

AFTER-CARE PROGRAMME FOR JUVENILES — WHERE DOES IT STAND TODAY ?*

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That the ultimate aim of institutional administration is reformation and rehabilitation of the inmates is widely accepted today. What, however, has not yet been duly appreciated is the need of after-care services which will be essential if the institutional inputs must be able to provide commensurate results. Actually, towards achieving the purposes of resocialization and rehabilitation both institutional and after-care services are so much dependent on each other that without one's effectivity, the other's achievements are adversely affected. Whereas, we still need very many improvements to be brought about in institutional care and correctional efforts, after-care services must also be developed side by side,

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A. *Introduction*

The concept of after-care of care and correctional caseloads of institutions is derived from the thought that regards reformation and rehabilitation as the ultimate aim of institutional administration. And although the term after-care was traditionally used to describe specific kinds of material aids given to the discharged individuals, the term now is increasingly used to include all services and programmes designed to accelerate the reintegration of persons into the mainstream who have been through a programme of care and correctional training.

After-care, as the last phase of care and correctional continuum, is not the prolongation of the treatment programmes begun and brought to a certain level at the institution but rather an approach designed to (i) remove gradually the beneficiary's social dependence, (ii) to remove or atleast dilute the stigma that may have come to be attached to him due to his institutionalization, and (iii) to help hasten the process of his Vocational and Social' rehabilitation. Further, it has to have a constructive vigilance over the conduct of the supervisee so that the interests of the society, princi-

pally to guard against a relapse into anti-social behaviour, are safeguarded, this last responsibility being predominant in case of statutory after-care (Licence). Statutory after-care differs from probation in the sense that while probation is an alternative to institutionalization, the former is an alternative to continued institutionalization. Besides, grant of statutory after-care is an administrative function while grant of probation is a judicial function.

B. *Rationale*

The substantiation for developing after-care programmes is based on the arguments that quite often more tension charged is the situation when the 'doors' of institution open for the inmate than when these were closed on him. Whatever may be the monotony of institutional life, its sense of security, routine, and its steady supplies of food, clothing, medical and other services make the inmate dependent. And longer he has been there the greater are going to be his difficulties on release, though after the initial enthusiasm! Again, unfortunately, most of institutional boys return to the surroundings which fostered their pre-commitment activities and the appropriate pre-

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paration of the family for the return of the young person is seldom done. By virtue of his stay in the institution, his status and prestige among his delinquent friends is enhanced; in the eyes of his relations and community in general it is diminished. Accepting that he has matured chronologically and the institutional programmes would have made positive impact on him, still he will need reasonable support for bridging the gap between the inside and the outside.

Experience in after-care work has well indicated that majority of the supervisees face difficulties which are of personal and/or domestic nature and quite frequently they experience problems in securing and retaining employment. Material aid, advice, referrals, emotional support of a steadying hand — these, when promptly provided, have very often swung the balance away from recidivism. When society has considered desirable to expend significant resources on care and treatment through institutional efforts, to make these efforts more fruitful in terms of ensuring that the individuals on return to society will settle down as law-abiding citizens and contribute to community life should require no stronger argument to convince anyone about the vital necessity of a well organised after-care service.

C. *Organisation*

Let us accept that presently we have available very limited after-care services, statutory or voluntary, in the country, even quantitatively speaking. And wherever they exist the information about them is unavailable or is very scanty. However, in Maharashtra the responsibility for juvenile after-care work rests with the Maharashtra State Probation and After-care Association, a

voluntary organisation aided by the State Government. It operates the service directly by its independent officers in Bombay City, through the staff of Certified Schools in Poona for their own inmates, and through its affiliated District and Regional Probation and After-care Associations in other situations (I.C.S.W., 1969: 15). In the last mentioned case, the Officer-in-Charge of the Observation Home has been assigned this additional duty. However, the Bombay Children Act, 1948, under section 92(1) states: "Subject to prescribed conditions, the Director (Child Welfare) may at any time after the expiration of six months from the commencement of the detention of a child in an Approved Centre or Approved institution* and on the recommendation of the visitors or managers of the Approved Centre or Approved Institution or on application by a parent, other relation or guardian, reinforced by local enquiries made through the Maharashtra State Probation and After-care Association, or otherwise, release such child from the Centre or Institution and grant a written licence in the prescribed form and on prescribed conditions permitting him to live under the supervision of such responsible person or society willing to take charge of the child and approved by the Director". Through Administrative Rules, the ex-licencees are expected to be followed up for one and a half years — the minimum contacts to be after every six months. There is no service available to dischargees of institutions after completion of the commitment period though some institutions do provide peripheral help informally.

Whether the after-care service would be better effective if organised as an extension of the institutional work is a much discussed topic. It is believed by many correctional administrators that no other agency

* Known as Certified School and Fit Person Institution respectively before the amendment of the Act in 1975.

will know about the individual's after-care problems and possible solutions as intimately as the one which has nursed and bestowed care on him and at least where the licensee is going to stay in the same area or there about the need for his transfer to other set of workers should be obviated. This plan may also be helpful to discharges since the institution will be taking special interest in the area of after-care. Further, since these caseloads will be limited, local people and organisations around the institution could be more easily got interested than it may be possible for this work in the whole of the city or district. On the other hand, it is contended that it may lead to proliferation of after-care and if the work has to be taken over by the existing institutional staff, this area may get neglected or the institutional work may suffer. Again, larger perspective of the after-care work may not get developed, even in the large centres of population where the bulk of the work lies. Separate arrangements for stay with much more freedom and individual responsibility (as in after-care hostel) will be needed in certain instances and that may not be possible for individual institutions to provide.

D. Statistical Profile

Children Acts were in force in 13 States and 4 Union Territories in 1971 (14 States

and 5 Union Territories in 1975) although coverage was not in all districts of the state in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, U.P. and West Bengal. Almost all of them have legal provisions for statutory after-care, some with minor differentiations though.

While discussing any service the immediate necessity is to look at the numbers which will have to be catered to. Up-to-date All India figures are unavailable and it is embarrassing to quote statistics of 1971 in the year 1982, and those too for only four states! Handbook on Social Welfare Statistics, 1976, has a section on Social Defence but the data are not sufficiently analytical for the present purpose. The National Institute of Social Defence must use its persuasive skills vigorously to collect national data and publish it periodically.

As will be noticed from Tables I and II given in the appendix, during 1971, 16 994 children were handled by 165 institutions in four states: 4,808 were the new admissions and 4,926 were the discharges of various categories*. Those released on licence were only 393 (or 400) while 1,547 were discharged from institutions at the end of their commitment period. There seems very little chance, if at all, that those 1,547 children received any after-care help! !

The total after-care load during the year was 1,298 licencees, 346 terminating successfully. The failures were only 18, the success-failure** ratio being 19:1. Quite an

* Data of 10 States and 2 Union Territories:

No. of approved/certified/special schools and children homes and fit person institutions: 1974-75	159
No. of inmates on 1-4-1974	14,449
Admission during the year 1974-75	7,770
Released /discharged during the year 1974-75	7,335
This does not include Maharashtra which had 109 institutions with a capacity for 9,200 children (other details not available).	

** The definition of 'success' meaning that revocation of licence was not asked for. This has many disadvantages: actions by individual supervising officers may weigh heavily in determining whether the revocation order is asked for or not, and there is an unknown amount of variation between supervising officers. It would be evidently preferable when some measure of the actual behaviour of the licensee is used as a criterion. Even better would be some measure of the supervisee's efforts to play the role of law-abiding citizen, a measure of the conditions which the supervisee encountered in the free community and a measure of the therapeutic assistance he received. Since such measures are not applied, not asking for the issuance of revocation order is to be taken as an approximation to success in very general terms.

impressive performance in itself as far as 'official' control of recidivism is concerned though one remains uncertain about their actual qualitative rehabilitation.

In case of children released on licence from institutions in Maharashtra during the four years period 1971-75*, out of total 843 cases of licencees closed, 719 were successful and 124 failures. Approximately for every 6 successful, there was one failure.

E. *Effectivity*

Accomplishments of after-care service will need to be understood from two contexts : how efficient the service itself is and what quality of material it is required to deal with. It is a truism that if the person concerned has not received reasonable care, education and training during the period of institutionalization, after-care efforts start with a strong handicap, how-so-ever efficiently these are put forward. And equally, the results of efficient institutional programmes will be adversely affected if the after-care programme is rather weak. To my way of thinking, towards achieving the purposes of resocialization and rehabilitation the services (institutional and after-care) are so much interdependent that without one's effectivity, the other one is much less than half!

There is very little evaluative research material available on the basis of which one can comment, with any reasonable authenticity, upon the quality of either institutional or after-care programmes in the country at large. However, the conclusions of the few studies and personal experience in the field do not exhume much confidence. Recapitulating the main findings of the two I.C.S.W. studies which contacted a sample of ex-inmates from Bombay and Poona one finds that:

Impact of Institutions on Juvenile Delinquents (1969)

- (i) Craft training did not equip them adequately to take up a job in those particular crafts in which they were trained: out of 229, 63 per cent had not been able to obtain a single job in common with the craft training learnt in the institution.
- (ii) Scholastic attainment in the institution had been, on an average, two grades only.
- (iii) Case work services provided were inadequate in terms of diagnosis, counselling and planning rehabilitation.
- (iv) Only 50 per cent of the respondents were happy about their institutional stay.
- (v) 173 of 229 respondents were released on licence. In Bombay and Poona where after-care service exists in rather an organised form, almost 50 per cent did not get the benefit. In district places where it is less organised, a very small number seem to have had some contact with the Probation Officer and almost none was helped in any way.

The brighter side was that 82 per cent were employed though income level per month was upto rupees one hundred only; 63 per cent of them were sharing financial responsibility of the family.

Impact of Institutions on 'non-delinquent' Children (1973)

- (i) Out of 501 respondents, only 61 (12.2%) had atleast one job in common with the craft training they had undergone in the institution. Majority

* The Maharashtra State Probation and After-care Association, Poona — Annual Reports 1973-74 and 1974-75: pp. 76 and 79. Data for later years not published.

of the respondents did not try to get a job in that particular trade either due to inadequate training, or they were not interested in that type of job owing to poor salary.

- (ii) 66 per cent gained 3 to 4 grades above the educational level at the time of admission.
- (iii) 83 per cent (418) felt that somebody (at times more than one person) took interest in them in the institution which speaks well for the institutions.
- (iv) There were 177 respondents released on licence as against 324 after final date of discharge. Effective help, in the area of employment, to licencees given by the Probation Officers of the Maharashtra State Probation and After-care Association was only in 38 cases.

The brighter side was that 54 per cent of the respondents were employed though income level per month of little more than half of them was upto rupees one hundred. However 186 (out of 268 girls) were married, 166 happily!

Bedi (1978) who studied institutional services for socially handicapped children in Rajasthan found in the main that:

- (i) Out of 27 institutions covered, 19 had no arrangement for vocational training, 6 had limited facilities and the remaining 2 were sending their inmates to outside vocational centres.
- (ii) Out of 328 respondents, 276 were utilizing or had availed of educational facilities: 217 among them were generally satisfied.
- (iii) Some of the staff members stated that counselling services to the inmates were adequate. However, there were others who felt that counselling and family reconciliation services were inadequate because there was

lack of rapport of the concerned staff with inmates. In all, only 74 out of 328 inmates had utilised counselling services.

Panji's study of an After-care Hostel in Maharashtra "(1979) which contacted 20 (population 24) hostellers released from juvenile institutions, found that 2 respondents had studied upto XIth standard, 9 upto 7th and the remaining 9 upto 4th. Proficiency in vocational standards had to be evaluated in terms of the duration spent in each trade since no certificate was given as no tests were held to evaluate their proficiency in the institution — a stark shortcoming of the institutional training programme. Seven respondents had not received any craft training because such facilities did not exist in their institution(s). Out of the remaining 13, only 6 had spent 1 to 2 years and 2 had spent 3 or more years in one or more trades.

In relation to general satisfaction, except arrangements for food in which 3/4th of the hostellers were very dissatisfied, satisfaction was expressed by around 60 to 70 per cent of them in areas like accommodation, recreation, medical, and help in securing employment, etc. The main problems expressed by the superintendent in securing placements were inadequate capabilities and unrealistic expectations of his wards. Rapport between him and his charges was felt to be on a superficial level.

F. *Suggestions*

It must be admitted forthwith that quite a significant number of juveniles who reach institutions bring with them tangled problems, emotional and adjustmental, and deficiencies like educational backwardness, inaptitude for learning, history of failures etc. Evidently, it will be expecting too much that institutional and after-care personnel

should be able to achieve 'wonders' with most of them. However, with the provision of reasonably sufficient resources of qualified men and money, and little more vigour and dedication of administrators the job can be done definitely better. And since the institutional and after-care services need to be developed side by side, both of these call for serious thoughts. However, in the meantime, implementation of the following comparatively inexpensive suggestions should be able to enliven to some extent the existing after-care services for juveniles.

- (i) 'After-care starts when the child comes in'. This is an oft-repeated phrase but quite difficult in operational terms. In practice, the after-care agency comes to know of the individual juvenile almost at the time of his release. It should be feasible that atleast in local cases the after-care officer should know reasonably well and be known to the inmate before he leaves the institution. These contacts will go a long way in understanding the juvenile's needs and capabilities, his family-situation, and lend themselves to suitable planning for his after-care supervision. There is urgent need of strengthening the lines of communication between the social worker in the institution and his colleague in the community: forwarding extracts of institutional case files through post is not quite the same thing. However, in cases coming from other locations, quite detailed information about the licensee should be demanded by the after-care agency and duly supplied by the institution.
- (ii) Employment is generally the most pressing need of the licensee and the most difficult part of the job of the after-care officer. Both of them need assistance: the former in securing a suitable one and the latter for having appropriate contacts to facilitate the same. And besides the general unemployment conditions prevailing in the community, the problem is accentuated because of little or lack of appropriate training in trades which are marketable. Nonetheless, the Placement Committees, on which are represented influential and genuinely interested persons from trade, industry and service clubs can provide significant help. Such committees must be organised or rejuvenated where they already exist.
- (iii) Regularity of contacts between the after-care officer and the supervisee are a sine qua non, especially during the initial period, if the transition from institution to community is to be smooth and gradual. Economic stress for the client and his family is also more acutely felt during this period. There should be administrative provision for liberal reimbursement of travelling cost spent in contacting the supervisor or somebody else on his instructions, in deserving cases.
- (iv) Every licensee should be issued a Supervision Card specifying the conditions of licence. It will become handy to substantiate his status in case of any problems with police or in any other difficulty and facilitate immediate contact with the after-care officer through telephone or otherwise. Further, since the date and time of his next agency appointment with his supervisor can be indicated, the chances of his feigned or genuine forgetfulness

will be considerably reduced. It will also be useful for administrative control so that the contacts are not allowed to become one-way traffic: home and community contacts by the after-care officer are equally important if the family members are to be involved and their strains and stresses understood and suitably handled, in the over-all after-care plan.

- (v) In the districts where the Child Welfare Officer (Probation) is required to provide additionally the after-care service, he, in practice, tends to regard it as extraneous to his normal functions of probation and gives it insufficient attention. No doubt we can plead that probation service should extend its hitherto accepted role of social service to the courts, his duties of administrative management of the Observation Home are already onerous and he should get help if after-care work must receive its due.
- (vi) There should be compiled information about referral facilities which are usually needed by the licencees like those about apprenticeship schemes, scholarships, avenues for further training in crafts/trades etc. This compilation, built up over a period of time, will prove of immense benefit and resources of the

individual after-care officer will not be expended de novo every time the need for such information arises. Transfers of the personnel are inevitable and chances of using the details collected by one officer are lost for others in the absence of such compilation.

- (vii) There is a definite place for voluntary workers as auxiliaries or aids to after-care officers. A very important need of many licencees is for simple encouragement, friendship and human understanding which could be given in more regular measure by sincere and warm-hearted volunteers. This potential we have not yet seriously tried to take advantage of. If voluntary workers are intelligently chosen and reasonably equipped under 'guided practice' combined with occasional training seminars, the dependence on them for simple tasks should be welcomed as also being consonant with the concern of the community for ex-inmates which we greatly wish to foster. Admittedly, this is not going to be an unmixed blessing. In the initial stages it will need good bit of serious and continuous efforts on the part of the after-care agency. Nonetheless, it has large potentialities and the National Service Scheme of colleges is one such source of attracting volunteers from.

TABLE I
STATES FOR WHICH REASONABLE COMPARATIVE DATA IS AVAILABLE FOR 1971

State	Number of* institutions	No. of children at the beginning of the year	Children admitted during the year	Total	Number of children discharged during the year				
					Discharged at the end of commitment period	Released on licence	Absconded from the institution	Dis- charged*** otherwise	Total Discharged
Andhra Pradesh	4	1,241	358	1,599	317	30	32	64	443
Gujarat**	7	461	311	772	64	17	185	45	311
Karnataka	33	3,454	1,120	4,574	247	171	455	256	1,129
Maharashtra	121	7,030	3,019	10,049	919	175	787	1,162	3,043
TOTAL	165	12,186	4,808	16,994	1,547	393	1,459	1,527	4,926

SOURCE: Social Defence — A Statistical Handbook, 1974, pp. 154-161 & 192-199.

* Approved/Certified/Special Schools plus Children Homes and Fit Person Institutions.

** Data available only for Approved/Certified/Special Schools, (During 1974-75 there were 62 Children Homes with daily average of 1,519 inmates — Source: Handbook on Social Welfare Statistics, 1976).

*** Discharged on appeal, on unconditional premature release, transferred to other institutions within or outside the state, died, etc.

TABLE II

NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON LICENCE FROM INSTITUTIONS* DURING THE YEAR 1971

State	Children on licence at the beginning of the year	Placed on licence during the year	Total	Whose licence terminated successfully	Whose licence was revoked	Continued on licence at the end of the year
Andhra Pradesh	46	30	76	19	1	56
Gujarat**	108	17	125	11	—	114
Karnataka	238	152	390	91	2	297
Maharashtra	506	201	707	225	15	467
TOTAL	898	400***	1,298	346	18	934

SOURCE: Social Defence — A Statistical Handbook, 1974, pp. 184-185 and 214-215.

* Approved/Certified/Special Schools plus Children Homes and Fit Person Institutions.

** Figures available only of releases from Approved/Certified/Special Schools.

*** Discrepancy in the number of children placed on licence during the year between tables I & II is unexplainable.

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