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VULNERABLE GROUPS, IMPRISONMENT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION: A STUDY IN NAGPUR DIVISION

Y.RONALD AND P.V. LAAVANYA

PhD Candidate, School of Social Work Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
PhD Candidate, School of Social Work Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Abstract:

The authors have attempted to understand the linkages between vulnerable groups, imprisonment and the resultant social exclusion through empirical study in Nagpur Division in Maharashtra. The authors have also suggested policy measures necessary for tackling social exclusion.

KEY WORDS:

Young People, Social Groups, Imprisonment, Social Exclusion

INTRODUCTION:

The recent position paper of IPRT (2012) brought to light the linkages between vulnerability, imprisonment and social exclusion. The research findings of IPRT revealed that social and educational disadvantage of young people will result in vulnerability to crime. Moreover the paper argued that lack of appropriate programs to reintegrate ex-prisoners back in to society through work or training will result in poverty and social exclusion. The IPRT study is very much relevant to Indian context.

The recent national crime records bureau statistics (2011) reveals that forty six thousand, four hundred and eighty [46480] young people between the age group of 18-30 have been imprisoned in the Indian jails. Thus it is clear that 37.30% of prisoners in India are young people. Given below [in Table 1] is another interesting revelation from the national crime records bureau statistics (2011).

Table 1- Source: NCRB (2011)

	Category 1 (Below XIIth Std)			Category 2 (Technical/Graduate)			Total
	Illiterate	Below Xth Std	XI & XII	Graduate	Post Graduate	Technical Degree/Diploma	
Number	36884	55332	24532	5419	1477	942	124586
Percentage	29.60 %	44.41%	19.69%	4.34%	1.18%	0.75%	100%
Cumulative Percentage	93.70 %			6.29%			

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The table [1] reveals that 93.70 % of prisoners in Indian Jails have less education. Only a meagre 6.29 % of prisoners are graduates or technical diploma holders. Hence it is clear that socially and educationally disadvantaged people land up in jail.

The prison organization is entrusted with the task of reforming and rehabilitating the offenders (Ahmad 1993:369). But in most cases, the prison uses repression and intimidation as tools, which are ineffective and inhumane (Kumarappa 1942:51). Bhutta and Akbar (2012) argue that the substantive gap remaining between policy and implementation has turned prisons into place of illegalities and fertile breeding places for offenders.

For the rehabilitation to be successful, skill development of prisoners should be given more importance. The NCRB (2011) records show that forty three thousand, three hundred and seventeen [i.e 34.76%] inmates are trained in agriculture, carpentry, canning, tailoring, weaving, soap/ phenyl making, handloom and others trades. But many scholars like Kumar are sceptical of the prison industries and work programs.

Upon release from prison, the inmates are entitled to get support and guidance from the prison. But Hiremath (2008) suggests that even the draft national prison policy has failed to dwell on the aspect properly. This brings us to the juncture to study the linkages between vulnerable groups, imprisonment and social exclusion.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the socio-demographic and educational background of imprisoned people?
2. What is the perception on productive work and life at prison?
3. What is the position of released prisoners in the job market?
4. What are the psycho-social dimensions of social exclusion of released prisoners?

METHODOLOGY

A list of convict prisoners released in the Nagpur Division in 2012 was extracted with the help on two NGOs. Then, simple random sampling method was used to derive at 30 samples. The NGO workers visited the homes of the released prisoners and conducted the survey with the selected respondents.

FINDINGS

a. Most of the imprisoned are youth from marginalised groups.

The table 2 indicates the presence of 53.3 % youth in the samples. Moreover, table 3 gives a clear indication that 96.7% of the imprisoned are from socially marginalised groups such as SC, ST, NT, DNT, and OBC. The crosstable 4 indicated that the youth from the marginalised groups mostly spent 3-14 years in prison.

Table-2: Distribution of Respondents Age Group

Respondents Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
19-24 years	4	13.3
25-39 years	12	40.0
Above 40 years	14	46.7
Total	30	100

Table -3: Distribution of Respondents Caste

Respondents Caste Group	Frequency	Percentage
Schedule Caste	12	40.0
Schedule Tribe	4	13.3
Notified/ Denotified Tribes	4	13.3
Other Backward Classes	9	30.0
Upper Caste	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Table-4: Cross tabulation of Respondents age and their Prison Term

Respondents Age Group	Respondent Prison Term			Total
	6 months to 2 years	3-7 years	8-14 years	
19-24 years	0	4	0	4
25-39 years	3	5	4	12
Above 40 years	0	9	5	14
Total	3	18	9	30

b. None of the imprisoned youth from marginalised groups had any technical skill/ qualification. Neither were they graduates.

From Table 5, it is evident that none of the interviewed sample respondents have a degree or technical education. Nineteen (63.3%) of the respondents have just had elementary schooling and four (13.3%) are illiterates. The highest education in the samples studied is twelfth standard. Only 2 (6.6%) had finished twelfth standard and another 5 (16.6%) had finished 10th standard.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Respondents education and their Offences

Education	Offences						Total
	Sexual	Dowry	Theft	Fraud	Murder	Others	
12 th Standard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 th Standard	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
1-8 th Standard	2	4	1	0	3	9	19
No Education	1	0	0	1	2	0	4
Total	3	4	2	4	7	10	30

c. Most of the time in prison was spent on doing odd job and never participated in any regular skill development programs.

From table 6, it is clear that kitchen assistance, gardening, office assistance, laundry work, and carpentry were the odd jobs. Table 7 substantiates this as 60% of the inmates spent their time in these tasks for 26-40 hours per week. The remaining 30% were idle for most of the time.

Table 6: Type of Work carried by the Respondent during their Prison Term

Type of Work carried by the Respondent in the Prison	Frequency	Percentage
Kitchen	8	26.7
Garden	4	13.3
Office Assistant	4	13.3
Laundry	8	26.7
Carpentry	1	3.3
Others	5	16.7
Total	30	100.0

Table 7: Number of Hours the Respondent Worked in the Prison

Hours of Work carried by the Respondent in the Prison	Frequency	Percentage
1-10 Hours	2	6.7
11-25 hours	7	23.3
26-40 hours	18	60.0
Above 40 hours	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

Most of the inmates (73.3%) felt that the work in prison is of no benefit, as indicated in the table 8. They almost never (96.7%) took part in any courses. Only one respondent had attended a literacy program.

Table 8: Respondents Perception of their Work in the Prison

Respondent Perception of their Work in the Prison	Frequency	Percentage
Prisoner's were benefited	8	26.7
Prisoner's were not benefited	22	73.3
Total	30	100

Table 9: Respondent Exposure to Literacy Program during Prison Period

Respondent Exposure to Literacy Program	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	3.3
No	29	96.7
Total	30	100

d. The released prisoners either do unskilled manual labour or do not get any job at all. They do not get much support and guidance from prison department. Thus most of them are idle and at the risk of further criminalisation.

Table 10 indicates that 80% of the inmates never have had any career guidance and counselling session while in the prison. As a result 56.7 % have no job and the remaining (43.3%) only do unskilled manual job as indicated in table 11.

Table 10: Respondents Exposure to Counselling in the Prison

Respondents Exposure to Counselling in the Prison	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	20
No	24	80
Total	30	100

Table 11: Respondents Employment Status after Prison term

Respondent Employment Status after their Prison term.	Frequency	Percentage
Employed in unskilled job	13	43.3
No Employment	17	56.7
Total	30	100

The experience in prison also affects the attitude of the released prisoners. As indicated in table 12, most of the released prisoners (66.7 %) consider job as waste of time. Another 13.3% would like to depend on other rather than engaging in work. Only 20 % feel that they should have a job. The most shocking revelation in table 13 is that the 30% of the released prisoners feel that there is chance to get back to crime

Table 12: Respondent's attitude towards Employment

Respondent's attitude towards Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Should have a Job	6	20
Not Necessary	20	66.7
Depends on others Acceptance	4	13.3
Total	30	100

Table 13: Respondent's Chance of getting back to Crime

Respondent's Chance of getting back to Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Chance of Getting back to Crime	9	30
No Chance of getting back to Crime	21	70
Total	30	100

e. Most of the released prisoners experience exclusion from immediate family and do not have enough support systems and therefore experience psycho-social stress

Table 14 shows that out of the 21 married people, only 4 (19%) are living with the spouse/ family and 17 (80%) are dependent on other relatives and friends. One unmarried released prisoner lives on street also.

Table 14: Respondents' Marital Status

Respondent's Marital Status	Respondent living with			Total
	Spouse	Relatives	Street	
Married	4	17	0	21
Unmarried	7	0	1	8
Divorce	0	1	0	1
Total	11	18	1	30

From clustering the open ended questions, the following social problems were identified:

- Lack of respect and support in the community
- Lack of support in the family often leading to stress
- Lack of financial sources
- Lack of awareness of government schemes for released prisoners

NEEDS AND SUGGESTIONS

The following are the imminent needs:

1. There is a need for skill training for youth in the communities where there is high population of marginalised groups.
2. There is a need for revamping the prison job environment with more focus on constructive work.
3. There is a dire need for counselling and guidance professional in the prison.
4. There is a need for continuous psycho-social support after release from prison.

In order to make it possible, NGOs, social work colleges and young professionals can be roped in by the government. Their involvement can help the state tackle the social exclusion of vulnerable groups.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study was limited to thirty samples only and cannot be generalised to the entire population. Due to lack of funds, time and resources, only 30 samples were selected. But there is scope for future research to explore the topic in depth.

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