

VIEWS & OPINIONS OF INMATES ON PRISON LIBRARY IN COIMBATORE

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ABSTRACT

Prison libraries play an important role in self-improvement for inmates. The libraries also help in providing legal information for helping file petitions in courts. In Tamil Nadu there are Eight Central Prisons for confining causal offenders one Central Prison for habitual offenders and three Special Prisons for Women, one Borstal School for Young Offenders (Aged 18 to 25 years). The study was carried out in three places I. Central Prison, Coimbatore. II. Female Annexure Central Prison, Coimbatore. III. Borstal School, Pollachi. The Central Prison & Female Annexure Central Prison is located in Coimbatore & the Borstal school is located in Pollachi. Questionnaire method followed to collect the data, out of 900 literate inmates the questionnaire was circulated to the inmates who use library resources. Approximately 200 of inmates use library regularly, a total of 133 (66.5%) responses received. The present study indicates that the inmates are utilizing the library well.

KEYWORDS: Prison, Prison Library, Inmates, Resources, Education, Coimbatore.

1. INTRODUCTION

A library is a collection of information resources and services, organized for use, and maintained by a public body, institution, or private individual. In the more traditional sense, it means a collection of books. This collection and services are used by people who choose not to — or cannot afford to — purchase an extensive collection themselves, who need material no individual can reasonably be expected to have, or who require professional assistance with their research¹. Libraries can be divided into categories by several methods; in this special library often have a more specific clientele than libraries in academic or public sectors and deal with only a specialized or particular type of information or particular type of users. Prison Library is categorized under special library; it meets the need of inmates & staff in the prison. There are only limited documentary evidences available to trace the nature and extent of prison libraries in other parts of the world. The study is framed to identify the opinion of inmates on Prison Library in Coimbatore.

2. ROLE OF PRISON LIBRARIES

Prison libraries play an important role in self-improvement for inmates. The libraries also help in providing legal information for helping file petitions in courts. The prison libraries are vital to the remedy of the prisoners, helping them to strengthen character and decrease the rate of recidivism. It also supports the curriculum of in-prison education programs. Some libraries also

contain some hobby or general reading books to help them to spend their unstructured time in a positive way.

3. PRISON LIBRARIES IN TAMIL NADU

In Tamil Nadu there are Eight Central Prisons for confining causal offenders one Central Prison for habitual offenders and three Special Prisons for Women, one Borstal School for Young Offenders (Aged 18 to 25 years), Two Open Air Jails, Six District Jails, Three Special Sub Jail for Men, 98 Sub Jails for Men, Three Special Sub Jail for Women and 9 Sub Jails for Women. The capacity of Central Prison ranges from 723 to 2517, Special Sub Jails from 84 to 224, District Jails from 200 to 400, Sub Jails from 18 to 143, Special Prison for Women 93 to 412, Open Air Jail is 100, farm jail is 10 and that of Borstal School is 10. In every prison there is one library with books of moral & educative value for the use of Prisoners. Books are also borrowed from the District library on loan basis. A prisoner may also receive books during Interview or by post subject to censorship and they may keep 3 books at a time. *Newspaper and Magazine*: Tamil and English newspapers and magazines are supplied to inculcate reading habit among the prisoners. All newspapers and Magazine are subject to censorship. All prisoners are permitted to purchase at their own cost any of the newspaper or magazine of their choice, subject to certain restrictions imposed from time to time by the Government. **Source:** <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Libraries> dt:27/03/14.

3.1 COIMBATORE

It also known as *Kovai* is the second largest city in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is the administrative headquarters of the Coimbatore District and a major textile and engineering hub of South India. It is referred to as "the Manchester of South India" due to the presence of a flourishing textile industry. It is a heavily industrialized city with textile factories, engineering firms, automobile parts manufacturers, health care facilities and technical educational institutions. The hill stations of Ooty, Coonoor and Valparai are close to the city making it a good tourist attraction throughout the year. The city is situated about 500 kilometers (311 mi) southwest of state capital Chennai, on the banks of the Noyyal River and is close to the Siruvani Waterfalls.

3.2 PRISON LIBRARY IN COIMBATORE

The study was carried out in three places I. Central Prison, Coimbatore. II. Female Annexure Central Prison, Coimbatore. III. Borstal School, Pollachi. The Central Prison & Female Annexure Central Prison is located in Coimbatore & the Borstal school is located in Pollachi.

CENTRAL PRISON, COIMBATORE

The Central Prison, Coimbatore, was established during the year 1872. This prison, during the freedom struggle had illustrious freedom fighters like V.O. Chidambaram and Periyar E.V. Ramasamy. Thiru.V. O. Chidambaram was confined in this prison from 9.7.1908 to 1.12.1910. A memorial was constructed in respect of this leader in front of this prison.

Area of the prison

Originally it had around 201.76 acres of land including the built up area. Lands for Government institutions, broadening of road etc., took away nearly 34 acres of the land and now the prison has 167.76 acres. The main prison consists of 60 acres built up area; 24 acres of gardens and rest are parade ground, playground, staff quarters and open area. The offender of Coimbatore, The Nilgiris and Erode, Salem, and Namakkal are in central prison, Coimbatore. The authorized accommodation of this prison is 2208 (male 2124 + female 84). The average accommodation is normally more than 2500. The convicted prisoners are classified as follows:

- a. Prisoners sentenced to death
- b. Lifers
- c. Long Termers
- d. Short termers

The convicted prisoners are classified as A & B class. For remand, it is special and ordinary class. There are persons detained under the TPDAA (Tamilnadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities Act), NSA (National Security Act) and POTA (Prevention of Terrorists Act).

FEMALE ANNEXURE CENTRAL PRISON, COIMBATORE

Inside the central prison the separate Female Annexure is situated, which is very near to the main prison area. Here only the remand inmates are kept & the convicts are then sent to Vellore Women prison. The authorized accommodation of women prison, Coimbatore is 84. During the study visit (Nov '2010), there were 51 remand women inmates.

BORSTAL, POLLACHI

It is situated in Pollachi town which is 40kms away from the Coimbatore. Here only the Pre-Convicted Adolescent Offenders are kept & the convicted Adolescent Offenders are then sent to Borstal School, Pudukkottai. The inmates are in the age group of 18 – 21. During the study visit (Nov '2010), there were 51 Pre-Convicted Adolescent Offenders.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The Questionnaire method is the chief instrumentation for extracting data. Out of 900 literate inmates the questionnaire was circulated to the inmates who use library resources. Approximately 200 of inmates use library regularly, a total of 133 (66.5%) responses received. Out of 133, nearly 80% responses were in Tamil language. For inmates the questionnaire was designed in four parts, namely personal information, use of library, purpose of using library & finally library services. All questionnaires were checked for completeness at the time of completion in the library. Any missing data identified was then clarified with the inmate at that time.

5. VIEWS & OPINIONS OF INMATES ARE LISTED BELOW.

The inmates are categorized by Gender wise, Area wise & by Type.

Gender	No. Of Respondents
Male	128
Female	5
Total	133

Table 1 shows that out of 133 respondents, 128 of them were male & 5 of them were female.

Table 2 – Area

Area	No. of Respondents
Central Prison	123
Female Annexure Central prison	5
Borstal School	5
Total	133

Table 2 shows that out of 133, 123 are from Central Prison, 5 from Female Annexure Central prison & 5 from Borstal School. (Chart 1)

Chart-I

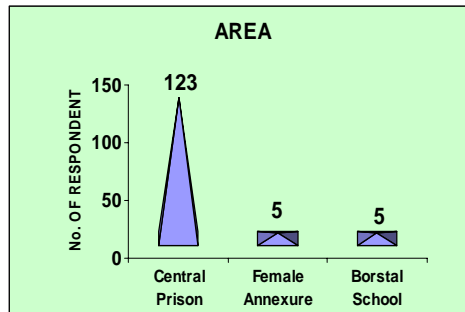


Table 3 –Type

Type	No. Of Respondents
Convicts	123
Remand	10
Total	133

Table 3 reveals that 123 are convicts & 10 are remand inmates.

Table 4 – Age wise Classification

Age wise classification (Yrs)	No. Of Respondents
18-22	5
23-40	85
41-59	38
60 & above	5
Total	133

From table 4 it is clear that the highest number of inmates belong to the age group of 23 – 40 yrs ranging to 85 respondents out of 133. It is really a point of concern that majority of the inmates

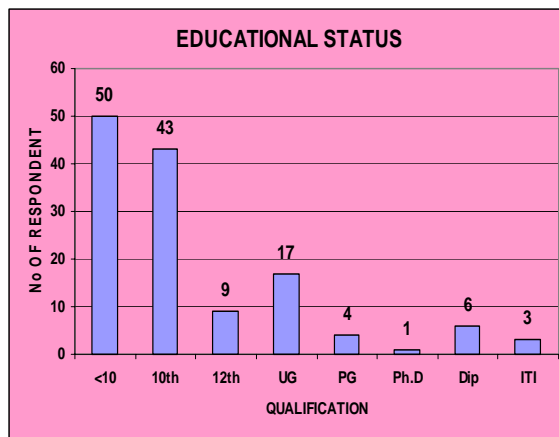
are adult and in an impressionable age group. It is understood from the table that the adult group are very active reader.

5.1 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 5 – Educational Status

Educational Status	No. of Respondents
< 10	50
10th	43
12th	9
UG	17
PG	4
Ph D	1
Diploma	6
ITI	3
Total	133

CHART 2



Since majority of the inmates are adult, it is interesting to concentrate on their educational status. Table 5 represents the educational status of the respondents. It is understood from the table that the reading habits plays a vital role among the growing learner as it is found to be very much influential in terms of manner & also for future. (Chart 2)

Table 6 – Respondents from currently doing higher studies

Inmates	Doing Higher Studies	%
Respondents	29	69%
Non Respondents	13	31%
Total	100	100%

Table 13, shows that 29 (69%) respondents out of 42, who are doing higher studies, are utilizing the library. This shows that the library is in great help to their higher studies & also to update their knowledge. Out of the non respondents of 31% it is understood on observation that most of them are utilizing the library but they are not interested in responds to questionnaire.

5.2 STAY PERIOD OF THE RESPONDENTS

The Table 7 & 8 shows that the period of stay.

Table 7 - How long are in Prison

How long are in Prison (Yr)	No. of Respondents
Remand	10
< 3	36
> 3 < 5	22
> 5 < 10	49
10 & Above	15
Not interested	1
Total	133

Tables 7 reveal that 36 of the respondents are staying less than 3 years, 22 of them from 3 – 5 yrs, 49 of them from 5 – 10 yrs, 15 of them are in 10 & above yrs, 1 respondent is not interested to provide the detail & 10 respondents are in remand & their stayed period are less then 6 months.

Table 8 – How long will be in Prison

How long will be in Prison (Yr)	No. of Respondents
< 1	13
1 to 5	28
Life Prisoner	7
Don't know	75
Remand	10
Total	133

Table 8, shows that 75 out of 133 respondents don't know how long will be here. Some of them are waiting for their court order to release.

5.3 LIBRARY VISIT

Table 9 – Library visit

Library Visit	No. of Respondents	%
Daily	17	13
Weekly	79	59
Monthly	9	7
Rarely	18	14
NA	10	8
Total	133	100

The table 9 shows that 13 percentages of the respondents are visiting the library daily. The majority of 59 percentage visit weekly once, 7 percentage visit library monthly once, 14 percentage visit library rarely & for 10 respondents who are in remand doesn't have the facility of in-house library, hence this detail Not Applicable for them. The maximum number of visit is on weekly once; the major reason is that the books are issued weekly once.

5.4 PURPOSE FOR USING LIBRARY

Table 10 – Purpose

Purpose	No. of Respondents
Studies	17
Knowledge	109
Time Pass	19

The table 10, shows that 109 respondents prefer to use the library for the purpose of improving knowledge. 17 of them are using for the purpose of their studies & 19 of them are using to time pass. It is observed from the table 17 that the maximum inmates are using the library for further study & knowledge, it also shows that the library plays vital role to the rehabilitation of the inmates.

5.5 RESOURCES IN LIBRARY

Table 11 – Resources in Library

Resources	No. of Respondents
Books	99
News Papers	35
Magazines	10
Story Books	52
Any others	3

As indicated in Table 11 that 99 of respondents read books, 52 of them read story books, 35 of them read news papers, and 10 of them read magazines and 3 responds to any other resources. (Chart 3)

5.6 TIME ALLOCATED

Table 12- Aware of Timings of the Library

Time allocated	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	103	77
No	20	15
NA	10	8
Total	133	100

The respondents were asked whether they are aware of the time allocated to visit the library. Table 12 indicates that the majority 77% are aware of the time allocated, 15% are not aware & for the remaining 8% it is not applicable.

Table 13 – Allocated Time - Sufficient

Time Sufficient	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	77	75
No	26	25
Total	103	100

The respondents were asked whether the allocated time is sufficient. Table 13 shows that 77 out of 103 (who were aware of the time allocated) respondents give response that time allocated is sufficient and 26 out of 133 respondents give response that the time allocated is not sufficient.

5.7 ATMOSPHERE OF THE LIBRARY

Table 14 – Relax place

Relax Place	No. of Respondents
Yes	75
No	22
Doesn't Matter	26
NA	10
Total	133

The question is asked whether the library was designed to encourage inmates to study in a more relaxed atmosphere the data received is shown in Table 14. The high response 75 out of 133 states that, it is a huge incentive to relax and study. 22 out of 133 states that, the library should not be a place to relax, 26 out of 133 states that, the atmosphere is not a matter & for the left 10 respondents it is not applicable.

5.8 RESOURCES ASSIST FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

Table 15 - Resources assists

Resources to Assist	No. of Respondents
Yes	47
No	76
NA	10
Total	133

Table 15 shows that the library provides the resources to assist for further education, 47 out of 133 respondents says that the library provides the resources, majority of them 76 out of 133 respondents says that the library is not providing the resource for further education.

5.9 SHARE INFORMATION OF READ BOOKS

Table 16 - Resources Support

Resources Supports	No. of Respondents
Distance education	11
Online Course	0
Any other Course	36
Total	47

For those who replied that the library provides the resource for further education were asked to which course the library resources support. 11 out of 47 says that it supports for distance education & 36 out of 47 says that it support for any other course.

Table 17 – Share information

Share information	No. of Respondents
Yes	126
No	7
Total	133

The respondents were asked whether the read books information's are shared with others. Table 17 reveals that the majority 126 out of 133 states that they share with others. 7 out of 133 respondents states that they don't share with others.

Table 18 – Share with whom

Share information	No. of Respondents
Neighbor Inmates	106
Visitors	7
Both	13
Total	126

For those who replied that they share the read books with others were asked with whom they share. 106 out of 126 says that they share with the neighbor inmates, 7 out of 126 says that they

share with the visitors who visit them & 13 out of 126 says that they share with both the neighbor inmates & the visitors.

VIEWS OF INMATES

- Very peaceful, helps to improve knowledge, able to avoid their worries about the sin they made.
- Functioning in good way.
- Good books are available but only limited numbers are there.
- Helps to think & improve our knowledge.
- Great benefit.
- 50 years old books are available; this helps to know lot of information of the past.
- Provide peace of mind.
- Library helps to know what are happening outside.
- It's like our educational institution.
- Helps to keep away from family worries.
- Most of the books are not in reading condition.
- Time is spent in useful way.
- Simple & service are sufficient
- Books are not sufficient, need more books
- Rare books are available, really helpful
- Required books not available. Even the available books are not in good position.
- Library helps to clear the doubt in any general subjects
- Reading habit increased,
- Some says that it is very useful & satisfied.
- Few of them are not happy with the system & few are not interested to give their views.

OPINIONS BY THE INMATES

- Books should be issued 2 times in a week.
- Generally in all working days the library allows utilizing the library to read the issued books, instead of that they should allow to read & refer the library books in all working days. Open access should be maintained.
- The widely used books are not returned in time.
- Subject wise books should be arranged
- The copies of books catalogue should be available in each block. It will be easy for the inmates to decide the required books. The list of the same will be handover to library in charge during issue day. It avoid rush & time is saved.
- Library should have the library professionals to maintain it.
- Since there is no library professional, the library-supporting inmate who maintains the library can be trained up by any library professional from outside.
- Books in general knowledge, story, history, astrology, spiritual, computer, science, religious, law, simple English, current affairs, philosophy, social impact books, motivational books, history about the temples, dictionary are the requirements.
- Best author books in Tamil language are in great demand.
- The books like kadal pura, yavanarani, ponninyin selvan, senthamil sekilar, and varant bala's books are most requirement for the library.

- Previously monthly once books were borrowed from local public library through library in-charge and issued to the inmates. Recently this service was not carried out due to inadequate of staff. Inmates are of view of restoring this practice so that they can have access to more number of books..
- Increase the copies of the most frequently used books.
- The collections of books should support the inmates, who are doing higher education.
- Need separate place for Library, at present the classes for primary education & drawing are running under the library area.
- Required more cupboards to preserve the books.
- Arrangements to be made for binding all the books available in the prison library and weed out books to be removed.
- Need more chairs to sit & read in library.
- All major newspapers both English & Tamil Language should available in Library.
- Old newspapers should be maintained in the library. This helps the inmates to refer any court order or government news relevant to their case.
- Maintain the gate entry register.
- Automation of the library will be great helpful. Helps to learn online courses.

CONCLUSION

The present study indicates that the inmates are utilizing the library well. Their voices are the books are the only companions for their prison life. Most of the inmates are more than 3 yrs & they read the book in 3 days time. During this period they have read the same book for more then 3 times. One reason they love that book another reason, they could not find better book as per their wish concern. As the librarians are service providers, they should find out the better way of providing services. Collection of books concern to the inmate's requirement should be updated with the latest edition. The library is the place where the inmates find privacy, quiet & independent. The library should fill the mind with the noble aspiration, good purposes and the best ways of realizing them.

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