

# Unlocking Opportunities: Exploring the Intersection of Prisoners & Employability

Ms. Rose Mathew<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Vidya Vinutha Dsouza<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>II MSW Student, St Aloysius College (Autonomous), Mangalore

<sup>2</sup>Asst Professor, MSW Department, St Aloysius College (Autonomous), Mangalore

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## ABSTRACT

**Prisoners are those who have been found guilty of a crime and have been imprisoned or incarcerated in a correctional facility. Despite the fact that they have been found guilty and are currently incarcerated for committed crimes, it is crucial to remember they are still people and should be treated with respect and decency. In order to lessen the possibility that they would commit crimes again and make it easier for them to successfully reintegrate into society after being released, it is also crucial to give them options to better their life, such as having access to training, education, and work. This concept paper aims to present the perspectives of multiple researchers regarding the significance of employability skills for incarcerated individuals. The focus of this paper is to provide an insight into the perceptions of researchers on the importance of equipping prisoners with employability skills that could potentially increase their chances of finding employment post-release.**

**Keywords: Correctional, Crime, Employability, Imprisonment, Incarcerated, Modification, Perceptions, Prisoners, Punishment, Rehabilitation, Skills**

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## INTRODUCTION

Employability skills are a set of personal attributes, qualities, and competencies that enable individuals to find, obtain, and maintain employment. These skills are essential for success in the workplace and are highly valued by employers. However, individuals who have been incarcerated face significant barriers to employment due to their criminal records and limited work experience. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of developing employability skills among the prison population as a means of reducing recidivism and promoting successful re-entry into society.

Prisoners come from a variety of origins and may have experienced a variety of difficulties that led to their imprisonment, such as mental health concerns, poverty or addiction. A few of these underlying problems may be addressed by giving convicts with the resources and tools they need to move past their past and create a brighter future through access to employment and educational opportunities. Studies have also demonstrated the importance of work in lowering recidivism rates and fostering effective reintegration back into society. Therefore, enhancing the employability of inmates benefits the entire society in addition to the individuals.

It's also critical to understand that, even after release, it may be challenging for ex-offenders to get employment due to the stigma associated with a criminal record. It may become tougher for ex-offenders to reintegrate into society and contribute to their communities as a result of a loop of unemployment and recidivism. Therefore, it's critical that businesses and society at large understand the importance of giving people a second opportunity and encouraging their re-entry into the labour. By doing this, we may encourage a better and more just society and aid in ending the cycle of incarceration.

Gandhian philosophy places a strong emphasis on the value of empathy and compassion for all people, even individuals who have committed crimes. Gandhi believed that people and society in general could be changed through love and nonviolence. In the context of inmates and employment, a Gandhian strategy would entail acknowledging the humanity and intrinsic value of each prisoner and giving them opportunity to better their life and give back to society after their release.

Gandhi was a strong proponent of personal accountability and independence. In order to increase inmates' employability, a Gandhian strategy would entail giving them the instruments and resources they require to evolve

as self-sufficient and accountable members of society. This could entail having access to educational and training opportunities as well as to social support systems like counselling and mental health care.

A Gandhian strategy would also stress the value of civic engagement and social responsibility. A Gandhian approach to encouraging prisoners' employability would entail cooperating with employers, neighbourhood groups, as well as other stakeholders to create an opportunity for former inmates to reintegrate into society and contribute positively to their communities. This is because it is understood that the welfare of each individual is connected to the welfare of the community as a whole.

Trauma may come in many different ways for prisoners, including sexual violence, loneliness, and loss of independence. Prisoners may find it challenging to reintegrate back into society following their release since trauma could have long-lasting impacts on a person's physical and mental well-being. In order to address the trauma experienced by convicts and assist them in recovering and rebuilding their lives, adequate mental health treatment, support, and rehabilitation programmes are crucial.

Prisoners who have undergone trauma may face a variety of repercussions on their physical and mental health. Anxiety, sadness, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), sleeping problems, and difficulties focusing are a few of the typical symptoms of trauma. Prisoners may find it difficult to participate in treatment programmes and reintegrate into society once they are released due to these symptoms. Additionally, traumatised inmates may be more prone to engaging in self-destructive activities like substance addiction and may be at a higher risk of committing crimes again. Therefore, it is essential for prisons to offer trauma-informed treatment and to put into practise evidence-based procedures that assist the prisoners' physical and mental well-being.

Prisoners' views on their employability might vary, but many have considerable difficulties in securing and retaining job following their release. Ex-offenders may have no work experience, no access to education or training while jailed, and a criminal record, all of which can make it challenging for them to find employment. Additionally, some firms can be reluctant to work with ex-offenders because of liability worries or prejudices towards those who have criminal history.

For people who have spent a lot of time behind bars, this impression might result in a feeling of pessimism and a lack of drive to look for work. But a lot of inmates also understand how crucial employment is to their successful reintegration back into society, and they might actively look for job training and educational possibilities while they're behind bars. Additionally, certain initiatives can assist inmates in overcoming the obstacles to employment and making a smooth transition back into the community. These initiatives include vocational courses, job placement assistance, and support networks.

In addition to the obstacles already described, inmates may experience stigma and prejudice from society, which can harm individual's self-esteem and confidence when looking for work. Those who have completed lengthy terms or were convicted of more serious crimes may find this especially difficult.

However, studies have indicated that participants in vocational and educational programmes during incarceration had a higher likelihood of finding and retaining work following their release. In addition to giving convicts the chance to get degrees or certificates that are acknowledged in their field, these programmes give them the information and abilities they need to succeed on the labour market. Additionally, ex-offenders can overcome obstacles to employment such as locating appropriate career possibilities, building professional networks, and resolving worries about their criminal background with the aid of job placement agencies, mentorship, and support networks.

Overall, it is crucial to understand the significance of employment in encouraging successful reintegration and lowering recidivism, even when inmates' perceptions of their employability may be altered by the difficulties they confront. Prisoners can more easily reintegrate into society and lead fulfilled lives if they are given the means to prepare for it and secure meaningful work.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The Tihar Jail in India is the subject of Kiran Bedi's study, "It's Always Possible: Transforming one of the largest prisons in the world." The jail was changed from a location of violence, corruption, and horrible circumstances into a model correctional facility that prioritises rehabilitation and reformation, according to Bedi, who worked as the Inspector General of Prisons at Tihar. The study describes a number of crucial tactics that were used to alter Tihar Jail, such as enhancing living conditions, putting in place vocational and educational training programmes, and adopting restorative justice techniques. Bedi also emphasises how crucial strong leadership and staff development are in developing a constructive and therapeutic jail environment. Overall, Bedi's study shows that even the most

difficult prison settings may be changed by putting an emphasis on reformation and rehabilitation instead of punishment and retaliation. The Tihar Jail study has acted as a role model for jail and prison reform in India and all over the world, motivating several other correctional institutions to implement comparable procedures and ideas.

"Library services to the prisoners in Himachal Pradesh: a study and proposed model" is a research paper by Anupama that focuses on the importance of providing library services to prisoners in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. The paper highlights the benefits of library services in promoting education, rehabilitation, and mental well-being among prisoners. The research was conducted through a survey of 100 prisoners across four prisons in Himachal Pradesh. The survey found that the majority of prisoners had little to no access to books or reading materials while incarcerated, and many expressed a desire to read and learn but lacked the resources to do so. The paper proposes a model for providing library services to prisoners, which includes establishing library units within the prison, creating a book bank, and offering literacy and reading programs. The model emphasizes the need for collaboration between prison authorities, government agencies, and NGOs to support the development and implementation of library services. Anupama's study emphasises the value of offering prisoner library services as a way to support literacy, rehabilitation, and mental health overall. For prison administrators, legislators, and NGOs interested in advancing reading and education among prisoners, the suggested model offers a framework for creating library services in prisons.

Priyadarshi Nagda's research paper, "A Social Legal Study of Prison System and its Reforms in India," focuses on the Indian prison system and the demand for reforms to enhance inmates' living circumstances and advance rehabilitation. The article gives a general overview of prison system in India as it is now and identifies some of the major problems and difficulties that inmates experience, such as overcrowding, subpar living circumstances, a lack of accessibility to education and healthcare and violations of their human rights. The study also discusses a few of the legislative frameworks and regulations that control India's jail system and looks at their shortcomings. In order to improve the prison system in India, Nagda's research suggests a number of reforms, including expanding the prison system's capacity, enhancing inmate living standards and healthcare services, offering education and vocational training, encouraging the use of restorative justice procedures, and bolstering oversight and accountability systems. In order to facilitate the creation and execution of these changes, the report also underlines the necessity of cooperation between NGOs, government agencies and civil society groups.

In his research paper, "From cell to society: A study on the social reintegration of released prisoners in Kerala and Tamil Nadu," Dr. Santhosh focuses on the difficulties and experiences that released prisoners face as they attempt to reintegrate into society in the Indian states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The study gives a general summary of the socioeconomic problems that recently released convicts encounter, such as prejudice, stigma, and difficulties locating a job, a place to live, and social support. Additionally, the article discusses some of the initiatives and policies put in place to aid in the reintegration of convicts and assesses their merits and shortcomings. In order to improve the social reintegration of released prisoners, Dr. Santhosh's research makes a number of recommendations, including providing vocational training and education encouraging community-based rehabilitation programmes, fortifying collaborations between government organisations and NGOs, and fostering awareness of and favourable attitudes towards ex-offenders.

K. Paramasivan's research paper, "A Study on Reintegration of the Released Prisoners in Tamil Nadu," focuses on the struggles and experiences of recently released prisoners in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu as they attempt to reintegrate into society. The report gives a general summary of the economic and social difficulties that recently released convicts confront, including stigma, prejudice, and difficulty locating work, housing, and social assistance. The study also discusses a few policies and initiatives that have been put in place to aid in the reintegration of convicts and analyses their merits and shortcomings. According to Paramasivan's research, there are a number of recommendations that can be made to help released prisoners better reintegrate into society. These recommendations include offering education and vocational training, encouraging community-based rehabilitation programmes, enhancing collaborations between government organisations and NGOs, and fostering awareness of and positive attitudes towards ex-offenders. The report underlines how crucial it is to remove the social and economic obstacles newly released convicts encounter in order to reduce recidivism and foster effective reintegration into society. The suggested ideas might be a useful tool for decision-makers, NGOs, and other parties involved in assisting for social reintegration of releasing convicts in India and other countries.

## **ANALYSIS**

Prisoners' employability refers to their capacity to find and keep a job, whether they are incarcerated or not. A number of variables, like as a person's education level, work experience, employment skills, criminal background, and social networks, have an impact on how employable a prisoner is. Through the provision of financial security, the development of experience and skills, and the encouragement of social ties, employment may play a significant part in assisting the effective reintegration of convicts back into society. Prisoners, however, face several obstacles

to obtaining work, such as stigma and prejudice from employers, a lack of access to learning and job training programmes, and the logistical and legal difficulties associated with working while having a criminal record. Policies and programmes aimed at offering education and job training, encouraging self-employment opportunities and entrepreneurship, forming alliances between public and private sector organisations, spreading awareness and encouraging favourable attitudes towards ex-offenders are just a few examples of what can be done to increase the employability of prisoners.

In order to reduce recidivism and foster effective reintegration into society, research in this area has shown how crucial it is to address the social and economic challenges that convicts encounter. It is feasible to foster more inclusive and egalitarian communities, increase public safety, and advance economic growth by assisting convicts' and ex-prisoners' employment. Life sentenced prisoners frequently have major employment-related difficulties, which might affect how they view their own employment chances. Inmates serving life sentences are those who have been ordered to remain incarcerated for the remainder of their lives without the chance of parole. Inmates serving life sentences might not have the same access to educational programmes and career training programs as other prisoners who could be eligible for release because of the nature of their sentence. They may feel less employable and depressed about their employment prospects as a result of this access barrier.

Inmates serving life sentences may less likely to be hired by businesses that believe they constitute a higher threat to public safety. Even if they possess the necessary abilities and experience, life condemned prisoners may find it challenging to find meaningful job due to this mindset. The consequences of a lack of employment possibilities may extend farther into society. Inmates serving life sentences may find it difficult to reintegrate into society after their release and are more prone to commit new crimes, which might increase the risk of recidivism. Providing access to educational and job training programmes inside the prison system, encouraging entrepreneurship and self-employment options, and forging relationships between the prison system and local companies are just a few ways to increase the employability of life-sentenced offenders. These initiatives can facilitate the effective reintegration of life-sentenced prisoners back into society by lowering barriers to employment.

### CONCLUSION

All in all, various studies have shown that there is a significant need for programs aimed at developing employability skills among prisoners. While many inmates may face significant challenges in obtaining employment after release, overall findings in studies suggest that by providing training in areas such as communication, problem-solving, and time management, one can help to improve their chances of success. Furthermore, it is also found that such programs can have a positive impact not only on prisoners' employment prospects, but also on their overall well-being and prospects for successful reintegration into society. As such, an urge to policymakers and correctional authorities should be made to consider the implementation of such programs as a means of reducing recidivism and promoting successful re-entry for formerly incarcerated individuals."

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