



PRAYAS ANNUAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 1991 – FEBRUARY 1992

Prayas, a field action project of the Centre for Criminology and Justice.
School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY & CORRECTIONAL ADMINISTRATION

FIELD ACTION PROJECT
SOCIAL WORK WITH UNDERTRIAL PRISONERS AT
THE BOMBAY CENTRAL PRISON
(" PRAYAS ")

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD FEB.91 TO FEB.'92

C O N T E N T S

1. HAPPENINGS
2. INTRODUCTION
3. THE PROCESS OF REHABILITATION
4. EXPANSION OF THE PROJECT
5. THE BALWADI
6. OUR VOLUNTEER STARTS WORKING
7. FUTURE PLANS
8. SOME STATISTICS

Our dear friend Shri Madhu Rao is no more with us.
Shri Rao has made valuable contributions to Prayas.
He was our resource person who had employed our
first client. Shri Rao was always available to
us for advise and help. His presence is deeply
missed by all of us. We dedicate this report to him.

H A P P E N I N G S

- MARCH 1991 : The After care Project of the Department of Criminology & Correctional Administration was merged with Prayas.
- APRIL 1991 : Meeting held with the Inspector General of Prisons, Pune, to seek permission to start a Balwadi in the Womens' section and to allow volunteers to work with young adults and women.
- MAY 1991 : IGSSS Sanctioned Rs. 1 Lakh for the Project
- : Welfare Agencies Fund sanctioned Rs.24,000/- towards salary of Social Workers.
- : permission received from I.G.(Prisons) office to start Balwadi in prison and for volunteers to work with women and young adults.
- JUNE 1991 : Rotary meeting resulted in Rotarians employing 3 clients - 2 boys and 1 woman.
- JULY 1991 : A sum of Rs.24,000/- received from Penguin Charities and Shri P.D. Kunte towards self employment and legal aid.
- : Smt. Pradnya Shinde appointed as Balwadi teacher. Balwadi started in prison .

- : Part time After care Worker,
Ashwini Jotkar appointed.
- AUGUST 1991 : Our first volunteer, Shri D.P. Singh
started visiting the Young Adults section
as an Arts and Crafts Teacher.
- SEPT.1991 : Shri B.D. Kamble, our first para-
professional appointed.
- : First medical Camp organised in the
Womens' Section with the help of Rotarians
Dr. Dipak Vyas and Br. Tushar Shah.

INTRODUCTION

Prayas has completed its second year in February 1992. The objectives of the project have not changed, However, over the past two years we have found ourselves involved in a continuous process of evolving and discovering new ways to meet our goals.

Our first Annual Report presented an overall picture of our work with undertrial prisoners in the Bombay Central Prison. This year we have concentrated on the post release phase and the process of rehabilitation. Correctional philosophy asserts that it is possible to work with some offenders and it also stresses on the importance of integrating released prisoners into main stream living. It has been our experience that though it is not impossible to translate this philosophy into practice, it is not an easy task either.

THE PROCESS OF REHABILITATION.

The relationship between the undertrial prisoner and the worker which is built when the undertrial is inside prison, forms the foundation on which the rehabilitation process is established. For a better understanding of the undertrial as a person, and the circumstances which led to the criminal act, a lot of footwork needs to be done by the workers. Gathering information from various sources like the person's

home, place of work, and police Station is necessary because it enables the worker to assess the case. Based on his assessment the worker may decide to present the case in court, pleading for a sentence conducive to rehabilitation.

If the undertrial is released from prison (either on bail or discharged or acquitted, or after the trial ends, or after conviction) the role of the after-care worker begins.

The first step is getting to know the person whom we refer to now as our client. In the initial stages the after-care worker works along with the prison social worker because the client is dependent on and trusts the prison worker. Gradually the client is encouraged to meet the after care worker as the prison worker has to identify new cases. The after care worker counsels the client and finds out the persons needs, aspirations, interests and capabilities. Other parameters of whether the client is indicating need for continued help are being assessed by the worker simultaneously. Whether the client communicates freely about his life, friends and family, whether he keeps his appointments and meets the worker at the contact office, whether he completes tasks ^{suggested} by the worker are indications of the client's response to the efforts of the worker towards his rehabilitation.

In the past year we have begun to realise that there are differences in the rehabilitation processes of males and females. These differences arise mainly due to age and gender factors. In the case of male undertrials we are working only with young adults i.e. between the age group of 16 and 23 years. Whereas the womens group is a heterogenous one, where we find women from 16 years and above. The needs of these women differ with their age.

The principal needs of the young males are training, education and employment. The needs of the younger women are similar to the needs of the males. But the older and married women have very different needs. The safety and well being of children left outside are the main concerns of these women. The social workers concentrate on helping these children get shelter, contacting relatives and seeking their help in looking after their children. Sometimes it is difficult to locate the children because after the mothers arrest these children get separated from one another. Women released from prison sometimes encounter children who have become deviant in their absence. Thus the women have a two fold problem - one is dealing with their own situations and two, dealing with the problems of their children. Often the women have to deal with these situations single handedly since they have neither the

Support of their family nor of their husbands. Surprisingly, after release most women have not contacted the workers. We are trying to find out why. Follow up in some cases revealed that they had gone back to domestic work. Even while in prison few had indicated need for help with rehabilitation. (The case load from this section could have been low this year also because the post of the female social worker was vacated.)

This year we have come across boys who want to complete their schooling and at the same time work and earn a living. There have been some boys who are not interested in studying but have instead opted for on the job training where they are able to learn a skill as well as get a stipend which is enough to look after their minimum requirements.

Coming back to the rehabilitative process, the worker has to work extensively with the client, because once he is out of prison the client is faced with many options some of which may conflict with what the worker is offering him. The success of a case depends on how well the client is able to analyse his situation, make his choices and has the determination to stand by those choices. This is rather difficult and the client needs a lot of support from his family, friends, the worker and the community.

The worker is able to support the client in 2 main areas, namely the Police and Employment spheres. The client is very anxious of being rearrested by the Police on suspicion, therefore the worker accompanies him to the respective Police Station and informs the Police about the clients' decision to reform and the future plan for his rehabilitation. We have till now received the co-operation of the police in many ways. They have agreed to supervise the client. One or two ^{policemen} have tried to find jobs. ~~and~~ They have also assured us that the client will not be rearrested unless caught red-handed. The visit to the Police station not only eases the client's anxiety but also helps in strengthening the bond between the worker and the client. The visit also enables him to see the humane side of the law.

The workers have found jobs for their clients mainly through informal contacts. The project needs to strengthen its networks within the community. A need is felt to appoint a full time social worker who can explore the various resources available in the community and establish networks with various organisations and individuals. This will not only make us more efficient but also enable us to find the right job for the right person, and eliminate the trial and error method that we are using right now.

In our efforts at working towards the rehabilitation of our clients we have had our share of ups and downs: *We get discouraged:*

- On losing contact with highly motivated clients
- When rearrest disturbs the process of rehabilitation
- When clients give up jobs found by our workers with great difficulty.
- When stigmatization by the community leads to client demotivation.
- at the lack of community resources, or our inability to make use of them at the right time due to the paucity of supportive networks.

But nevertheless we continue working. Our motivation to do so is based on :

- the need for such a service.
- the lack of similar services.
- the community's willingness to contribute in cash and kind to our project viz. positive response of the Criminal Justice System to our worker, the support received from private citizens, and social service groups.

- Our clients' motivation to change their lifestyle
- Our clients' emotional struggle to overcome attitudes that hamper pro-social living.
- Our clients' struggle to cope with emotional turmoil, confusion and lack of control over external factors that sometimes determine the future course of life.
- Our belief that undertrial prisoners are also being affected by being processed by the Criminal Justice System and therefore must be supported.

EXPANSION OF THE PROJECT

This year due to the widening scope of the Project and the increasing caseload, especially in male section, a strong need was felt for increasing the man-power on the project and for specialising the tasks of each worker. A para professional was appointed in order to decrease the workload of the Social workers. The main task of the para - professional was to visit the homes of the undertrials in order to establish contact with the family, inform them about the undertrials's whereabouts and to give any other information that the family needed. He also had to contact lawyers, establish networks with them for purposes of legal aid for our clients or merely to understand the legal position of the earlier cases. The service delivery has become more efficient and effective and the work has become more organised ever since the para professional has joined the project. Other needs that were addressed to during this year were those of children as well as the young adults. A Balwadi was started in the women's section for children upto age of 5 years who stay with their mothers in prison.

A volunteer started visiting the young adults section once a week to teach the boys arts and crafts.

A brief description of the balwadi and the volunteer's work in given ahead.

THE BALWADI

In collaboration with the Child Guidance Clinic of TISS, a Balwadi was started in the women's Section, for the children upto 5 years of age. The balwadi teacher was appointed in August, 1991 and she visits the prison five days in a week. *The initiative for this activity was taken by the Students of the Dept. of Medical & Psychiatric Social Work.*

The balwadi in the prison has a few unique features. Unlike other balwadis, this one has a fluctuating population. On some days there may not be any child at all whereas on other days there could be as many as 10 - 12 children. The balwadi teacher has to cater to the needs of children whose age group varies from 1 day to 5 years.

Growing up in an artificial environment of the prison where they may be confined for long periods of time, it is imperative that the balwadi teacher is sensitive towards mental, physical as well as psychological needs.

The teacher uses many methods like puppets, songs, story telling, painting, music and dance for the education and recreation of the children.

She organises various activities with women especially when there are no children in prison. She teaches the women basic reading and writing skills, embroidery stitching and conducts discussions on health and hygiene,

child development, child rearing etc.

The setting up of the Balwadi has fulfilled a basic need of the prison population.

OUR VOLUNTEER STARTS WORKING.

Our first volunteer started visiting the young adults section from July onwards. He goes inside the prison once every week as an Arts and Crafts teacher. His activities revolve around painting, drawing, music, dance and literacy. His main aim is to involve boys and make constructive use of idle time. Through his activities he tries to draw out their hidden potential. In his role as a teacher, he conducts group discussions on issues which are close to their heart, viz. parent-child relationships, sibling rivalries, meaning of friendships, sexuality, homosexuality in prison, ambitions, dreams and of course crime.

Since the volunteer has started working in the section, there has been a qualitative change in the atmosphere. Less time is spent in fighting and gossiping since the boys are now fruitfully occupied in painting, drawing and crafts. There has been a gradual reduction of anti-system feelings and negative attitudes. The goal of reformation

and rehabilitation finds easier acceptance. Now the social worker and the volunteer work in co-ordination with one another. This greatly helps in identifying cases for after care and rehabilitation.

FUTURE PLANS

Having consolidated our credibility within the Criminal Justice System, we feel that the time has come for us to concentrate on strengthening our rehabilitation process. The response that we receive from the community and the Government will depend on how successful we are in achieving this task.

We realise that it is difficult to find jobs which match the interest, aspirations and capabilities of our clients. Therefore, our focus must shift to training, to obtain better jobs and for self employment. Ground work has been initiated in this direction. We are in the process of collecting information about organisations which offer training and self employment opportunities. Formal contact has been made with some of them. We feel the need for a full time after care worker to develop and systematize this effort.

At present we find networking with other organisations to be a more feasible option than setting up our own

rehabilitation workshop. We do not have the requisite funds and staff to start such a workshop. Secondly our client group is not large enough and has diverse interests. It would therefore ^{not} be a viable proposition to start our own workshop just now.

Having worked in the field for two years now, and perhaps being the only agency in India doing this kind of work, we feel the need to approach the Government. Rehabilitation of prisoners has been a neglected issue since long. We would like to rehabilitate the concept of reformation within the Justice system. The rising trend of crime especially of those committed by young adults and women need to be curbed. It needs to be pointed out here that all stern measures to do so must be accompanied by rehabilitative efforts. In the third year of the project, our emphasis will be on the formation of a special policy for young male offenders and women within the Criminal Justice system.

SOME STATISTICSI. SERVICES

i.	No of Home visits made	174
ii.	No. of Court visits	76
iii.	No. of persons where legal aid was provided	53
iv.	No. of Police Station visits	23
v.	No. of persons on behalf of whom letters were written to families	9
vi	No. of group discussions held inside prison	50

POST RELEASE WORK

II.	No. of Cases for short term rehabilitation	10
III.	No. of cases taken up for long term rehabilitation	4
IV	On going cases	4
V	No. of cases that failed	3

4. Family Support Unit

a) Total number of cases	31
b) Number of police station visits	4
c) Number of home visits	174
d) Request cases from other prisons	9
e) Average number of children in Balwadi(per month)	8
f) Average number of women attending adult literacy classes(per month)	18

5. Workshop

a) Total number of trainees who have used the service	21
b) Number of exhibition cum sales held	9
c) Number of orders received	16

6. Police Station

a)		
	Marital dispute	23
	Family dispute	2
	Sexual abuse	5
	Women in distress	8
	Juvenile delinquents	2
	Adolescent problems	6
	Child labour	1
	Young adult offender	5
	Problems of police personnel	1
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	Total number of cases	53

b) Number of home visits	130
c) Number of court visits	4