

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATED TO THE DEPARTMENT:

Prisons Department is an integral part of Criminal Justice System. The aims and objectives of Prisons department have undergone change from retribution and deterrence to correction and rehabilitation and now moving for reforms. To realize these goals a project called “Har Hath Ko Kaam” has been started under which prisoners are paid wages for the work done by them in the prisons industries at the rates as fixed by the Govt. under the Minimum Wages Act for unskilled workers.

(i) The objectives of the HAR HAAT KO KAAM Project are as under: -

1. To work for the welfare of the inmates, both convicts and undertrials, lodged in the correctional homes/prisons in Himachal Pradesh.
2. To work for the welfare of the prisons staff posted in the Department of Prisons & Correctional Services, Himachal Pradesh.
3. To enhance activities of rehabilitation and care of inmates.
4. To create awareness among inmates and staff about HIV/AIDS, gender injustice, drug addiction, environmental issues and literacy and contemporary issues.
5. To provide opportunities to the inmates inside the prisons to earn livelihood.
6. To organize cultural programmes for and by the inmates and the staff to reduce stress of the inmates
7. To arrange Yoga, Meditation and spiritual discourses to wean the inmates away from life of crime.

8. To receive donations grants and acquire/purchase any movable or immovable property from any government or semi government business houses or individuals in the name of the society for furtherance of its objectives.
9. To identify talent among inmates and to provide platform to carry out the trade and to market the products made by the inmates.

(ii) Uniqueness of the Project: -

Open Prisons have been operated since long. One limitation of these prisons is that the inmates are generally uprooted from the area they belong. The Department has created open barracks for inmates in all the jails so that the prisoners remain in the same geographic location as their families which allows them to meet each other regularly.

Another innovation is that the Prison Department allows prisoners to step outside the confines of prisons to work in private enterprises by securing jobs for them. At present 146 prisoners including 4 women earn wages under this project. This has been possible with the active awareness and support of civil society and captains of industry who have come forward to engage inmates as workers at their establishments.

Himachal Pradesh Prisons is the only such organization in the country that has taken the bold initiative of finding jobs for incarcerated women outside the prisons.

All the prisoners having skill in any trade are today engaged in prison factories. The bouquet of activities includes handlooms, bakeries, readymade garments assembly line, silver jewellery making, carpentry, blacksmith, dairying, vermin composting, laundry, organic gardening, spice making, sanitary napkin unit, car washing, beauty salon, software development, etc. Innovative initiatives

like opening of Shimla Book Cafe at the iconic Ridge in Shimla, Himkaara Stores at key locations in the state and securing jobs for inmates in industrial units inside the prisons and in the private sector have given a tremendous boost to the earnings of the inmates besides increasing their self-esteem.

Branding of prisons products was done under HIMKARA logo for which a trade mark has been obtained. For handloom products, Ministry of Textiles was approached to allow the use of Handloom Mark. After inspection of the process, the Ministry has allowed the Department to use the mark. Kaara Bakery, Kaara Spices and Kaara Line (clothing range) have become household names in Himachal Pradesh.

(iii) Key Benefits to Public & Government

At the individual level there is definite improvement in the physical, spiritual and mental health of the prisoners. Now they remain occupied in work in the prison factories and their mind is diverted from negativity. Sustained availability of work in the jails ensures their employment leading to earning of wages.

At the family level, there is more satisfaction as the inmates are able to send money home. According to a study conducted in Model Central Jail, Nahan, more than 45% inmates are the sole bread winners for the family. By this project they are able to earn wages and send to their homes for the education of children and maintenance of the families.

At the society's level, there is greater awareness about the positive side of the prisoners. There is better acceptance due to increased interaction with the prisoners and by the use of products made by them. Improved satisfaction level in

the prisons, increases the likelihood of better integration and absorption in the society, post their release from the prisons. This has improved the overall bearing and personality of the inmates. The levels of stress and depression have come down and financial independence has increased.

With the funds generated through the project, a lot of welfare activities like Kaara Junction, an in house broadcasting service for the entertainment of inmates, open air gym, crèche for children, prison orchestra and choir and reward scheme for inmates could be initiated in the prisons.