

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES OF PRISONERS IN PRISONS

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“To insure good health: eat lightly, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness, and maintain an interest in life.”

-William Londen

INTRODUCTION

Prisons are the integral part of criminal justice system. Recently prisoners are convert in to rehabilitation centers. The world “prison” first used in England for punishment during 16th century. The world prison and goal derived from the latin worlds which means seize and cage respectively. The world prison traditionally defined as places in which persons are kept in custody pending trial or in which they are confined to punishment after the conviction.

Over-crowding of prisons is a global phenomenon of a cause of major concern for prison administration over the world. Over crowing of prisons leads to many problems of prisoners’ health problems is one of the basic issues which is faced by prisoners in all prisons. Like poor sanitary facilities, lake of physical and mental activities. Lack of decent health care on increase the likely hood of health problems in prisons. The prisoners are excellent venues for infectious disease screening and intervention, given the conditions of poverty and drug addiction.

It is surprising and indeed shocking that despite the large prison population in India, there is a complete death of published information regarding the prevalence of health problems in prisons. In Karnataka there are 102 prison population may be classified in the following 1. Under trial prisoners 2. Convicted prisoners 3. Civil prisoners 4. Women prisoners. All these prisoners or kept in a separate barrack especially women prisoners are also kept in safe and separate barrack.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The international principles on prisoners – health rights are recognized as follows-

Article – 12 of the international covenant on Economic, social and cultural rights 1966. [Second generation of human rights] establish the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Those who are imprisoned retain this fundamental right and their entitlement to a standard of medical care that is at least equivalent of that provided in the wider community. When state deprives people of

their liberty it assumes responsibility for their health care. Ensuring that prisoners maintain good health is essential of success of public health policies, as disease in prison is easily transferred to the public via staff and visitors, with almost all prisoners eventually returning to the community and potentially transmitting, infections to others. Faced with the alarming increase of TB and HIV in prison world-wide, it is essential to recognize this reality and take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of transmissible disease. It is vital that all prisoners undergo a medical examination and health screen on entry, on an individual basis. This is important to ensure that the prisoner start receiving proper treatment for any health conditions immediately. It is also critical that to identify any signs of ill-treatment in previous detention custody, and to diagnose the presence of any transmissible disease such as TB ideally detainees and prisoner should also be encouraged to undergo voluntary testing for HIV, with pre and if it is necessary thought post-counseling.

INDIAN CONSTITUTION

The Indian constitution clearly stating that right to health is also a fundamental right which guarantees citizens of India including prisoners. Medical officer shall have charge of the sanitary administration of the prison and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the prison rules and manuals made by the state government and also Karnataka prisons Act 1963 Sec. 36 speaks on sick prisoners it is mandate if the prisoners desiring to see the medical officer appearing at the health in mind or body, shall without delay be reported by the officer in immediate charge of such prisoners to the jailer. Examination of criminal prisoner under the special or general orders of medical officer – every prisoner as soon as possible after admission be examined under the general or special order of the medical officer. He shall enter or cause to be entered in a book, to be kept by the jailer, a record of the prisoner health and any wounds or marks on is person, the class of labor he is fit for if sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of any observations which the medical officer thinks fit to add. Female prisoners shall be searched and examined by the matron under the general or special orders of the medical officer.

MEDICAL FACILITIES PROVIDED IN PRISONS

Separate hospital wing is existing in all central prisons and in some district prisons. Medical officers are working in these hospitals, who deputed from department health and family welfare services, paramedical staff, pharmacists, male nurses, lab technicians are assisting medical officers. Hospitals are being provided with required medical equipment, vis., X-ray machines, lab equipment, ECG machines etc. The health problems of prisoners are being taken care of by medical officers, Inmates are being referred to district hospitals for higher treatment – investigations in all district HQ, Sub-jails, and Taluk Sub-jails health problems of prisoners are being taken care of by the visiting medical officer. Prison department in co-ordination with various organizations vis., medical colleges, Rotary, Lions Club and other NGO's hold general health checkup camps, eye, skin and dental health checkup in the prisons.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE OF PRISONERS

The study of mental health care in prisoner has been undertaken for the first time in India at central prison Bangalore, the study has been funded by the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority and Conducted by expert from NIMHANS, Bangalore.

The study made the following observations as follows:

- To assess the mental health morbidity of prisoners' mental health. Training for the prisons staff in early identification and treatment of mental health.
- To standardize the screening instrument for mental health in prisons.
- Analysis of results.
- To develop minimum guidelines for mental health care of the prisoners
- To create awareness among the prison staff regarding mental health and mental illness so that appropriate steps can be initiated towards the care of mentally ill prisoners.
- Decrease in the time line lag provide in identification and treatment offered for the mentally ill prisoners main streaming mental health care of the inmates of the prison along with the general health care establishment of network of legal professionals and NGO's to cater to the needs of mental health care with in the prison.
- Guidelines developed will set a bench mark in the care of mentally ill inmates of all the prisons across the country.

Problems of women prisoners are also in high position 95% of the prison population in most counties prison policy and procedures often do not address women's health needs. Mental health problems among women in prisons all over the world are very high. These include many metal disorders and high level of drug or alcohol dependence. Many women undergo sexual and physical abuse and violence in prison. The gender specific health care needs and additional issues related to the women's responsibility for children and families are often neglected. Many women have young children for whom they were often the primary or sole career before they entered prison [United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, 2009]. Women in prison frequently come from deprived backgrounds, and many have experienced physical and sexual abuse, alcohol and drug dependence and inadequate health care before imprisonment.

CONCLUSION

Health is a wealth is a statement we must full fill the necessary requirement regarding to solve the health issues in prisons. It is the bounded duty of the government to provide health facilities to the prisoners it is very urgent and needy. Providing health facilities in the prisoners is the primary object of the government because right to health is also a fundamental right of all human being including prisoners. In 1999 the National Human Right Commission [NHRC] gave directions to all prisons in the state to develop health screening format to be adapted by all the prisons in the state. It is very important to establish new hospitals within the premises of prisons to checkup pregnancy women of

prisoners and also to appointed necessary number doctors as well as eminent psychiatrists in central prisons across the state. It is already an opinion of CHRI reports. Finally, our opinion is to provide timely and good health facilities to the prisoners without making any discriminations. Only then shall be the purpose of health objectives fulfilled and also fruitful.