DAJE Volume 02 (1) 2026 [January-June]
Published on: 26 August, 2026

Received: 30 April, 2026 /Revised: 16 July, 2026/Accepted: 17 July, 2026

Rehabilitation of Prisons through Education: A Comparative Analysis of Initiatives in Indian States and Union Territories

Chandrapal Yadav[1]
Neelam Thapa[2]
Sumit Rajpoot[3]

Abstract

Prison education is a significant aspect of correctional reform which contributes to prisoners' knowledge, vocational skills, personal development and successful social reintegration. But the number and quality of educational and rehabilitation programmes are highly variable by State and Union Territory in India. The purpose of this study is to draw comparisons in the formal education system, the vocational system, prison libraries, recreational and spiritual activities, and best practices in prisons of State and Union Territories of India. The study used a descriptive and comparative research approach with secondary data obtained from Prison Statistics India 2022 published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), official prison department websites and other government sources. The data on analysis shows significant disparities between different states in relation to educational participation in corrections, with Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka having relatively good rates of educational participation while North-Eastern states having low rates or no participation at all. The study also notes significant variations in vocational training and rehabilitation in the States, with Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh as examples of integrated correctional education. The study suggests development of a uniform national framework that improves resource distribution and digital capabilities to provide equitable access to education and support the rehabilitation programs to enhance the reintegration of prisoners into the society.

Keywords: *Prison Education, Rehabilitation, Vocational Training, Prison Libraries, India.*

Introduction

While prisons offer confinement for those who have been convicted or awaiting trial, they also exist to help rehabilitate and reform inmates. The modern prison system is meant to be

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar (Madhya Pradesh)
[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar (Madhya Pradesh)
[3]Student (M. Lib. I. Sc.), Department of Library and Information Science, Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar (Madhya Pradesh)
Published by: Department of Education, Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar (MP)

a rehabilitative centre containing educational and vocational training programs, mental health care, and libraries (Ministry of Home Affairs). According to Mahatma Gandhi, "Crime is the result of a diseased mind, and therefore jails must have an environment like a hospital with proper treatment and care." (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2003) There is an urgent need to convert jails from places where punishment is administered into centres of recovery and learning. Education, library services, vocational training, cultural/recreational activities have all been identified as key elements in this transformation. These programs improve the literacy and skill set of inmates, but also have a major impact on the mental, emotional, and cognitive health of inmates. The provision of access to information, opportunity to learn, and ability to express oneself creatively can be transformative for inmates, help them find meaning and purpose in life again, develop discipline in their life, and prepare them for reintegration into their communities. In India, each of the 28 states and 8 Union territories are responsible for providing prison services within their jurisdictions; therefore, each state's prison administration and regulations are governed by the Prison Act of 1894. Each state and union territory is responsible for providing education and rehabilitation services to inmates. In all states, prison facilities are classified into 8 different types of prisons based on use; Central, District, Sub jail, Women's Jail, Borstal Schools, Open Jail, Special Jail and others. All types of facilities must have libraries and offer opportunities for education. However, there are significant disparities in the amount, quality, and accessibility of these programs. The purpose of this study is to find out how much and in what ways have Indian prisons administered educational and rehabilitative programs. It is intended that the results from this study will identify both best practices and existing voids and will contribute to the overall conversation regarding policy visibility, standardization and digital accountability in the area of prison reform in India.

Role of Prison Library in Education and Rehabilitation of Prisoners

The Prison Library delivers critical resources for educating and rehabilitating convicted offenders by providing access to books and reading materials that can improve literacy, skills, and knowledge. Prison libraries provide a vehicle to support an offender's positive thinking through self-improvement and developing emotional stability so that he is ready for a successful and productive life upon his release from prison.

Review of literature

CC BY

Singh (2018) examined the role of open and distance learning in providing educational opportunities to prison inmates, with special reference to IGNOU Regional Centre Jaipur, and highlighted its contribution to skill development, competency enhancement, and socio-economic rehabilitation. Jain and Tripathi (2018) examined IGNOU's educational initiatives in Haryana prisons and found that access to education promotes prisoners' knowledge, productive engagement, personal development, and rehabilitation. Similarly, Gupta and Tiwari (2024) studied educational and vocational training programmes among 118 convicted prisoners in Central Jail, Delhi, and emphasised their importance in developing prisoners' knowledge, practical abilities, and employable skills. Collectively, these studies highlighted the significant role of educational and vocational programmes in prisoners' reformation, rehabilitation, and successful reintegration into mainstream society after release.

The use of prison libraries as a means of rehabilitation, education and mental health of inmates has received a great deal of empirical and conceptual research from all over the world. Awofẹsọ & Opesanwo (2024) conducted a conceptual review on prison libraries' theoretical foundations as centers for inmate rehabilitation. They established that prison libraries promote an inmate's personal growth, literacy and social integration by providing him/her with the ability to be autonomous and self-directed in the learning/development process. Kaur (2018) described the development of prison libraries in light of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions) guidelines. The author emphasized that international standards are essential to ensure that prison libraries meet the educational and psychological needs of inmates, indicating that their proper implementation would further the purpose of correction. Bahuguna & Singhal (2021) looked at human rights jurisprudence within India as it relates to criminal and correctional reform. They identified that adequate reform requires a legal framework that provides adequate rehabilitation. The results of their study utilize field data from Uttarakhand's prisons and statistical analysis utilizing SPSS to demonstrate a connection between literacy and life skills and human rights perspective, applying an argument for reform which is consistent with international standards.

Han (2023) looked at how prison libraries are set up globally and argued that prison libraries help people become more educated and help maintain mental health and connect to their families. Voccarino & Cormier (2010) examined the partnership between the Wanganui District Library and a local New Zealand prison. Their study found prison libraries offered prisoners a degree of autonomy, increased awareness of accepted social norms and enhanced

CC BY

literacy levels. The researchers concluded that through regular attendance at libraries, prisoners will develop ongoing reading habits that persist after release from prison. Through an Australian study, Garner (2017) also found inmate education achievement was low and there is a need for digital technology to be utilized in prison libraries in order to help bridge the gap between prisoners and society. Providing inmates with e-books, music, and educational resources can change the way inmate's access information. Garner emphasized that information technology can bridge geographical and informational divides. The use of digital tablets was studied in New South Wales (NSW) correctional facilities by Thaler et al. (2022) through qualitative research. Inmates reported strong engagement and satisfaction as inmates particularly enjoyed the communication and education-related functions. The study recommended improved Wi-Fi infrastructure, ongoing training, and expanded educational material in order to maximize the rehabilitative effect of digital tools on inmates.

Sharda & Tiwari (2022) conducted a case study about the District Jail Library in Gautam Buddha Nagar. They found that 78% of inmates accessed the library at least once per week, with the majority of them favouring religious and educational materials. They recommended expanding collections, providing digital materials (e.g., you-tube videos), and building partnerships between NGOs and prisons to meet the demand for additional books and vocational materials. Amaravathi & Nayak (2023) did a survey with 149 inmates at Mysore Central Prison about their use of library resources & services. They found a high level of overall use of library resources (i.e., 85.90% of the respondents went to the library at least once a day), with story books & newspaper materials being most utilized. There was a high level of satisfaction with the physical structure of the library; however, there was still dissatisfaction with regards to text books and journals. The authors made recommendations for the enhancement of prison libraries that included enhanced structure, larger collections of printed materials and enhanced sanitation facilities in the library.

Research Gap

Previous research on prison education has tended to centre on a single prison. However, there is limited in-depth comparative research on all Indian States and Union Territories. Also, earlier research explored the formal education, prison libraries, vocational training, recreational activities and rehabilitation efforts separately rather than in one seamless framework of analysis. Thus, the significance of regional differences and good practice have not been systematically analysed. This study aims to bring this to the fore and undertake a comparative

CC BY

assessment of prison education initiatives at a national level with evidence-based policy recommendations to enhance correctional education in India.

Research Objectives

1. To review the current status of education programmes in prisons of various Indian States and Union Territories.
2. To measure the state wise participation of inmates of prisons in formal education and vocational training.
3. To assess prison library facilities, rehabilitation programmes, recreation facilities and best practice.
4. To detect the regional differences of prison education and rehabilitation programmes.

Research Questions

RQ1: Prison inmates of which states have better participation in formal education and vocational training?

RQ2: What are the differences between prison libraries and rehabilitation programs by state?

RQ3: What are good practices that help to facilitate effective prisoner rehabilitation?

RQ4: What policy measures are needed to decrease regional disparities in prison education?

Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive and comparative research design with the aim of analyzing the prison education and rehabilitation initiatives in Indian States and Union Territories which relied solely on secondary data. The data were gathered from Prison Statistics India 2022 published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), information obtained from the official websites of the prison departments of the various State/Union Territory, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) and government reports. This study compared certain variables such as the number of inmates, formal education offered, vocational training, prison libraries, recreational activities, spiritual activities, and state-specific rehabilitation programs. The variables were chosen to analyse the level of correctional educational and rehabilitative services to prisoners and to determine the regional variation and best practices in correctional education in India.

The data gathered were organized, graded and analyzed systematically by application of the descriptive statistical techniques which involved frequencies, percentages and comparative

CC BY

tabulation in Microsoft Excel. Participation rates in educational and vocational programmes were determined by combining the number of prisoners enrolled in programmes with the total number of prisoners in each State and Union Territory, thus allowing for comparisons across the regions and for identification of top and bottom performing regions. The results were analyzed with the aim of identifying differences in correctional education, rehabilitation and policy implementation.

Limitations

The study is limited by completeness and consistency of official data as some of the prison department websites contained outdated and/or incomplete data. No inferential statistical analysis or primary data collection was conducted as the study was based on secondary administrative data.

Data analysis and Interpretation

To analyse and present the Secondary Data collected from the NCRB's Prison Statistics India 2022 (NCRB, 2022) and the official websites of the State/UT Prison Departments systematically, the secondary data was compiled into tabular form.

Table 1: State-wise Distribution of Prisoners Enrolled in Formal Education

S. N.	State	Total Population	Elementary Education	Adult Education	Higher Education	Computer	Total
1	Telangana	6497	6151 (94.67%)	1900 (29.24%)	392 (6.03%)	470 (7.23%)	8913 (137.18%)
2	Tamil Nadu	18806	5408 (28.75%)	3049 (16.21%)	1250 (6.64%)	313 (1.66%)	10020 (53.28%)
3	Andhra Pradesh	7254	1587 (21.87%)	912 (12.57%)	413 (5.69%)	28 (0.38%)	2940 (40.52%)
4	Bihar	64914	15922 (24.52%)	7421 (11.43%)	480 (0.73%)	303 (0.46%)	24126 (37.16%)
5	Karnataka	16203	776 (4.78%)	4813 (29.70%)	49 (0.30%)	85 (0.52%)	5723 (35.32%)
6	Haryana	25471	1403 (5.50%)	2795 (10.97%)	1264 (4.96%)	502 (1.97%)	5964 (23.41%)
7	Madhya Pradesh	48857	798 (1.63%)	6938 (14.20%)	357 (0.73%)	84 (0.17%)	8177 (16.73%)
8	Uttar Pradesh	121609	3984 (3.27%)	6145 (5.05%)	4876 (4%)	1195 (0.98%)	16200 (13.32%)

CC BY

9	Rajasthan	24659	2068 (8.38%)	349 (1.41%)	322 (1.30%)	368 (1.49%)	3107 (12.59%)
10	Chhattisgarh	20451	1296 (6.33%)	457 (2.23%)	310 (1.51%)	470 (2.29%)	2533 (12.38%)
11	Gujarat	16611	798 (4.80%)	567 (3.41%)	652 (3.92%)	14 (0.08%)	2031 (12.22%)
12	Odisha	18962	477 (2.51%)	699 (3.68%)	494 (2.60%)	91 (0.47%)	1761 (9.28%)
13	Jharkhand	19615	1172 (5.97%)	399 (2.03%)	124 (0.63%)	27 (0.13%)	1722 (8.77%)
14	Maharashtra	41070	342 (0.83%)	1536 (3.73%)	862 (2.09%)	266 (0.64%)	3006 (7.31%)
15	Assam	11592	391 (3.37%)	0	16 (0.13%)	42 (0.36%)	449 (3.87%)
16	West Bengal	28789	765 (2.65%)	240 (0.83%)	55 (0.19%)	36 (0.12%)	1096 (3.80%)
17	Kerala	8883	99 (1.11%)	29 (0.32%)	126 (1.41%)	40 (0.45%)	294 (3.30%)
18	Punjab	30801	298 (0.96%)	339 (1.10%)	78 (0.25%)	25(0.08%)	740 (2.40%)
19	Goa	681	0	0	15 (2.20%)	0	15 (2.20%)
20	Himachal Pradesh	2881	0	20 (0.69%)	14 (0.48%)	0	34 (1.18%)
21	Uttarakhand	6858	26 (0.37%)	8 (0.11%)	1 (0.01%)	38 (0.55%)	73 (1.06%)
22	Mizoram	1580	0	0	16 (1.01%)	0	16 (1.01%)
23	Sikkim	387	0	0	1 (0.25%)	0	1 (0.25%)
24	Arunachal Pradesh	335	0	0	0	0	0
25	Manipur	855	0	0	0	0	0
26	Meghalaya	1137	0	0	0	0	0
27	Nagaland	469	0	0	0	0	0
28	Tripura	1194	0	0	0	0	0
Union Territories							
1	Ladakh	30	0	0	0	9 (30%)	9 (30%)
2.	Delhi	18497	2856 (15.44%)	1142 (6.17%)	432 (2.33%)	689 (3.72%)	5119 (27.67%)

CC BY

3	Chandigarh	1195	120 (10.04%)	19 (1.58%)	65 (5.43%)	0	204 (17.07%)
4	J & K	5314	46 (0.86%)	91 (1.71%)	132 (2.48%)	72 (1.35%)	341 (6.41%)
5	A&N Islands	258	3 (1.16%)	4 (1.55%)	0	0	7 (2.71%)
6.	Puducherry	323	0	0	0	2 (0.61%)	2 (0.61%)
7.	DNH & Daman Diu	176	0	0	0	0	0
8.	Lakshadweep	6	0	0	0	0	0

The analysis has revealed that several states are actively promoting formal education for prison inmates. For instance, among the 6,497 inmates in Telangana's prison system, there are 8,913 inmates enrolled in a formal education programme (wherein many inmates are enrolled in multiple educational programmes) according to NCRB 2022 data. In Tamil Nadu, there are 10,020 inmates (53.30%) out of a total of 18,806 inmates enrolled in formal education, which is a testament to the level of institutional support for such programmes within that geographical region. Similarly, Bihar has 24,126 inmates, representing 37.15% of its total inmate population of 64,914, enrolled in educational programmes. In Andhra Pradesh, 2,940 inmates represent 40.52% of its total inmate population (7,254) enrolled in formal education as well, while in Karnataka, there are 5,723 of 16,203 inmates (35.32%) in formal education programmes. Collectively, these statistics demonstrate the perspective that these states have regarding prison education as an effective rehabilitative and self-development opportunity. However, while some states have made demonstrated progress in providing education to incarcerated offenders, there are still alarming deficiencies in many other states.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report for 2022, five north-eastern Indian States (Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura) each reported having no educational enrolment amongst their prison inmates; specifically, in the case of Arunachal Pradesh this would mean that 335 inmates were incarcerated with no access to formal education whatsoever.

Likewise, although there were 855 inmates in Manipur, absent education reporting meant that none of these had access to formal education. The same can be said for Meghalaya,

CC BY

Nagaland, and Tripura where there were 1,137; 469; and 1,194 inmates respectively who showed no sign of enrolment in formal education. The lack of educational enrolment among prisoners in these states, therefore, indicates a significant gap in the rehabilitative programs or provisions of essential facilities or legislation; further efforts toward filling this gap will necessitate targeted educational initiatives and policy reform to provide both greater access and options to inmates, thereby making greater opportunities available for rehabilitation through education. There is also considerable inequality in prisoner education across India's Union Territory of Government (UTG) overseen by Delhi; according to the NCRB report for 2022, Delhi reported the largest number of enrolled prisoners at 5,119 out of a total of 18,497, which translates into an overall enrolment percent of 27.67%.

The level of formal education offered to imprisoned individuals varies significantly by region, but there are some substantial differences. The data available show Delhi has the most people involved with training, with an estimated 5,119 out of 18,497 prisoners participating in training, or 27.67%. Compared to Delhi, Chandigarh is fairly close in the number of prisoners participating (204 of 1,195 or 17.07%) and thus has a significant level of participation. In Jammu and Kashmir there are only 341 of 5,314 prisoners (6.41%) being trained, respectively; this is a particularly poor outcome. However, in the smaller Union Territories, roughly 30% of those prisoners that are literate are involved in some kind of training. Although most are doing well in percentage terms, those in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2.71%) and Pondicherry (0.61%), have virtually no participation rate. The most alarming areas are in Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep where no prisoners are currently involved with vocational training. This alone indicates a pressing need for correctional programming in these areas.

The regional disparities in formal education appear to reflect differences in the nature, coverage, and implementation of educational programmes across states and Union Territories. The high participation reported in Telangana is largely concentrated in elementary education, while Tamil Nadu shows comparatively wider participation in elementary and adult education, indicating variations in the type and coverage of educational opportunities available to prisoners. Bihar's relatively high participation can also be viewed in relation to documented initiatives such as smart classrooms. In contrast, several North-Eastern states reported no formal educational enrolment and also showed limited documentation of structured educational initiatives in the data examined. These differences

CC BY

suggest that regional disparities may be influenced by variations in programme availability and coverage, institutional support, administrative implementation, and reporting practices. However, as the study is based on secondary data, further state-specific investigation is required to establish the precise factors responsible for these variations.

Table 2: State-wise Number of Prisoners Provided Vocational Training

S. N.	State	Total population	Agriculture	Carpentry	Canning	Tailoring	Making of Soap & Phenyl	Handloom	Others	Total
1	Nagaland	469	63 (13.43 %)	50 (10.66%)	30 (6.39%)	30 (6.39%)	30 (6.39%)	30 (6.39%)	110 (23.45%)	373 (79.53%)
2	Telangana	6497	142 (2.18%)	129 (1.98%)	0	160 (2.46%)	218 (3.35%)	73 (1.12%)	1288 (19.82%)	2122 (32.66%)
3	Sikkim	387	24 (6.20%)	20 (5.16%)	0	4 (1.03%)	0	0	49 (12.66%)	97 (25.06%)
4	Tripura	1194	256 (21.44 %)	0	0	0	0	0	0	256 (21.44%)
5	Karnataka	16203	589 (3.63%)	90 (0.55%)	3 (0.01%)	339 (2.09%)	39 (0.24%)	25 (0.15%)	1684 (10.39%)	2862 (17.66%)
6	Rajasthan	24659	0	579 (2.34%)	0	981 (3.97%)	0	0	2787 (11.30%)	4347 (17.62%)
7	Manipur	855	50 (5.84%)	0	0	16 (1.87%)	10 (1.16%)	37 (4.32%)	0	113 (13.21%)
8	Tamil Nadu	18806	109 (0.57%)	145 (0.77%)	14 (0.07%)	371 (1.97%)	65 (0.34%)	210 (1.11%)	1291 (6.86%)	2396 (12.74%)
9	Gujarat	16611	89 (0.53%)	36 (0.21%)	0	272 (1.63%)	10 (0.06%)	0	1537 (9.25%)	2029 (12.21%)
10	Himachal Pradesh	2881	29 (1%)	52 (1.80%)	5 (0.17%)	50 (1.73%)	1 (0.03%)	0	105 (3.64%)	280 (9.71%)
11	Kerala	8883	117 (1.31%)	0	20 (0.22%)	23 (0.25%)	34 (0.38%)	0	616 (6.93%)	810 (9.11%)
12	Andhra Pradesh	7254	54 (0.74%)	8 (0.11%)	0	86 (1.18%)	28 (0.38%)	2 (0.02%)	431 (5.94%)	629 (8.67%)
13	Haryana	25471	243 (0.95%)	125 (0.49%)	303 (1.18%)	174 (0.68%)	72 (0.28%)	0	1197 (4.69%)	2136 (8.38%)
14	Meghalaya	1137	33 (2.90%)	40 (3.51%)	10 (0.87%)	0	0	0	0	83 (7.29%)
15	Uttar Pradesh	121609	1512 (1.24%)	480 (0.39%)	233 (0.19%)	573 (0.47%)	133 (0.10%)	289 (0.23%)	5133 (4.22%)	8653 (7.11%)

CC BY

16	Uttarakhand	6858	216 (3.14%)	69 (1%)	0	91 (1.32%)	0	26 (0.37%)	86 (1.25%)	488 (7.11%)
17	Jharkhand	19615	335 (1.70%)	25 (0.12%)	0	81 (0.41%)	34 (0.17%)	271 (1.38%)	405 (2.06%)	1341 (6.83%)
18	Chhattisgarh	20451	49 (0.23%)	129 (0.63%)	0	245 (1.19%)	14 (0.06%)	101 (0.49%)	324 (1.58%)	1139 (5.56%)
19	Goa	681	4 (0.58%)	5 (0.73%)	5 (0.73%)	8 (1.17%)	0	5 (0.73%)	0	34 (4.99%)
20	Madhya Pradesh	48857	330 (0.67%)	271 (0.55%)	103 (0.21%)	309 (0.63%)	0	304 (0.62%)	414 (0.84%)	2063 (4.22%)
21	Assam	11592	101 (0.87%)	8 (0.06%)	94 (0.81%)	43 (0.37%)	72 (0.62%)	13 (0.11%)	59 (0.50%)	472 (4.07%)
22	Bihar	64914	771 (1.18%)	19 (0.02%)	0	241 (0.37%)	171 (0.26%)	32(0.04 %)	1180 (1.81%)	2449 (3.77%)
23	Maharashtra	41070	165 (0.40%)	75 (0.18%)	13 (0.03%)	86 (0.20%)	15 (0.03%)	84 (0.20%)	1030 (2.50%)	1509 (3.67%)
24	Punjab	30801	209 (0.67%)	128 (0.41%)	23 (0.07%)	83 (0.26%)	6 (0.01%)	11 (0.03%)	399 (1.29%)	1132 (3.67%)
25	Odisha	18962	0	0	0	45 (0.23%)	63 (0.33%)	35 (0.18%)	431 (2.27%)	574 (3.02%)
26	Mizoram	1580	5 (0.31%)	15 (0.94%)	0	6 (0.37%)	0	3 (0.18%)	0	29 (1.83%)
27	Arunachal Pradesh	335	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	West Bengal	28789	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Union Territory										
1	Chandigarh	1195	85 (7.11%)	140 (11.71%)	86 (7.19%)	106 (8.87%)	0	0	448 (37.48%)	865 (72.38%)
2	A&N Islands	258	10 (3.87%)	18 (6.97%)	20 (7.75%)	3 (1.16%)	0	10 (3.87%)	0	70 (27.13%)
3	Puducherry	323	54 (16.71 %)	2 (0.61%)	0	7 (2.16%)	0	0	2 (0.61%)	65 (20.12%)
4	Ladakh	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	6(20%)	6(20%)
5	Delhi	18497	118 (0.63%)	178 (0.96%)	40 (0.21%)	261 (1.41%)	5 (0.02%)	75 (0.40%)	2252 (12.17%)	3174 (17.15%)
6	J&K	5314	26 (0.48%)	20 (0.37%)	0	49 (0.92%)	0	12 (0.22%)	52 (0.97%)	173 (3.25%)
7	DNH & Daman Diu	176	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Lakshadweep	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CC BY

Nagaland is the top scoring state for prisoners involved with vocational training; with 373 of 469 prisoners involved with living skill development activities (79.53%). This figure illustrates how much emphasis Nagaland places on vocational education through the Department of Correctional Services. In Telangana, 2122 of 6497 prisoners (32.66%) are involved with training. This number may be indicative that there is serious rehabilitation going on in Telangana. The number of prisoners participating in vocational training from Karnataka (17.66%) and Rajasthan (17.62%) are indicative of moderate levels of participation and appear to implement a balanced approach.

Similarly, with regard to Tamilnadu - only approximately 12.74% (2396/18806) of the prison population are undertaking training, which sounds "adequate", but perhaps less so when viewed through the lens of total prison population. Tumultuous is a notable point - Uttar Pradesh has more total prisoners than all of Tamil Nadu, yet training is considerably lower than in Tamil Nadu (7.11% (8653/121609)). Consequently, the large discrepancy between need and resources, in addition to that fact. As for Madhya Pradesh, only an even lower percentage of their total prison population (4.22% (2063/48857)) are currently in training programs, indicating that similar disparities in need vs available resource for prisons are likely in that state as well. Slightly better statistics exist for smaller states such as Sikkim (25.06%) and Tripura (21.44%) show at least some level of success with their prison programs when trying to demonstrate how prison programs can be successfully managed on a limited basis, therefore meeting the goal of providing prisoners opportunities for vocational training. Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal have no vocational programs available within their prisons, showing extreme deficiency, while Chandigarh has the most total prisoners currently in a vocational training program (865 (72.38%)), whereas in Delhi, that number is noted at 17.15%. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (27.13%) and Puducherry (20.12%) demonstrate sufficient means of self-reliant status towards current vocational training prison program offers. Jammu and Kashmir state has only 3.25% of total population currently in a vocational prison program (639 (3.25%)), and neither Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu nor Lakshadweep are offering vocational training to any prisoners currently.

Overall, it is evident that the status of vocational training across various states and Union Territories is highly varied. In some regions, it is highly effective, whereas in many places, its inadequacy is clearly apparent. Therefore, it is essential that these programs be promoted uniformly throughout the country to enhance the effectiveness of prisoner rehabilitation and

CC BY

social reintegration. The regional disparities in vocational training appear to reflect differences in programme coverage, prison population size, and the implementation of skill-development initiatives across states and Union Territories. Higher participation in Nagaland, Telangana, and some smaller states may indicate wider programme coverage relative to their prison populations. In contrast, states with large prison populations, such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, report lower participation rates despite implementing vocational and skill-development initiatives. This may reflect challenges in extending training opportunities to a larger number of prisoners. Therefore, regional disparities may be influenced by differences in programme coverage, population size, and availability of training opportunities, institutional capacity, and implementation of vocational initiatives.

Table 3: State wise Distribution of Recreational Activities, Spiritual Activities and Best Practices

S. N.	State	Recreational activities	Spiritual activities	Best practices
1	Andhra Pradesh	Sports meets, TV, indoor/outdoor games, music, drama,	Yoga, meditation, religious classes, spiritual and moral education.	-
2	Arunachal Pradesh	local sports tournaments	Yoga and meditation	-
3	Assam	Sports, drama, music, games, festivals, art competitions	Meditation therapies, yoga, religious discourses	-
4	Bihar	Sport facility, music, arts	Cultural activities, yoga and meditation	PRERNA (education), VEDANTA (computers), handloom, carpentry, routine yoga, tailored training
5	Chhattisgarh	Indoor/outdoor games, theatre, music, painting,	Yoga, spiritual group programs	-
6	Goa	-	-	-
7	Gujarat	Literary activities, arts, sports & games (indoor/outdoor), music, drama	Yoga, meditation, patriotic songs	-

CC BY

8	Haryana	Extensive sports (Kabaddi, Volleyball), TV in barracks, music, art, cultural programs	Yoga, meditation, multi-system courses, religious discourses	"Reach and Teach" literacy, foundational program, National Literacy Mission, vocational expansion
9	Himachal Pradesh	Music, artistic outlets, drama, tournaments, folk music	Yoga, meditation, moral & spiritual activities	IGNOU in jails, women-focused training, post-release reintegration (Galwakdi), creative therapy
10	Jharkhand	-	-	-
11	Karnataka	Comprehensive sports, cultural events (drama/music), festivals	Yoga, meditation, religious discourses	-
12	Kerala	TV, FM radio, music/drama, competitions, clubs, festivals, welfare events	Yoga, meditation, spiritual lectures	-
13	Madhya Pradesh	Arts, sports, music, theatre, sculpture, indoor/outdoor games,	Yoga, spiritual group sessions	-
14	Maharashtra	Films, drama, bhajans, reading, folk dance, music, TV, radio	Meditation, spiritual discourses	-
15	Manipur	-	-	-
16	Meghalaya	Indoor games	-	-
17	Mizoram	Indoor games	-	-
18	Nagaland	-	-	-
19	Odisha	-	-	-

CC BY

20	Punjab	Carrom, chess, basketball, football, cricket, cultural competitions, TV, worship	Spiritual discourses, religious lectures, yoga meditation	-
21	Rajasthan	Sports/events, arts/music, dance, drama, festival competitions	Yoga and meditation	-
22	Sikkim	Carom, chess, football, music, drama, creative games	-	-
23	Tamilnadu	Volleyball, kabaddi, TV, tennicoit, music, drama, cultural committee,	Yoga, meditation, spiritual classes, satsang	-
24	Telangana	TV, radio, newspapers, indoor games, competitions, events	Moral classes, yoga, religious discourses	-
25	Tripura	Indoor/outdoor games, dance, arts, festivals	Meditation	-
26	Uttar Pradesh	Sports (kabaddi, chess), drama, ludo, cultural events, reading, TV	Ramcharitmanas, Gita, Quran, Bible reading groups, yoga	'Illiterate to Literate' campaign
27	Uttarakhand	Outdoor games, movies, festivals, group singing, dance, drama, art	Religious discourses, yoga/meditation	-
28	West Bengal	-	-	-
Union Territory				
1	A&N Islands	-	-	-
2	Chandigarh	Gymnastics, TV, music, arts, sports, drama, competitions	Satsang, meditation by Brahma Kumaris, religious lectures	-
3	DNH & Daman Diu	-	-	-
4	Delhi	Sports activities	Religious classes, meditation, moral education	-
5	J & K	Sports/arts, outdoor games, music	Moral and spiritual education, meditation and yoga classes	-
6	Ladakh	-	-	-
7	Lakshadweep	-	-	-
8	Puducherry	-	-	-

CC BY

A compilation of the various recreational, spiritual, and "best practice" (Bureau of Police Research & Development. (n.d.)) Programs and activities provided in prisons in India is presented in Table 3. Many Indian states have made substantial efforts to develop and maintain a humane environment for inmates by providing structured recreational activities. For example, recreational activities such as: sports, music, television, art competitions and cultural events have been provided in prisons in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to enhancing inmate wellness through productive forms of engagement. Additionally, recreational programs offered in the prisons of Madhya Pradesh, such as yoga and sports, contribute positively to the physical and emotional well-being of the inmate. However, some states such as Goa, Manipur and Jharkhand do not provide any type of recreational programming, indicating a disparity between states and the implementation of recreational programming in prisons

In addition to recreational activities, many original teachings, such as yoga, meditation, religious teachings and morals, are found in every state, including Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh. MP prisons conduct many spiritual conferences, meditation camps and discourses by various religious leaders in order to assist in the emotional and moral rehabilitation of their prisoners.

Prisoners are involved in spiritual sessions and meditation in Union Territories, such as Delhi and Chandigarh, while there are no such activities reported in other union territories (e.g. Ladakh, Mizoram and Lakshadweep). This demonstrates the lack of spiritual outreach; however, states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are leading by example in implementing rehabilitation and reformation best practices. In Madhya Pradesh, various initiatives are being pursued actively, including prison libraries, vocational training programmes, spiritual education and skill development workshops. In addition, a number of central jails in Madhya Pradesh collaborate with NGOs to provide educational and psychological support programmes through which inmates have a greater chance of rehabilitation. Bihar has established smart classrooms, non-formal education through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and provides vocational activities under the "MUKTI" programme. Uttar Pradesh has initiated projects including 'One Jail One Product' and women's literacy programmes, while Gujarat encourages vocational training for employment opportunities

CC BY

such as diamond polishing. Chandigarh has also implemented mental health care and after-care services. Conversely, most other states and many union territories do not document best practices, indicating the need for a nationwide systematic approach to prison reform.

The regional disparities in recreational, spiritual, and rehabilitative activities appear to reflect differences in programme diversity, institutional collaboration, and the implementation of rehabilitation initiatives across states and Union Territories. States such as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh have adopted various best practices related to education, skill development, spiritual activities, and other rehabilitation programmes, indicating a broader approach to prisoner rehabilitation. In contrast, some states and Union Territories show limited documentation of such activities and best practices. Therefore, these regional disparities may be influenced by differences in programme availability and diversity, institutional collaboration, administrative implementation, and the adoption of best practices related to prisoner rehabilitation.

Discussion and Recommendations

The 2022 analysis of the NCRB statistics regarding prisons shows differences in the implementation of educational and rehabilitation programming by state and union territory. The analysis further illustrates inequitable progress towards the use of educational programming as a means to reform persons incarcerated for a crime.

Many states, including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh, have made substantial efforts to enrol large numbers of inmates in educational programs. However, other states from the North East of India, such as Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim, are far behind in this regard, demonstrating a lack of a national policy framework that provides uniform, effective delivery of such programs. For example, in Madhya Pradesh, inmates are enrolled in an integrated approach to education, sport and spirituality, many inmates learning formally through yoga, meditation and legal awareness activities, which are beneficial to the intellectual and emotional development of inmates. Conversely, many states with this poor performance (and UTs) show very limited participation in similar types of reformative programs. This could be due to limited resources allocated to prisons, neglect on the part of local administration or lack of awareness of the transformative possibilities that educational programs for prisoners can provide. Further, many of the reforms that have been successfully implemented through vocational training, libraries in prisons, working with NGOs and providing psychological counselling are not

CC BY

implemented consistently across the Nation, which indicates that there is a need for improved inter-state cooperation/coordination and a standardized approach to the implementation of vocational training and rehabilitation.

To eliminate these discrepancies, a National All-India Comprehensive Framework for Prison Education and Rehabilitation should be developed under the direction of the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide access to a minimum standard of education in all prisons to Inmates; access to elementary, adult and higher education in all prisons in India; and to establish regular recreational and spiritual programmes for prisoners, including yoga, meditation and moral education, will help to improve the mental and emotional well-being of imprisoned persons. Further, capacity building for jail staff, librarians, and administrators will support an increase in their knowledge of rehabilitation and educational management.

Furthermore, it is vital that prison libraries work with local educational bodies (schools, colleges, and universities), public libraries and open learning centres to promote literacy, reading circles, and Extension Lectures, to assist prisoners in formally and informally accessing educational opportunities. In addition to developing partnerships with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), and state open universities to provide prisoners with flexible access to educational opportunities, a strong monitoring and evaluation system should be developed to assess the effectiveness of programs by obtaining feedback from prisoners, staff and evaluators (independent observers). Lastly, modernising prison libraries through the introduction of digital resources, resources in regional languages, and electronic educational tools will support the development of reading habits and will provide a sustainable pathway for prisoners to achieve personal development, skills development, and complete rehabilitation throughout India.

Conclusions

This study highlights significant geographical disparities in the availability and implementation of prison education, vocational training, and rehabilitation programmes across India. Several states, including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu, have implemented various educational and vocational initiatives, whereas several North-Eastern states and Union Territories report limited participation in such programmes. Madhya Pradesh demonstrates a comparatively integrated approach by combining formal education, vocational training, spiritual activities, legal

CC BY

awareness, recreation, and other rehabilitative initiatives. Achieving equitable access to rehabilitative opportunities requires a coordinated national policy framework, adequate resource allocation, effective implementation, and continuous monitoring.

The study contributes to the existing literature by providing a comparative assessment of regional disparities and documented best practices in prison education and rehabilitation across Indian States and Union Territories. It identifies variations in programme coverage and implementation that may assist policymakers and prison administrators in strengthening and expanding rehabilitative initiatives. Future research should employ primary data, state-specific investigations, and longitudinal studies to assess the effectiveness and long-term outcomes of these programmes. Further research may also examine prisoners' experiences and institutional challenges to develop a more comprehensive understanding of prison education and rehabilitation in India.

References

- Amaravathi, V., & Nayak, K. J. (2023). Effective use of library resources and services by the inmates at central prison library of Mysore: A case study. *Journal of Advances in Library and Information Science, 12(3)*, 190–195.
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands Police (Prisons). (2025). Official website. Retrieved from https://andaman.gov.in/
- Andhra Pradesh Prisons Department. (2025). Official website. Retrieved from https://spsnellore.ap.gov.in/prisons-department/
- Arunachal Pradesh Police. (2025). Official website. Retrieved from https://arunprisons.nic.in/
- Assam Prisons Department. (2025 Official website. Retrieved from http://prisons.assam.gov.in/
- Awofẹsọ, O. A., & Opesanwo, O. A. (2024). The pivotal role of prison libraries as an information resource for prisoner rehabilitation. The *International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion, 8(1)*, 61–82.
- Bahuguna, S., & Singhal, A. (2021). Correctional program in the state prison of India: An analysis with reference to Uttarakhand state. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematical Education, 12(4)*, 387–393.

CC BY

- Bihar Prisons Department. (2025). Official website. Retrieved from https://state.bihar.gov.in/home/
- Bureau of Police Research & Development. (n.d.). Best practices of prisons in States/UT. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Retrieved from https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/1737721962_f0120c940f416b59dc4b.pdf
- Canning, C., & Buchanan, S. (2019). The information behaviours of maximum-security prisoners: Insights into self-protective behaviours and unmet needs. *Journal of Documentation, 75(2)*, 417–434.
- Chandigarh Prisons Department. (2025). Official website. Retrieved from https://chdmodeljail.gov.in/
- Chhattisgarh Jail Department. (2025). Official website. Retrieved from https://jail.cg.gov.in/
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Police (Prisons). (2025). Official website. Retrieved from https://dnh.gov.in/notice/o-o-the-jail-superintendent-silvassa-sub-jail/
- Delhi Prisons Department. (2025). Official website. Retrieved from https://tiharprisons.delhi.gov.in/
- Garner, J. (2017). The role of IT in prisoner education: A global view. In H. Partridge, K. Davis, & J. Thomas (Eds.), *Me, Us, IT! Proceedings ASCILITE 2017: 34th International Conference on Innovation, Practice and Research in the Use of Educational Technologies in Tertiary Education* (pp. 255–259). ASCILITE. doi:10.14742/apubs.2017.789.
- Goa Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://www.goa.gov.in/department/inspector-general-of-prisons/
- Gujarat Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://prisons.gujarat.gov.in/
- Gupta, M. K., & Tiwari, M. (2024). Study of educational and vocational training programs for reformation of prisoners: A case study of the Central Jail, Delhi. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 30(4)*, 7410–7421. doi:10.53555/kuey.v30i4.2584
- Han, K. (2023). The role of the prison library. *International Journal of Education and Humanities, 9(3)*, 108–112.

CC BY

- Haryana Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://haryanaprisons.gov.in/
- Himachal Pradesh Prisons & Correctional Services. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://hpprisons.nic.in/
- Jain, A. K., & Tripathi, U. N. (2018). Prisoners education in India: A case study of IGNOU with special reference to Haryana. *Educational Quest: An International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences, 9(1)*, 39–46. doi:10.30954/2230-7311.2018.04.06
- Jammu & Kashmir Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://www.jkprisons.in/
- Jharkhand Prisons Department. (2025). Official website.
- Karnataka Prisons and Correctional Services. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://prisons.karnataka.gov.in/en
- Kaur, S. (2018). The prison library: Its role and challenges. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovation Research, 5(12)*, 312–315.
- Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://www.keralaprisons.gov.in/
- Ladakh Police (Prisons). (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://police.ladakh.gov.in/pages/jail.html
- Lakshadweep Police (Prisons). (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://lakshadweep.gov.in/
- Madhya Pradesh Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from http://www.jail.mp.gov.in/
- Maharashtra Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://mahaprisons.gov.in/
- Manipur Home Department (Prisons). (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://manipur.gov.in/wpcontent/uploads/2024/05/Notification_RecruitmentPrisonCorrection.pdf
- Meghalaya Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://megprisons.gov.in/
- Mizoram Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://prisons.mizoram.gov.in/

CC BY

- Nagaland Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://prisons.nagaland.gov.in/
- National Crime Records Bureau. (2022). *Prison statistics India 2022. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.* Retrieved from https://ncrb.gov.in
- Odisha Prisons and Correctional Services. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://prisons.odisha.gov.in/contact/
- Puducherry Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://py.gov.in/prisons
- Punjab Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://prisons.punjab.gov.in/
- Rajasthan Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://home.rajasthan.gov.in/content/homeportal/en/jaildepartment.html
- Sharda, P., & Tiwari, R. (2022). Information needs of inmates using library of District Jail, Gautam Buddha Nagar: A case study. *Journal of Indian Library Association, 57(2)*, 123–133.
- Sikkim Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://sikkimprisons.gov.in/
- Singh, S. (2018). Access and inclusion of jail inmates to education through open and distance learning for skill development and competency enhancement: Case of IGNOU Regional Centre Jaipur. *Chetana, 3(3)*, 78–94.
- Tamil Nadu Prisons and Correctional Services. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from http://prisons.tn.gov.in/
- Telangana Prisons and Correctional Services. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://tsprisons.gov.in/
- Thaler, O., Barkworth, J., & Howard, M. (2022). *Implementing digital technologies in prisons: A qualitative study of inmate experiences* (Research Bulletin No. 58). Corrections Research Evaluation and Statistics, Corrective Services NSW. Retrieved from https://correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/research-and-statistics/rb58-implementing-digital-technologies-in-prisons.pdf
- Tripura Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://prisons.tripura.gov.in/

CC BY

- Uttar Pradesh Prisons Administration and Reform Services. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://upprison.gov.in/
- Uttarakhand Prisons Department. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://prison.uk.gov.in/
- Voccarino, F., & Comrier, M. (2010). Pathway to rehabilitation—Prisoners' use of a public library. The *Australian Library Journal, 59(4)*, 169–179.
- West Bengal Correctional Services. (2025). *Official website.* Retrieved from https://wb.gov.in/departmentsdetails.aspx?id=D171104170336887&page=Correctional-Administration



CC BY