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TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY AND CORRECTIONAL ADMINISTRATION

FIELD ACTION PROJECT
SOCIAL WORK WITH UNDERTRIAL PRISONERS AT
THE BOMBAY CENTRAL PRISON

('PRAYAS')

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD FEB '90 TO FEB '91

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- * YUVA (Youth for Voluntary Action)
- * Ms. Ashwini Jotkar

THE TEAM

Project Director	Ms. Sanober Shekar
Social Worker (Male Section)	Mr. S. Vijay Raghavan
Social Worker (Women's Section)	Ms. ^{Laxmi} Laxmi Singh
Social Worker (Aftercare)	Ms. Deepa Lakshman

MILESTONES

- DECEMBER '89 : Permission given by the Inspector General of Prisons for the placement of full-time social workers at the Bombay Central Prison.
- JANUARY '90 : The Director (TISS) gives permission to start work. Two months salary made available from other departmental project for the appointment of one social worker. Application for funds made to various organisations.
- FEBRUARY '90 : S. Vijay Raghavan joins as prison social worker in the adolescent (male) section.
- MARCH '90 : Childrens' Aid Society permits social worker to visit its institutions to collect data on any previous institutional background of prisoners.
- APRIL '90 : Meeting with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate regarding project.
- MAY '90 : Meeting with Commissioner of Police, Mr. Bhavé; request made for letter of introduction to police stations in Bombay.
- MAY '90 : Penguin Charities sanctions Rs. 20,000 towards Prisoners' Welfare Fund of the project.
- MAY '90 : Mahalaxmi Temple Charities sanctions Rs. 50,000 to the project.
- JUNE '90 : Commissioner of Police issues instructions to all police stations to extend co-operation
- JULY '90 : Laxmi Singh joins as social worker in the

- JULY '90 : Tata Exports sanctions Rs. 50,000 for the project.
- JULY '90 : First client to be taken up for aftercare, following release from prison after sentence. He is placed in a factory.
- AUGUST '90 : The project opens office at Worli B.D.D. Chawls, primarily for meeting ex-inmates for the purpose of rehabilitation. The project is named 'PRAYAS'.
- SEPTEMBER '90 : Presentation regarding objectives and work of project made before police officers of Zone IV at Matunga Police Station.
- OCTOBER '90 : Discussion with Magistrate, 36th Bombay Central Court, regarding rehabilitation of criminal addicts followed by referral to the Action Group on Drug Abuse.
- DECEMBER '90 : One day workshop on aftercare.
- DECEMBER '90 : Meeting with new Commissioner of Police, Shri Ramamurthi, to introduce the project.
- JANUARY '91 : Meeting with Justice Pratap, Chairman, Legal Aid Committee to introduce the project.
- JANUARY '91 : Meeting with Justice Kurdukar, Administrative Judge in charge of Metropolitan Courts, to introduce the project.
- FEBRUARY '91 : Meeting with Metropolitan Magistrates arranged by Shri Velkar, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, at Esplanade Court. Subsequently circular issued by Chief Metropolitan Magistrate to all Metropolitan Magistrates regarding role of project social workers in

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

The Department of Criminology and Correctional Administration embarked on a field action project called "Social Work With Undertrial Prisoners at the Bombay Central Prison" or simply the "Prisons Project". The project commenced work in February 1990, with the appointment of a social worker, Mr. S. Vijay Raghavan, in the adolescent (male) section of the prison which is popularly known as the 'Baba' section. In the month of July another social worker, Miss Laxmi Singh, was appointed in the women's section. The project completed its first year in February, 1991.

The prisons project has emerged out of the experiences of students placed at the Bombay Central Prison over a span of 5 years. The need for placing full-time social workers in prison was felt by students because they observed that the undertrial population was largely neglected, if not actually discriminated against. This situation seems to stem from the status of the undertrial, which though special, is ambiguous in nature. In the eyes of the law the accused person is presumed innocent until proved guilty. Nonetheless, he is confined to a prison and treated as any other ordinary prisoner. The objectives of such confinement are largely unstated and therefore correctional services are not available to him from the prison system.

The project is an experiment to test whether correctional social work with the undertrial is viable or not. The workers of the project provide services and counselling to the undertrial prisoner and attempt to counteract the processes of criminalisation and personal demoralisation by introducing positive, pro-social influences. The client group of the project comprises adolescent male undertrial prisoners and women undertrial prisoners (especially first-timers), as these are presumed more amenable to influence.

The broad objectives of the project are:

- (i) To help the undertrial prisoners in facing problems related to the legal process and incarceration in a positive manner;
- (ii) To help the undertrial prisoners to take responsibility for themselves and to resist the process of criminalisation;
- (iii) To initiate the process of rehabilitation on release from prison.

This report is an attempt to briefly present the work done in the past year, and the future plans of the project.

THE CONTEXT

The Bombay Central Prison mainly houses undertrials, i.e. persons being tried for various criminal offences in the courts of Bombay. The social workers are placed in two sections of the prison namely the womens' section and the adolescent/ young adult (male) section. A brief description of the physical setting and an idea of the inmates' routine is given below in order that the reader gets a picture of the prison environment and understands the workers' role in prison.

The adolescent (male) section comprises of a barrack which is cordoned off by a high wall. Anywhere between 75 - 150 young persons between the ages 15-23 are housed in this hall. This section is one of the many sections in the prison.

On the other hand, the womens' section is isolated from the rest of the prison. In this section there are 3 barracks and an office for the matron. There is no women jailor for this section unlike the other male sections. The womens' section houses on an average 50 women belonging to a varied age group i.e. 14 years and above. Of the 3 barracks, barracks no. 1 and 2 are used to keep women who have committed petty offences. Most often these women belong to the lower socio-economic group. As against this, barrack no. 3 has

women who have been arrested for possession of narcotics or for smuggling. Women in this barrack are usually better off economically. Some of them are foreigners.

Apart from this superficial classification, there is no other system of classification whereby first offenders are separated from habitual offenders, thus giving ample scope for the two categories to intermingle freely with one another.

The inmates of both the male and the female sections have the liberty to move around within their respective compound walls between 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., and again from 3.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. At all other times they are confined to their barracks where they either sleep or sit idle.

Breakfast consisting of barley is served at 8.00 a.m.; lunch consisting of rice, chappatis, dal and vegetables at 10.30 a.m.; and dinner and tea at 3.30 p.m.

A television and carrom board comprise the prisoners' entertainment in the young adult section whereas in the women's section only barrack no. 1 has a television.

Meetings with family members are allowed once in a week for about 5 minutes, and with lawyers at stipulated hours. Two postcards in a month are provided free of cost. All correspondence is censored for reasons of security. Money orders upto Rs. 80/- p.m. are allowed with which prisoners can buy items of daily consumption from the prison canteen. No under-trial prisoner can be forced to work and if he chooses to work than he is paid wages for the same. These facilities are permitted to the under-trial because of the special status he enjoys under the law i.e. every accused person is presumed innocent until proved guilty.

The average stay of an under-trial in this prison has been observed to be anywhere from 6 months to 1 year in ordinary IPC cases, and longer (upto 4 years) in cases of serious offences being tried in the sessions court. During the period

offences, and who most often lead similar lifestyles outside. In this environment an observer can see the processes of institutionalisation and criminalization take place, whereby negative values and anti-system attitudes are developed and reinforced. In the absence of positive influences, a vulnerable person is pushed towards viewing crime as an acceptable way of life and possibly sucked into the vortex of criminal activities.

THE INMATE POPULATION : LEGAL STATUS

It is found that a majority of the inmate population are in prison because they do not have suitable sureties to bail them out. Being from the low socio-economic strata of society, most of them lack the necessary resources and have poor support systems. Most often, they cannot afford the services of a lawyer. Their level of education being low (or even nil) they are ignorant about the law and how to handle their case.

Nature of Offences

Most of the women inmates are accused of theft, pick pocketing, and prostitution. A microscopic few are in for offences against the person, such as murder. Many are in for drug-related crimes. In the male section, pick pocketing, car *tope* *records* thefts, housebreaking and simple theft are the commonly found offences. Quite a few are in for serious crimes such as grievous hurt, assault, dacoity, murder and drug-related crimes.

Apart from these the women section houses a large group of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. These women are more or less neglected and ignored by the matrons as well as the other inmates, because they are in prison for only a few days before deportation.

ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN PRISON

Though reformation and rehabilitation are the long term objectives of the workers, they find themselves confronted with clients who require immediate supportive services because of the consequences of arrest and imprisonment. Here two things have to be noted. One is that these services are not available to the prisoners (especially the first timers) because they are ignorant about legal procedures. Coupled with this is the stress of being in a strange environment and the shock of being incarcerated. Most often the family members of the prisoners are unaware of their whereabouts. Therefore, the workers find it important to extend services (such as making home visits to inform family members, make telephone calls, arrange for legal aid, write applications, etc.) both from the point of view of responding to the inmates as a human being and also to mobilize the assistance that he is entitled to as an undertrial.

Secondly, these supportive services are an indication to the undertrials that the criminal justice system is not necessarily unjust and unfair. Respect for the law and the system is thus generated and inmates tendency to rationalize their behaviour and blame the system for their actions is minimised to that extent.

This process helps in building a relationship of trust between the workers and the inmates and opens an avenue for rethinking. Then, at some point, the inmate is ready to move beyond his case and think about lifestyle. The ground is thus prepared for reformation.

The relationship between the workers and the undertrials progresses as the workers see a willingness to change. The workers do not want to be exploited by those inmates who have no intention to change but want the workers help only to get released from prison. To this extent, the relationship can be said to be conditional. Those prisoners who show strong motivation to change cease to be merely 'cases in court' but

in some instances, lasts even after the client is released from prison, and now the actual efforts at rehabilitation commence.

The following sections are a description of the kind of work the social workers do in the prison and after the inmate is released. The work can be divided into services, case work, group work and aftercare.

7. DESCRIPTION OF WORK

a. SERVICES

LEGAL SERVICES

1. Writing Applications: The worker writes applications to court on behalf of the undertrial for different reasons:-
 - (a) Pleading guilty and requesting for either set-off or probation
 - (b) Return of personal belongings from the police station
 - (c) Requesting release on personal bond or asking for a reduction of bail amount
 - (d) Pleading innocence
 - (e) Explaining the facts of the case
 - (f) Requesting issue of charge sheet and expediting the trial
 - (g) In selected cases, the worker writes an application on his/her own behalf. He/she brings certain facts to the notice of the magistrate for consideration, such as the undertrial's socio-economic supports, his reasons for committing the offence, his attitudes towards reformation, etc. This is done when the worker strongly feels that the prisoner may benefit by release on probation.

2. Contacting lawyers: The worker contacts lawyers mainly for three reasons:-
 - (a) To engage the services of a lawyer under the Free Legal Aid Scheme or to arrange for lawyers who are willing to take up cases (on an honorarium paid from the Prisoners' Welfare Fund of the Project). This is

- (b) To discuss with the lawyers of the client the facts of the case
 - (c) To take guidance from senior lawyers on the future course of action in a case.
3. In the absence of a lawyer, the workers meet other court officials such as the judicial clerk and the Judicial Interpreter.

The judicial clerk helps the workers to obtain case details of the client. He informs the workers if the client's case is referred to the Probation Officer.

The judicial interpreter helps the workers by giving the workers' clients short remands and in this way expediting their cases.

4. Sometimes the workers and the probation officer together meet the magistrate regarding a particular client. The workers supplement the probation officer's information about the client and help the magistrate to arrive at a decision about whether the client will or will not benefit by release on probation. The court visit with the probation officer has given the worker a semi-legal status and also made it easier for the worker to follow-up the case with the magistrate. (This situation obtained prior to our own efforts for recognition in courts)
5. The workers read out the charge-sheet to the prisoners and explain to them what the charges against them are, and also discuss other aspects of legal procedure.

CONTACTING FAMILY AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT PERSONS

- (a) The workers inform the prisoner's family about the arrest, the bail amount if any, legal information such as implication of the charge, etc. This is either done through a letter, home visit or telephone call if possible.

(b) Another task of the workers is that of liaising between the prisoner and his/her family other significant persons. Information and feedback is given to and from by the worker till a compromise is reached. Once this compromise is reached the worker is in some position of moral authority to see that neither party goes back on their words. This constructive use of authority on the part of the workers is possible because the workers try to evaluate the facts objectively, whereas both family members and prisoners are emotionally disturbed.

MOBILIZING FACILITIES IN PRISON

Facilities for medical care, reading books and newspapers, and recreation do exist in prison, but somehow are affected by prison conditions. The workers therefore liaise between the administration and the prisoners in order to mobilise these resources and make them better available to the prisoners.

6. GROUP WORK

Group formation is inevitable in the barracks. The stress of incarceration coupled with feelings of deprivation create a bond between inmates which sometimes develops into deep friendships later outside prison. The prison setting induces feelings of a shared common life which is often expressed in the form of sharing clothes, food and other belongings with each other. This is true of both the male and female prisoners. The women prisoners even seem to share the responsibility of looking after the child of another prisoner and treat it as their own.

Groups get formed on the basis of type of offence, personality factors, socio-economic status, language, age, etc. The membership of a group varies from 3 members to about 10 members. It is seen that mostly all inmates try to become a member of some group because they get an identify, and a sense of belonging and of being accepted. Thus groups have

segregation. At the same time, group may also be a breeding group for negative and anti-system attitudes, as well as a base where first timers are initiated into a process of criminalization through interaction with habitual offenders.

The workers' presence in the prison also results in the formation of groups. This is so because every time the workers enter their respective barracks, inmates who need some support or want something gather around the workers. Gradually, a group is formed. This group is a mixed one comprising of first timers and habituals, of inmates from well-to-do families, as well as from poor families. All these members have at some point or other received the personal attention of the social worker either in the form of a service (such as writing an application), or by simply listening to someone's life story. In the larger group, there exists a core group which provides support to the workers. Although, also undertrials, members of the core group tend to have a longer stay in prison for various reasons and so provide continuity. This core group introduces new inmates to the workers, and keeps the workers informed about the happenings in the barracks in the workers' absence.

A group which a worker is part of can be of great value and importance to both the worker as well as to its members. Through the group the worker can counter negative processes and provide an alternative ethos. The group has therapeutic value because while providing support, it also helps release the inmates pent-up tensions and frustrations. In this way it creates a positive environment where the workers can initiate discussions and introduce prospective clients to ideas of reformation and rehabilitation. The workers also find the group very useful because it helps them to check out information, gives them a deeper insight into the lives of the inmates. Sometimes the inmates find it easier to open up in a group and therefore talk freely to the worker. The group is an important avenue for dissemination of information. It enables the workers to generate awareness of about the criminal justice system and also educate the

Group Activities

The group also serves as a medium for recreation. The interest and skills of the inmates in various arts and crafts can be identified and kept alive as a counter to enforced idleness and demoralization. In the female barrack, the worker conducted 'mehendi' and 'rangoli' sessions. The inmates enjoyed themselves and also learned to create designs using 'mehendi'. In the male section a drawing and crafts programme was started. The worker provided materials such as paper, pencils, cardboard, cloth and gum. The boys were encouraged to point and to try out new things. Cardboard posters were made by one imaginative prisoner with the help of pebbles collected within the ward complex.

A skit which was written and directed by a convict warder was enacted by 7 boys chosen by the director himself. The skit dealt with the reformation and rehabilitation of a criminal. The boys enjoyed the skit and it was also appreciated by the superintendent and the staff in the prison.

Limitations of Group Work

One of the greatest difficulties of group work with undertrials is that sustained work is not possible because of the short and unpredictable nature of their stay in prison. The membership of the group is constantly changing and the size of the group keeps fluctuating. Group activities involve a lot of sharing. Ideas as well as things have to be shared by the members of the group. But in an environment of deprivation and uncertainty being altruistic is difficult. The inmates often do not co-operate and share the materials required for crafts with each other. This leads to feelings of resentment in a few and slowly the group gets disinterested with the activity on hand.

Limitations arise also because of some restrictions on the type of activity possible in prison.

Finally, pressure of work outside prison (visits to inmates' families, courts, police station, etc.) makes it difficult presently for workers to focus more attention on maximising the potential of group work in prison.

C. CASE WORK

The term case work is being used (with reference to prison work) to refer to sustained interaction between client and worker, where the mutual objective is the reformation and rehabilitation of the client.

In the male section, a major objective of the interaction emerges out of the fact that here are people undergoing emotional and attitudinal changes primarily because they belong to a particular age group i.e. young adults (16-23 years). These young men are struggling with issues such as unemployment, sibling rivalry, independence, status, difficult parent-child relationships and feelings about sexuality. Another common problem area is rebelliousness arising due to conflict in values or with authority, and problems arising out of leading a particular life style.

In the womens' section, the need for case work amongst older married women arises because of the following reasons: lack of education; having a fatalistic attitude towards life (and their present situation in particular) an uncritical acceptance of the traditional stereotypes regarding the role of a woman despite evidence of victimization because of this. Family and children are the major concerns of these women. They are anxious about being rejected by their husbands and other family members. Changing the attitudes of the women towards more-reliance becomes an important task of the worker. The other areas of work include counselling the womens' family members and helping clients resettle in the family (or find other alternatives), arranging for the children's schooling, etc.

There are younger married and unmarried inmates as well of whose deviant behaviours has begun in childhood, usually due to maladjustment at home. Here, the workers' primary focus is on changing attitudes and behaviour patterns that are self-destructive.

Thus in case work, the workers respond to the clients' needs in an individualized manner involving the following areas of work:-

- i) Building a relationship with the inmate; exploring subjective perceptions and past-experiences; motivating him/her to make efforts towards positive changes.
- ii) Finding out about his/her background through various sources: (a) family (b) friends (c) neighbours (d) work place (e) school (f) police station
- iii) Motivating the family as a whole, or one family member or any other suitable person to accept the client and supervise him/her.
- iv) Counselling the inmate and/or the inmates family/ significant others regarding specific areas of difficulty
- v) Approaching the courts
- vi) Co-ordinating with the police:- (a) for information about the inmates case, and past record if any; (b) to request supervision (c) to avoid repeated arrests on suspicion (d) to keep them informed about a client's progress (e) to seek police assistance in employing the inmate.
- vii) Finding out job opportunities in the community; also obtaining financial or other help for those clients who want to become self-dependent.
- viii) Follow-up: which is a combination of surveillance, guidance and support.

D. AFTERCARE

Aftercare has been described as a helping process, a service programme and a constructive vigilance. It is a process in which the worker supports an individual during the transition period from an artificial, restricted environment of institutional custody, from doubts and difficulties to satisfactory re-integration in the community.

Aftercare is an important function of the workers because one of the objectives of the Project is to initiate a process of rehabilitation, and create in the family and the community an awareness of the importance of their participation in the process.

TASKS OF THE WORKER IN THE AREA OF AFTERCARE

1. Selection of Clients for Aftercare: One of the most distinguishing features of aftercare is the selection procedure. This is so because not all those who are released from prison request, or can make use of, the workers' assistance. Some of those released are professional criminals for whom crime is a way of life and so they are not even inclined to think of an alternative. Therefore, the workers have to select those who show a desire to change and are motivated to adopt a legitimate occupation and a socially acceptable lifestyle after their release. This process of selection and screening goes on simultaneously with the workers' other tasks, and as they interact with the inmates in prison. The formation of an open and trusting relationship between client and workers paves the way for continuing contact outside prison.

2. Pre-Release Preparation : The process of aftercare begins in prison itself, because the inmates have to be prepared to face society once they are outside and to persevere to maintain a crime-free way of life. The workers therefore have to spend long hours with such individuals to change their attitudes, and to discuss with them about the future. Thus before the prisoner is released he/she and the worker form a tentative plan for rehabilitation which generally

Since the undertrial population is a fluid one and consequently the duration of stay in prison is of an unpredictable nature, the workers often find it difficult to give the necessary inputs. Often it was felt by the workers that an undertrial who was showing strong motivation to change was released or transferred suddenly, thus bringing a case to an abrupt end.

3. Post-Release Follow-up :- Depending on the areas of work, the workers found that with certain clients short-term (supportive) aftercare and follow-up was sufficient, whereas with others long-term aftercare was essential.

During the course of their work the workers found that they were unable to do long-term follow-up very efficiently because of the increasing pressure of work in prison and the constraints of time. The absence of a place to meet the client once released from prison also posed another difficulty for the workers. In order to meet these difficulties: (a) the Aftercare Project of the Department of Criminology and Correctional Administration has been working closely with the Prisons Project so as to pool in the resources of social workers from both projects. (b) The Project obtained permission to utilize the Institutes unused room at the B.D.D. Chawls, Worli. This place serves as an office for the workers and as a meeting place for clients to meet the workers and talk to them about their problems.

During their interaction with the individual clients, the workers have had to keep in mind the skills, the needs, the level of motivation and the personality of each client. The workers' effectiveness in counselling the client and his family, and in motivating the client to continue in legitimate economic activity, despite it being non-remunerative initially, are put to the test. Another important task of the workers is to explain to employers the background of the clients, and to seek their assistance in supervising the client and monitoring their progress. This functionally implies that the worker remains in regular contact so that he/she may know about on-going positive and negative develop-

Apart from these tasks the workers must also do a lot of footwork in order to identify, develop and make optimum use of available community resources.

8. NETWORKING

(a) WORKING WITH THE POLICE

The project has been receiving extensive co-operation from the police department. Deputy Commissioner of Police Mrs. Meera Borwankar has continuously acted as resource person every time we needed some help or direction in this area. It was through her good offices that a meeting with the then Commissioner of Police resulted in an order being issued to Senior P.I.s of all police stations, instructing them to extend full co-operation to the two social workers.

The co-operation that we have received at the police stations has been primarily because the objectives of the project have been appreciated as being similar to those of the police. Our approach, whereby we never represented a client but instead presented a picture for consideration, has also helped our 'cause' to a great extent. An enumeration of the various types of help received from the police may give the reader an idea of the kind of co-operation we have received so far:

- (1) Free and frank discussions and sharing of information regarding a case;
- (2) Arranging for a job for a client;
- (3) Honouring the letter of introduction issued by us to a client after rehabilitation;
- (4) Releasing one of our clients after his arrest on suspicion, or a relatively minor charge, subsequent to discussions with the social worker;
- (5) Prompt return of personal property to a client on our request. In one case, an empty wallet with his mother's photograph, (which was the only memory of the mother), was returned six months after the boy's arrest.

- (6) Honouring any commitment given to the worker which has been mutually arrived at.

We found that, by and large, the experiences of police officers in the area of reformation and rehabilitation have been negative. In spite of this the officers were willing to experiment along with the project. There could be two reasons for this (apart from the official recognition given by the Commissioner): One, mutual respect for each other's views about a case. Secondly, we have initiated a dialogue with the intention of sharing responsibilities. One step in this direction has been a meeting with police officers of Zone IV. We plan to have such meetings with officers of other zones as well.

(b) WORKING WITH THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Here we have been able to achieve a fair amount of success. It was an uphill task in the beginning. Caseload was high, and resources were scarce. Slowly we have built a network of lawyers who take up our cases either free or on an honorarium paid from the Prisoners' Welfare Fund. Mr. Iqbal Yusuf, a senior advocate, has been our resource person here, introducing us to lawyers and being available for consultations on a variety of matters. We have developed a good working relationship with the Probation officers, whereby cases referred to them are mutually discussed before the report is submitted to the court. Some magistrates have been allowing us to meet them regarding;

- (i) referral of a particular case to the probation officer based on our information, and
- (ii) bringing to their notice certain pertinent and relevant information related to the reformation and rehabilitation of a client.

In order to gain recognition as an agency, we have been trying and have succeeded in obtaining a formal introduction for our social workers in the Metropolitan Courts of Bombay. In this regard we met Shri Velkar (Chief Metropolitan Magi-

Maharashtra Legal Aid Committee) and Justice Kurdukar (Administrative Judge at the Bombay High Court in charge of the Metropolitan Courts). A meeting of Metropolitan Magistrates was called by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at the Esplanade Court, at which we made a presentation. The response was encouraging. A circular was issued to all courts by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate regarding our role. Since then, the workers have experienced greater trust being placed in their reports by the magistrates - which is now a challenge to our skills for qualitative assessment of cases.

(c) DEVELOPING LINKS IN THE COMMUNITY FOR REHABILITATION

We have been able to achieve measured success in the areas of setting up networks for rehabilitation purposes. The unstinted support from Shri Madhu Rao in this area needs special mention. Not only has he employed one of our boys in his factory, guided him and taken care of his needs, but he has agreed to be a resource person for us in the area of training and employment. We have been constantly consulting him and taking his advice. (He charges us with being too emotional, we thank him for being so practical!) Shri Gangwani, Shri Amir Ali and Shri Jotkar have also offered opportunities for training and employment to other clients.

Most of our networks have been set up case by case. It can be said that so far whenever we have required support, it has come. By and large it has been individuals helping out in small areas that has boosted our work. Money from the Prisoners Welfare Fund has been used for travelling expenses of clients, part salary-cum-stipend, subsistence money till the client gets a job, money to pay mess bills of a client or for a pair of clothes, etc. Sometimes our resource persons have been relatives or friends of clients, which is indeed a very heartening feature for us. Special mention needs to be made here of Shri Satish Shetty, a sandwich stall owner at Borivili, who has helped a number of boys with temporary jobs and accommodation. Initial contacts with other voluntary organizations have later

proved very helpful. YUVA (Youth for Voluntary Action) has recently permitted one of our clients to stay temporarily in their shelter till he can find alternative accommodation.

Some prisoners have a history of prior institutionalization in childrens' institutions such as Sneh Sadan, or those of the Childrens' Aid Society. Both these organizations, and members of the staff, have been helpful in giving us the necessary information regarding such clients.

(d) COLLABORATING WITH AGDA (Action Group on Drug Abuse)

It has been observed that many individuals who are dependent on narcotic drugs have resorted to petty crimes, mainly thefts or pickpocketing in order to support their drug habit. In a meeting between the magistrate of the 36th Bombay Central Metropolitan Court and the social worker, the magistrate suggested that those addicts accused of crime could be referred for treatment instead of a prison sentence, because merely sentencing them was no solution. The worker agreed with the magistrate and together the legal angle for such an arrangement was worked out. However, to deal with the treatment aspect, the need was felt to collaborate with an organisation working in the field of drug addiction. Hence the worker approached the Action Group on Drug Abuse. The social worker of AGDA now regularly visits that court, and cases are referred to her. Wherever, necessary, she requests the assistance of the prison social worker.

9. RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT - Some Indicators

(a) RESPONSE OF PRISON ADMINISTRATION

The prison administration's image of the social workers has undergone a change over the past one year. Increased acceptance of the workers can be sensed from the various definite statements made by the prison staff about them. For instance, the workers are now referred to as 'our' social workers by the prison staff. Officers who were indifferent to the workers in the initial months have begun to refer cases to them now. The workers mobility, especially the male workers mobility, has increased and he can move in any barrack without the jailors' questioning his movements. Asking the workers to report complaints, or for suggestions in prison and then acting on these, is another example of acceptance. Administrative support from the staff has also been forthcoming where assistance in correspondence and communicating messages was concerned.

(b) RESPONSE OF THE CLIENT GROUP

Tremendous acceptance of both social workers from the client group was seen (more towards the end of the year). Indicators of this acceptance are:

- (i) increase in the caseload of both workers.
- (ii) requests received by the male social worker from barracks other than the juvenile barrack. Most requests are legal in nature because the inmates feel the worker can help them get released from prison. Few such cases have been taken up by the worker.
- (iii) Outside prison, some clients (ex-inmates) have been visiting the Worli office regularly. They have been approaching the workers for very specific needs. The male worker sees this as a consequence of group discussions conducted by the worker in prison regarding the nature of assistance that can be given to the inmates in the

area of rehabilitation. Clients approach the workers mainly for jobs, subsistence money, accommodation, loan for a specific purpose such as for clothes, self employment, death of a relative; to provide for legal assistance if the client is out on bail; to help tackle police suspicion on account of past record, etc. Family members have also approached the workers for legal advice or to ask the workers to supervise their ward.

- (iv) Many times clients themselves have made referrals to the workers; e.g. two cases which the worker is currently handling have been released on bail from Nasik Central Prison. In such cases a relationship with the worker has been established through letters.
- (v) Clients who have either left the city, or have been transferred to another prison outside Bombay, have maintained contact through letters. In one of our more promising cases of rehabilitation, the relationship was sustained through letters till the boy was released after serving his sentence.

Some excerpts from the letters received by the workers are reproduced below: (The names are fictitious)

- (1) Letter from a prisoner in Nasik referred by a client who was transferred from Bombay to Nasik

माननीय श्री साहिब विजयगड्डी को नासिक
खोईला जेल से रमेश के दोस्त हरिष पंडित की तरफ
से धरणा लू कर प्रताप। गेट लिखने का कारण को
मेरे को मेरे मित्र ने बताया कि आप ही हमारा सहाय
हैं। मेरे बारे में मैं आप को बताना चाहता
हूँ।-----

- (2) Letter from a client who was finding it difficult to talk in the workers' presence

आदरणीय दीपा मैडम, विजयभाईसाहब और मेरे
हितचिंतकों को अभिनंदन का प्रस्ताव !

मेरा ये खत देख कर आप सब लोग हरकत में पड़ गये होंगे। ये खत लिखने की वैसे ही खास वजह यह है कि जब भी आप लोग मुझ से बात करते हैं तो मैं गुमसुम सा लैहा आप की बात सुनता हूँ। मेरे मन में जो प्रश्न खगल आते हैं। मैं जानूँ क्या उर से आप कुछ कहेंगे इस उर से मैं कुछ बलता-बता। आप इसकी अच्छी तरहसे ध्यान से समझते हैं, मुझसे सवाल करते हैं, न जानूँ उस कृतक क्या हो जाता है। वैसा क्या होता है? इसी बारे में सोचते हैं आप को खत लिखने का विचार किया। जो कुछ भी लिखने जा रहा हूँ शत प्रतिशत सच है मैं गैर-कल देना हूँ।

(The letter is autobiographical in nature. The relationship between the workers and Amit substantially improved after this letter because it led to more openness and trust on the part of both.)

- (3) Letter from a father of a runaway boy on being inform about his son's arrest :

माननीय विजय राघवन जी नमस्ते
पत्र मिलने ही पुराने जमीन फिसल गई।
जल आपने दिपक के साथ बलना कुछ लिखा है, तो मेरी पत्र और प्रार्थना है। जल तो जेल से छुटेगा तो उसका घर वापस लौटने का इंतजाम कर लीजिये !

(4) Letter from a client transferred to Nasik:

विजय-भाई को हाऊ का सलाम और रिपार्डी को मेरा सम्मान।

खुश लिखने को देर हो गई इसलिए माफ़ी चाहता हूँ। लेकिन यहाँ आकर बिलकुल अकेला हो गया हूँ। कुछ भी अच्छा नहीं लगता। लगभग मैं आप से मिलकर ऐसा लगता था की, आपको से मिल रहा हूँ। और विजय भाई आपसे मिलकर जो हिम्मत आई थी लगता है वहाँ सब खली जाएगा अगर आप हमारा साथ छोड़ देंगे तो मैं क्या कर पाऊंगा। जब आपने रास्ता दिखाया है तो इस पर चतका भी जाता, नहीं तो मैं फिर से भटक जाऊंगा।

(5) Letter from a prisoner at the Bombay Central Prison, who came to know of the worker through another inmate and then wrote to him :

महोदय,

आप को पत्र लिखने का कारण की मैं पुक़्त बहुत गरिब आदमी हूँ और आपकी मदद चाहता हूँ। मैं ये पत्र बहुत से बार दोस्तों के कहने पर लिख रहा हूँ। मुझे मालूम हुआ कि आप आर्थ एरोड जेल में आते हैं।

मैं आपकी सहायता चाहता हूँ। इस भरके हुए को सही दिशा में रास्ता बताकर मैं जेल तक पहुँचाने का आशीर्वाद दूँगा तो मैं सगर्जना की आशा है मुझे अंधे को दो आँखें देंगी - - - - - !

(6) Letter from a client who was a runaway and was sent back home

प्यारे विजय राधाकर साहल,
Good morning मैं राजू
यहाँ पर अछी लखसे हूँ। आप मेरी चिंता न
करे। मैं यहाँ पर जोरों इस्ते लगे गया हूँ। आप
मेरे धारपे सकर आना कहा तो मैं खुद लम्बई
आपके घर जाऊँगा। आप को मेरे धरताले
बहुत याद करते हैं।

आपका प्यारा राजू

10. CONCLUDING COMMENT : THE EMERGENCE OF A STRUCTURE AND APPROACH

It now appears to us that the reasons for the acceptance and generally positive response we have received from all quarters in this past year are two-fold:

- (i) The need for such a project was felt, as the reformation and rehabilitation of offenders is an avowed objective of the criminal justice system.
- (ii) The Project stands independently of all elements in the criminal justice system, and is hence not identified with any of them. The social workers are, thus, free only to represent the profession of social work and to contribute their principles, knowledge and experience to the justice and rehabilitation process. To clarify : although we work in prison, we are not identified with the prison administration; although we visit police stations, it is not as representative of the client; although we assist a client to obtain legal aid, our objective is not primarily to secure his/her release.

We work case by case, involving all concerned as far as possible in achieving an overall view of the person and his/her situation. To this extent, we feel our role as social workers fills a gap in the system. We can play this role freely by continuing to work with the system without becoming a part of it; and working with the client and not simply for the client.

However, we are only a year old. It is still too early to make definite statements without more experience, and without systematically analysing our experience. This first year, however, has been both more challenging and rewarding than we had anticipated.

11. FUTURE PLANS :

(1) Self-help group

The possibility of a self-help group of ex-inmates is being seriously explored wherein those individuals who have moved away from criminality and are striving to lead a socially acceptable lifestyle can come together and discuss the problems they face. In doing so we hope this group will not only give its members support, but that members can share their experiences and their coping mechanism with each other.

(2) Sheltered Workshop

The Project plans to utilize the Institute's shed at the B.D.D. Chawls (near our office) and convert it into a sheltered workshop for released inmates. This place will serve as a testing ground where the workers can not only gauge the clients interest, skills and motivation but also train them in skills needed to sustain a job (such as communication skills), infuse discipline and a sense of accountability and commitment to the job. Also the workshop can provide temporary employment for those clients who have no supports. Here they could be given the opportunity to earn and learn at the same time.

(3) Appointment of Para-professionals

As the workload increases, so does the strain on the social workers capacity for quality work with clients, especially while in prison or after release. In order to free them from routine visits, which presently are taking up much time, it is proposed to select and orient a few volunteers who will pay home and court visits when establishing preliminary contact is the main objective.

Assistance is also required for identifying training and employment opportunities, identifying the varying potentials of clients, and designing and managing the training programme in the proposed sheltered workshop.

(4) Documentation

We have already begun the work of monitoring, evaluating and documenting our work, but presently it is not as comprehensive as it should be. It is proposed to appoint a trained worker especially for ensuring continuous and systematic documentation.

Needless to mention, for all the above plans we need more funds !

12. SOME STATISTICS

	JUVENILE Section	WOMENS ' Section
1. Prisoners selected for casework	17	13
2. Of the above, the number of cases who were taken up for short term Aftercare	5	8
3. Cases with whom long term aftercare work is still continuing (Out of the 12 cases from the male section 2 cases have been rehabilitated. Of the remaining 10 cases, 6 have been responding well to the worker whereas 4 are erratic they approach the worker only when confronted with a problem	12	5

From the female section, 2 cases were rehabilitated. Three cases was dropped, because the clients showed no interest on release. Work with 2 cases was affected because the clients were transferred to a prison outside Bombay.)

4. Cases for whom legal aid was arranged by the workers	13	1
5. Applications written by the workers on the behalf of the prisoners as well as on his/her own behalf	112	21
6. Cases in which action was taken by the Magistrate on account of application written	63	5
7. Home-visits paid by workers	120	100
8. Court visits made by workers	120	75
9. Group sessions conducted by workers	60	55
10. ^{Police} Public station visits by workers	25	20
11. Visits to the probation office by workers.	30	5