Living, Vipasana Centers and Brahmakumaris.
   
   - Mrs. Rimple Verma, from Art of Living gave a presentation on their involvement with Jails and prisoners all over the globe. She informed that Art of Living has conducted Prison Smart Programmes for seven lakhs prisoners across the globe. More than eight thousand prisoners have also benefited by this initiative in Himachal Pradesh in the last few years. The Prison Smart Programme aims at managing the stress levels of prisoners. Art of Living is also engaged in developing teaching skills in yoga and other trades.
   
   - During discussions, it was agreed that prisons department should either have qualified Yoga teachers in every prison or should tie up on long term basis with some NGOs. If any payment is required to be made to these NGOs, it should be done from the budget provided by the State.

19. **Speaker:** Presentation by Madhya Pradesh  
   **Sh. Sudhir Kumar Shahi, IPS ADG Prisons, Madhya Pradesh.**
   
   - Sh. Sudhir Kumar Shahi, made brief presentation and shared the best practices being followed in Madhya Pradesh Prison Department.
   
   - He brought home the point that 2/3rd of prisoner population consisted of undertrial prisoners. Therefore, there was a need to focus on
the positive engagement of this section of prisoners than convicts alone. He further informed that Madhya Pradesh Prisons have opened 4 ITIs in their jails.

- Talking of the challenges faced by the prison administrators, he highlighted high disproportion of staff to the number of inmates against the benchmark prescribed by Ministry of Home Affairs. The second challenge was shortage of correctional staff including Welfare Officers and Counsellors. Another problem highlighted by him was the non-availability of credible NGOs, who could engage with prisons in smaller towns.
- After discussion it was resolved to recommend that at least one counsellor should be provided in each District Jail in the country.

20. **Session III**  
**Speaker Sh. S. R. Harnot, Noted Writer**  
*(Literary Engagement with Prisoners)*

- Sh. S. R. Harnot, is a noted and awarded writer of Himachal Pradesh. His organization Himalaya Sahitya, Sanskriti Evam Paryavaran Manch, Shimla has been associated with Himachal Pradesh Prisons for the last several years. They have been conducting workshops, poetry recitation, and cultural programmes in the prisons of Himachal Pradesh. He shared that providing opportunities to read and write creatively to the prisoners changes their personality for good.

- He emphasized that like Himachal Pradesh prisons, where prisoners are encouraged to indulge in literary pursuits, this model should be followed in other States also.

21. **Speaker: Smt. Ms. Rukmani, Superintendent Jail, Tamil Nadu.**

- Ms. Rukmani, Superintendent Jail Tamil Nadu gave a representation about the various welfare activities for the inmates being run by Tamil Nadu Prions Department.
22. **Speaker: Sh. Kanwar Veer Partap Singh, Deputy Superintendent Jail,**

- Dy. Supdt. Jail, Punjab, Sh. Veer Pratap Singh also gave presentation and described about various steps undertaken by their department for improving the living conditions of inmates.

- He also informed about various good practices undertaken in Punjab prisons like Polythene free prisons, biodegradable carry bags making unit and Open Air jail for women etc.

**Closing Ceremony**

23. **Day-02: 05/10/2018 (Thursday)**

- The Chief Guest for closing ceremony of the Conference was Hon’ble Chief Minister, Sh. Jai Ram Thakur. The Chief Guest was welcomed by the Director General of Prisons &Correctional Services.

- Sh. Somesh Goyal, D.G. Prisons & Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh heartily thanked Hon’ble Chief Minister, Sh. Jai Ram Thakur, Chief Secretary Shrikant Baldi for gracing the conference despite the busy schedule. Sh. Somesh Goyal, also thanked other dignitaries, Industrialist, people from civil society and media.

- Sh. Somesh Goyal, gave an overview of the prisons in India and occupancy and overcrowding of prisons. He informed that 80% of prisoners are either illiterate or semi illiterate and they are in the age group of 18 to 50 years. Another study showed that almost 50% of prisoners are the sole bread winners of the family. To overcome their emotional, psychological, financial loss positive engagement of prisoners is required.
Sh. Somesh Goyal, further informed that according to 2016 statistics, 58,000 prisoners got vocational training. He further informed the Conference that it is a misconception in people’s mind that jails are seminaries of crimes. It is a matter of happiness to note that in 2016 the turnover of jails was Rs. 200 crores. He further said that now we can imagine of jail being neutral. He gave detailed information about the previous day proceedings of the conference and suggested to create institutional mechanism like Har Hath Ko Kaam and Yellow Ribbon Project of Singapore. He also suggested that the modernization grant should be started again for prisons which has been stopped by Government of India.

He requested the Chief Guest to ensure that Shimla Book Café did not go into private hands.

23. Launch of Coffee Table Book

A Coffee Table Book “Har Haath Ko Kaam a Game Changer” by Himachal Pradesh Prisons was launched by Hon’ble Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh.

The Book encapsulates the process of rolling out “Haar Haat Ko Kaam” in Himachal Pradesh prisons and its successful implementation.

24. Award of Appreciation for Work in Prisons of Himachal Pradesh

Sh. Somesh Goyal, DGP, Prisons and Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh, emphasized that prisoners were not the sole responsibility of the prison departments. They were the responsibility of the Civil Society and State as well. Partnership between all stakeholders was necessary for effective rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. Himachal Pradesh Prisons have done
pioneering work in engaging with captains of Industry to provide jobs to prisoners in their establishments. On this occasion 15 such industrialist and business entrepreneurs were presented an appreciation award by the Chief Guest for employing prisoners as factory workers.

- Mementos were also presented to heads of delegations from states and union territories, BPR&D and ICA Chandigarh.

25. Address by Dr. Shri Kant Baldi, Chief Secretary, Himachal Pradesh

- Dr. Srikant Baldi welcomed all the participants, dignitaries and the Chief Guest on this occasion. He said that he was happy to be part of such a positive programme. He also appreciated Himachal Prison Department for starting new reforms in prisons for reintegrating prisoners with the main society. He also thanked the industrialists for engaging prisoners and training them for their betterment.


- At the very outset, he thanked Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General Prisons and Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh and Sh. Tajinder Singh Luthra, Inspector General BPR&D for organizing the Conference in Shimla. He also welcomed all the dignitaries to the land of Gods, i.e., Himachal Pradesh. He congratulated the organizers for choosing such a positive subject for positive thinking.
- The Chief Guest Sh. Jai Ram Thakur, Hon’ble Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh expressed his concern about the state of prisoners in the country and wanted everyone to accept them as part of the society. He wanted all stakeholders to develop a humane perspective towards them for better mainstreaming of this marginalized section of the Society.

- He expressed his happiness at the monumental work being done in the prisons to make a turnover of Rupees 200 crores. He appreciated the efforts of Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General of Police, Prison and Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh, who has rendered yeomen services in rehabilitating the prisoners. Hon’ble Chief Minister appreciated the quality of products made by Himachal Pradesh prisons and commented that these could compete with the best brands in the respective fields.

- He voiced his concern at the stories of violence and crimes syndicates in some of the jails of the country. He was quick to add that Himachal Pradesh being a peaceful state did not have such problems and the number of prisoners was also much less in Himachal Pradesh.

- He exhorted the delegates to engage in serious deliberations on the theme of Conference and to come out with concrete suggestions for implementation by the States and the Centre.

- A memento, a handmade Charkha was presented to Sh. Jai Ram Thakur, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh by Sh. Somesh Goyal, Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh.

- Vote of thanks was then proposed by Sh. Sher Chand Sharma, Senior A.I.G. Prisons, Himachal Pradesh.
The Hon'ble Chief Minister later had group photographs with the delegates from the States and the Awardees. He also interacted informally with the delegates over High Tea.

27. **Session –II**

**Topic: Experience Sharing by Inmates and Awardees.**

- The Conference could not be complete without giving voice to the two main stakeholders, i.e., the Prisoners and the Civil Society.

- On this occasion the following entrepreneurs shared their views who have employed male and female inmates of open category:

  - Sh. Nand lal Sharma CMD, SJVN, Shimla
  - Sh. Pankaj Lakhanpal, Him Academy Public School Hamirpur,
  - Sh. Girish Minocha owner of Minchy’s, Food and Beverages, Shimla,
  - Sh. Amish Sood, MD Hotel Chalets, Naldehra Shimla,
- Smt. Neena Gupta, MD, NG’s Vidyamandir,
- Sh. Devender Singh, CEO Guru Kripa Enterprises, Kala Amb, Sirmour,
- Sh. Baljeet Singh, M.D. Hotel Cedar Grand Shimla,
- Sh. Bhupen Paul, Fashion Designer, Khalini Shimla,
- Sh. Vikas Kapoor, GM Hotel Radisson Blu,
- Sh. Vivek Sood, Matrix, Shimla,
- Ms. Shalini, RJ, BIG FM, Shimla.

- They narrated how after initial resistance, the prisoners were happily accepted by the rest of the staff. They also volunteered to hire more inmates in their effort to support rehabilitation programme of Himachal Pradesh prisons.

- The participants of the conference had interaction with seven prisoners who narrated how they had been rehabilitated in the last two years and have become financially independent.

- One by one they shared their experiences of regaining their self-esteem and financial independence by getting work under Har Haath Ko Kaam Porject. One of the women inmates stated that she could pay her security bond amount of Rs 1 lakh by the wages she had earned in the prison. Another inmate shared that when he went on parole he could transfer Rs. 1.5 lakhs from his account to settle marriage of his sister.

- Another convict who is an Ex- IIT student shared his experience how he moved from “hell” to an environment of freedom and self-fulfilment by the support of prison administration, particularly Sh. Somesh Goyal, DGP, Prisons by providing him ample
opportunities for work within the department and outside. He now teaches at a coaching center and more than 50 of his students have found admissions in prestigious medical and engineering colleges.

- The other inmates also shared similar sentiments.

28. **Speaker: Sh. Tejinder Singh Luthra, IPS, I.G. BPR&D**

Sh. Tejinder Singh Luthra gave a detailed presentation on practical meditation. He said that although the topic of the Conference is Positive Engagement of Inmates but positivity can be achieved through meditation also. Western world has developed a scientific perspective about meditation.

His presentation focused on:-

- Meditation is an excellent way to enhance emotional skills, especially self-awareness.
- There are many effective methods of meditation.
- Meditation was developed within the framework of religions; every major world religion has its own meditation methods.
- Meditation is an alternative psychology. Maturity in impulsiveness and resilience can be obtained through meditation.
- He concluded by saying that introduction of meditation could develop contentment, calmness and a positive attitude among prisoners.

29. **Speaker: M. Chandershkekhar, Director APCA**

Tamil Nadu

- Sh. M. Chander Shekhar, Director APCA (Academy for Prisons and Correctional Administration- a joint venture of five southern state for training prison officers)
gave a very short presentation on behalf of APCA.

- Prisons are expected to provide and take care of basic human needs like food, clothes, medical care, physical, education, discipline, mental care, providing of employment opportunity, opportunity for premature release and rehabilitation.

- He further told about the International Standard for prisons as laid down by Nelson Mandela Rules.

- Key suggestion given by him was that prisoners should be surcharged with positive values. A good environment be provided to introspect and reform themselves and positive physical ambience should be created.

30. Apart from this a short film on Bihar Prisons were played.

31. Smt. R. Latha, Deputy Superintendent Jail, Karnataka also gave very short presentation and told various jail ventures in Karnataka prisons. One interesting feature of her presentation was that the personal bond and slitting amount for parole in Karnataka was very less.

32. It was decided that BPR&D should collect the rates of personal bonds and sorties from all states and circulate for a common policy on the matter.

33. **Recommendations:**

During the course of two day Conference, the delegates’ recommendations are as under:

(i) The Model Prison Manual provides for institutional mechanism for vocational training and skilling of prisoners. This mechanism should be created by all states pending implementation of Model Prison Manual. While creating institutional mechanism total financial and operational autonomy should rest with the Prisons Department.

(ii) At present emphasis on traditional skills. This is borne out by the data compiled by the NCRB. Skill development should be planned after market survey and requirement of trade and industry.
(iii) Special focus should be on skill development of women to make them financially independent on their release so that they are not forced to go back to life of crime or exploitation.

(iv) All skill development programmes should be funded by the State Governments. A separate head of account should be created for this purpose.

(v) Skill India mission does not mandatorily engaging skillling of prisoners. Since 80% of the prisoners are in the age group of 18-15 years, it should become a mandate of Skill India Mission to upgrade the skills of this captive population.

(vi) Prisons Departments should register NGOs after thorough security vetting for working in the prisons.

(vii) Released prisoners are generally disowned by the family and they have nowhere to go. An offender rehabilitation programme on the lines of Yellow Ribbon Project of Singapore should be conceived and implemented in India. BPR&D should develop this scheme in consultation with states.

(viii) Elementary and middle school level classes should be run in every prison in classroom environment. Proper prisons schools should be set up with faculty taken on deputation from the Education Department.

(ix) ITIs may be set up in larger jails having 2000 or more prisoners.

(x) There is need to have an interface with chapters of industry in the state by the Prisons Department. This does not require any approval of the government and should be done by the heads of Prisons Departments themselves.

(xi) Involvement of departments like Social Welfare should be made compulsory in the prison set up. Social welfare department should be responsible to provide crèches and help to old prisoners. Similarly, Health Department should lookafter the physical and mental health of the prisoners. Posting of general doctor in the prisons is not sufficient.

(xii) Whatever products are made in the prisons, if these are needed or consumed by the departments, then the state government should make it compulsory to procure from the prisons department itself.
Promoting victim-offender mediation and restorative justice practice in prisons and also in cases of plea bargaining, probation and community service scheme as an alternative to imprisonment.

Promote collaborative research in the area of restorative justice at national and international level and also introduce innovative and implementation of pilot projects on restorative justice in the country.

For the spiritual and mental health of inmates long term arrangements with credible NGOs should be finalized, than having adhoc arrangements.

There should be atleast one counselor posted in every district prison in the country.

There is acute shortage or non-availability of correctional staff in the prisons. Model Prison Manual should be implemented in letter and spirit in this regard.

Reward scheme for good workers in prison factories should be in place on the lines of Himachal Pradesh prisons. A copy of orders issued in the Himachal Prisons by the Director General of Prisons & Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh is enclosed alongwith.