CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Statement of The Problem

Traditionally, the prisons have been considered as somewhat isolated, mysterious and frightful institutions where the offenders are confined for having committed a crime. But during the last few years, it has been realized by the administrators and social reformers alike that prisons are not isolated institutions but are a part of our social system.

The library professionals have, during the last few decades, discovered a new level of social conscience. They, individually as well as institutionally, are thinking on the lines of 'equal access to all' and have realized that equal access can not be provided while sitting in the same old building, manned by the same guards and offering the same service. If they have to provide the information,
educational or recreational, then they have to move from their respective places and go to the people. The people who can not come to the libraries and cannot move freely as others. But at the same time, they require the library services more than any other average user of the library.

With this social conscience, now one can have a look at the library users who are very often an ever narrowing circle of white collared, middle class, well educated, effluent, independent adults. Whereas on the other side, there are non users, the non reading, under educated poor who are socially deprived. One segment of the library's vast untapped clientele, to whom the library professionals should now pay their attention, are the shut in people, who can not come to library because they are literally locked up in their own immediate environment by physical means. This is the convicts and the undertrials class who are languishing in the prisons.

The prisons are defined as places for the detention of persons who are awaiting trials for the crime they have committed and for the persons who, after the court decisions, are serving imprisonment. The purpose of imprisonment is both punitive and reformatory. The idea is aimed at rehabilitation of the prisoners, so as to make them useful members of the society. The aim of prison
authorities nowadays is to awaken the higher side of the mind and character of the prisoners and to help them to develop it so that after imprisonment when they move out of prison and mingle in the society, they should be better human beings both in mind and in body. From the day of conviction, a program follows for turning the prisoners into better citizens who, after release, are expected to live an honest and peaceful social life.

There are generally three types of prisoners in any prison on the basis of their educational qualification i.e. (1) Educated Prisoners; (2) Literates and; (3) Illiterates. Educated prisoners are those who have completed their formal education but they still want to read and to be in touch with the outer world, through books, newspapers and periodicals. They would like to spend their leisure time in pursuing their reading habit. The literate are the persons who can read, write and solve simple arithmetic but they need books to enhance their educational or vocational qualification. The third type of prisoners are illiterates whose outlook on life is narrow and their recreational opportunities are very less. They do not know what the joy is in reading. So this class can be encouraged in the prisons to learn reading and writing through books.
Importance of libraries in the prison has long been recognized. Libraries not only assist the prisons, to maintain discipline but also provide remedy against the idle mind and make the prisoners friendly and co-operative. So the library is an educational as well recreational agency for the prisoners. The library services in the prisons is a vital force in the reformation of the prison inmates. It aims at the resocialization of inmates with an ultimate purpose of preparing them for their return to society with a more wholesome attitude towards living and with a desire to conduct themselves as good, honest and law abiding citizens. This study intends to investigate the present status of library services being provided to the prisoners in the prisons in Himachal Pradesh. It also will cover problem faced by the prisoners as well as the prison authorities and the library need of the prisoners. Subsequently, the investigator propose to design and suggest a model for the improvement and substitution of the present system on the basis of available and proposed library collection and facilities in the prisons in Himachal Pradesh.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The literature reviewed for the present research reveals that a few studies on this subject have been made in other countries. But
not a single systematic study has so far been carried out to assess
the present situation of library services to the prisoners in
Himachal Pradesh. The present study aims at filling this gap and
goes along the following objectives:

1. To undertake in depth study of the prison libraries, their infracstructure, collection development, staff strength, library rules, financial provisions etc., in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

2. To ascertain the library services presently being provided to the prisoners and the constraints, if any, in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

3. To ascertain the needs of the prisoners undergoing imprisonment in the various jails situated in Himachal Pradesh for the provision of library and information to them keeping in view their socio-economic background, period of imprisonment, educational background, sex, age and similar other characteristics.

4. To study the administrative problems, bottle necks in implementation of policies, financial constraints of the state government with regard to the library services for the prisoners in Himachal Pradesh.

5. To ascertain the views of the prison authorities as well as state government with regard to the library services for the prisoners in Himachal Pradesh.

6. To propose a model for library services to the prisoners in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

1.2 HYPOTHESES

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the
following hypotheses have been tested in this study.

1. Majority of the prisons in Himachal Pradesh do not have proper libraries within their premises for use of the prisoners.

2. Some of the prisoners are not even aware of the fact that facilities for certain library services can be made available to them either regularly or on demand.

3. A large number of prisoners are interested to avail the library services within the premises of the prisons for recreation and religious attainments.

4. A small percentage of prisoners are in the need of library services for pursuing higher education and appearing in the board/university examinations and also for writing on various aspects of their interest.

5. The prison authorities and the state government are not very serious about the provision of library service to the prisoners for various reasons such as paucity of funds, shortage of space, insufficient staff, security reason etc.

6. In a few prisons in Himachal Pradesh, the library services are provided by the neighboring public libraries through their extension services or mobile libraries which is limited to the issue and return of general books and fiction only.

1.4 UNIVERSE OF STUDY

All categories of prisoners serving in various jails of Himachal Pradesh have been covered in the study. At the time of study, there were around 1127 prisoners lodged in different jails. All prisoners, whether convicts or undertrials irrespective of their gender, socioeconomic background, educational status and period of imprisonment have been covered in the present study. All types of
prisons i.e. Model Central Jails, Open Air Jail, District Jails, Sub Jails, Borstal and Juvenile Jails have been visited by the investigator of the present study.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method adopted to conduct the research for the present study is "Survey Method". First of all, a list of various prisons in Himachal Pradesh was prepared with the help of Department of Prison, H.P. List of various District Public Libraries, where these prisons are located, was ascertained from the Directorate of Education, Himachal Pradesh. Whatever new prisons or libraries or changes in the addresses of existing prison and district libraries came to the notice of the investigator of the present study, were incorporated in the said list.

A great care was taken in the designing of "Questionnaires" and "Interview Schedules" which were formulated so that maximum information about the extent of library services presently being provided in the prisons and the actual requirements of the prisoners in this regard can be ascertained. Moreover, the investigator of the present study visited various library and information centres located in Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh,
Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi for literature searching on 'Library Services to the Prisoners'

Since the area of study was Himachal Pradesh, the investigator of the present study visited all prison libraries in Himachal Pradesh personally and collected the data through "Interview Schedules" and the "Questionnaires". Necessary permission to visit the prisons to interview the prisoners and to ascertain the information from the jail officials was obtained by the investigator from the Additional Director General of Police, Prisons, Himachal Pradesh. Every possible effort was made to collect data personally, even if the investigator had to make more than one attempt in a particular prison. Some times it was difficult to conduct interviews and get the questionnaires filled up due to preoccupation of the prison officials. Sometimes, due to hard climatic conditions and geographical terrain of Himachal Pradesh (the area of study), it was very inconvenient for the investigator to visit the prisons located in certain geographical region. But despite all such constraints, problems and inconvenience, the prisons were visited and data was collected as per plans.
1.6 SAMPLING

The data was collected personally by visiting all prisons situated in the state of Himachal Pradesh. First of all, the total number of prisoners was ascertained by the investigator. Then, by following the "Stratified Random Sampling Technique", one third of the total prison population in each prison was selected for collection of data. Thus, there were 1127 prisoners in the prison, out of which 34.07% i.e. 384 prisoners were interviewed for collection of data.

1.7 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Almost all the prisons in the state of Himachal Pradesh were visited personally by the investigator of this study in order to have the first hand information of the state of affairs of libraries and library services being provided to the prisoners. A detailed questionnaire was formulated, in consultation with the supervisor, to collect the data pertaining to the library buildings, reading material, staff, funds and other facilities available in these libraries.

The prisoners (34.07%) undergoing imprisonment in the various prisons in Himachal Pradesh were interviewed in order to ascertain their views about the need of library services and also the
type of library services required by them. All categories of prisoners were interviewed i.e. lifers, short term prisoners, undertrials, male, female, juvenile, educated, less educated, illiterates, literates etc. For this purpose also, a detailed Interview Schedule in consultation with the supervisor was formulated. ‘Stratified Random Sampling Technique’ was followed to conduct the survey.

The Jail Superintendents, officers of the Prison Department and the Home department of the state of Himachal Pradesh were also contacted and interviewed in order to collect the data pertaining to the problems of the state government and the prison authorities with regard to the library. All librarians of District Public Libraries were sent questionnaires regarding their services to the prisoners.

The data thus collected was analyzed and presented in the form of tables and diagrams which were interpreted appropriately in order to highlight the findings. On the basis of the finding of the present study, a model has been proposed for providing effective, efficient and viable library services to the prisoners in the state of Himachal Pradesh, which can also be applicable to other states and
union territories of India, with certain local variations and modifications.

1.8 VARIABLES

The data collected for the present study was first analyzed according to "Identification Variables" such as age, gender, educational qualifications, religion, nationality, occupation and type of crime committed. Thereafter the factors indicating the type of reading material preferred, mode of spending leisure time, according to age, gender, educational level, religion and crime committed were analyzed as "Dependent Variables".

1.9 LIMITATIONS

The study in hand required lot of field work and survey of the existing status and the need of library services to the prisoners in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Since the number of prisoners was quite high (i.e. 1127 prisoners) in the state of Himachal Pradesh, it was not possible to interview each one of them. Hence, only 34% thereof have been interviewed in each prison following "Stratified Random Sampling Technique" covering all categories of prisoners, according to their gender, age, period of imprisonment, educational
qualifications, previous occupations, socio-economic background, marital status and nature of crime committed by them.

The investigator could not visit two of the twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh namely Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti because of, firstly Sub Jails in these two districts are not functioning, and secondly, due to hard climatic conditions and tough geographical terrain of this region. The information related to these two districts was collected from the neighbouring districts and Prison Headquarters, Shimla.

On the basis of survey and conclusions drawn from the present study, a workable model for providing library services to all types of prisoners in a prison has been prepared and presented. This model can be adapted by all the prisons of Himachal Pradesh with minor local variations.

1.10 Field Work Experience

During the course of investigator's visit to various jails of Himachal Pradesh, scattered in all parts of its territory, she had many notable experiences in approaching the officers, prisoners and prisoners-related information and data. During the data
collection, the investigator came across a number of problems and had to face variety of situations.

The first requisite to visit the prison is to take the permission of prison authorities. Since prison is a place where people who have committed some crime are kept, the permission to visit the place was difficult to obtain due to security reasons. A request letter was framed by the investigator which was duly attested by the supervisor that the information thus collected will be used by the investigator only for the research purpose. In the meantime, the investigator also met the Additional Director General of Police, (ADGP) Prisons, Himachal Pradesh and personally enlightened him that she requires this information only for her doctoral research and confidential information, if any, will not be ascertained and any information, which jail authorities of Himachal Pradesh would prefer to withhold due to security reasons, will not be insisted upon. Only then necessary permission was granted by ADGP, Prisons, Himachal Pradesh, to visit the jails of the state and to collect data from the prisoners and jail authorities.

The offices of the prison department and prisons are not everywhere conveniently located. Sometimes the investigator had to
climb up and down the weather-born and slippery roads on foot as the vehicles can not reach such places. Himachal Pradesh, being a peaceful state, the people generally are not much conscious and aware of the location of prisons offices and jails except some important central jails. Most of the prison officers were very cooperative but some of them were reluctant to divulge much information about the work they were doing and the facilities in the form of books they were providing for the education and recreation of the prisoners.

Additional Director General of Police, Prisons, Himachal Pradesh, whom the investigator met in Shimla was an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer. He explained various schemes launched to keep the prisoners engaged in useful and productive work so that they are able to earn while working in prisons and to check prisoner from indulging in criminal activities like fighting among themselves, drinking, taking to drugs, gambling and sexual aberrations. He also talked about facilities being provided to the prisoners and was convinced that library services are equally important for jail reforms and can play an important role in shaping character of the prisoners.
The investigator also met Superintendent, Model Central Jail of Sirmour district at Nahan during this study. He had the background of working in the Welfare Department and seemed to be very enthusiastic and positive in approach to provide infrastructure and library facilities to prisoners, so that the knowledge and educational level of the inmates can be improved. The investigator was surprised and sometimes scared when she came to know that the persons who were serving tea and snacks in the office of Jail Superintendent were none other than convicts undergoing imprisonment for crimes like murder, dacoity etc. But due to their good conduct and behaviour, they were assigned such duties.

The investigator visited all the libraries of the prisons. Entering the big gates of the prisons was also a new experience for her. In every jail, there were two big entry doors and the guard on duty opened only a small part of one of the iron doors for entry purpose and immediately after the entry, locked the gate from behind; Only then, he opened second strong iron door which ushered the investigator inside of the prison. The investigator found a number of jail barracks where both male and female prisoners were lodged separately. One doctor is posted in the jail to attend the
medical problems of patients. One room inside the jail was being used as a library where some books and journals were kept for reading by the prisoners. The investigator talked to the prisoners who were found reading newspapers and books etc. Their reactions were incorporated in Chapter VI. In every barrack, there were number of cots and each cot worked as home for each prisoner. Each barrack had one colour television set for recreation of the prisoners. Some prisoners were engaged in weaving carpets, durries etc and some were cooking food for the prisoners in the mess. Each prisoner is given food not less than the prescribed scale of ration for each of them.

During her visit to Kaithu Sub Jail in Shimla, the investigator had an unforgettable experience with one of the prisoners. The said prisoner was working as Assistant Professor in H.P. University, Shimla and was charged with the crime of attempt to murder on a police officer. When the investigator expressed her desire to interview him, he, on the other hand, also started questioning her. During conversation, he criticized the rule of law, Indian judicial system and inadequate library and education facilities for prisoners in the jails. He said that he had done M. Phil and Ph. D. and he worked for seven years in H.P. University before imprisonment.
On investigator's visit to Model Central Jail, Kanda in Shimla district, which is reported to be the highest located jail in Asia and is constructed on the latest concept of prisons reforms, the Jail Superintendent who was also working as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Shimla Town welcomed the investigator and introduced her to some of the prisoners who were engaged in various duties in the prison. The investigator was surprised to meet one of the prisoners, who was a reputed industrialist of Solan district. He was sentenced to life imprisonment on a charge of murder which, according to him, he never committed. He was implicated on the charge of beating and then poisoning an old man belonging to scheduled caste on a land dispute in Solan district.

During her visit to Una Sub Jail, which is a border district of H.P, the investigator had an unpleasant experience. When she was taken to meet the prisoners in the jail to interview them, she suddenly found her self surrounded by dangerous looking terrorists, who were undertrials in various cases of terrorism, murder, abduction and robberies. But immediately, Deputy Superintendent of Jail and her security guards escorted her back to the office of the Officer Incharge, where, the interviews of the prisoners were recorded one by one.
During the course of the present study, the investigator met not only the hard core terrorists, murderers and other criminals but also innocent youth and old people. But all of them responded very well to the "Interview Schedules" and all of them echoed the same thing that it is very difficult to spend their leisure time in the prisons. They all wanted a library in the prison so that they can pass their time as well as improve their educational qualifications.

1.11 Chapterisation

The present work has been divided into nine chapters. The first chapter is entitled "Introduction: The problem and Methodology", which describes the problem, objectives, hypotheses, universe of study, research methodology, sampling, tools and techniques, variables, and field work experiences of the present investigator and limitations of the study. Chapter II covers the literature available on the subject i.e. "The Prison libraries", 'Library services to the prisoners' and " Library services of the public libraries available to the prisoners". This chapter includes the published literature on the subject from all over the world with emphasis on Indian situation.
Chapter III highlights the origin and development of library services to the prisoners in general all over the world, with special reference to the state of affairs in India, and particularly in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Chapter IV gives the detailed information of each of the twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh, historical background of the prisons, present state of affairs of each prison and the library services being provided to the prisoners therein.

Chapter V describes the demographic profile of the prisoners in Himachal Pradesh. It covers data on convicts and undertrials, regarding their nationality, term of imprisonment, age, gender, religion, socio-economic background, marital status, crimes committed and the future programme of prisoners lodged in jails of Himachal Pradesh. Chapter VI assesses the needs of the library services of different categories of prisoners in Himachal Pradesh. Chapter VII deals with perception of prison authorities about library services to the prisoners. The organizational set up of prisons in Himachal Pradesh, points of view of all senior officers of the government in the state of Himachal Pradesh, as well as Jail Superintendents/DeputySuperintendents/AssistantSuperintendent of all the twelve district jails of Himachal Pradesh. It also highlights
the problems faced by prison authorities in providing library services to prisoners and other information related with library services to the prisoners in Himachal Pradesh.

Chapter VIII describes the role of public libraries in providing library services to the prisoners. It provides information regarding the working of District Public Libraries of Himachal Pradesh and the type of services provided to prisoners, in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Chapter IX provides the "Proposed Model for Library Services to the Prisoners in Himachal Pradesh", based on the needs of the prisoners.

A comprehensive bibliography, listing alphabetically references from books, periodicals and articles consulted by the investigator of this study, has been provided at the end. Care has been taken to maintain uniformity throughout the listing of the bibliography. For listing of reference and compilations of bibliography, the ISBD rules have been followed with certain local variations. The references within the text of this study have been given in the footnotes, where required.

Six appendices have been added at the end. Appendix I is a photocopy of the permission to collect data from the prisoners and
jails authorities in Himachal Pradesh, from the Additional Director General of Police, Prison, Himachal Pradesh. Appendix II is a copy of the "Interview Schedule" used for collecting data from the prisoners. Appendix III is a copy of the "Questionnaires" used for collecting data from the prison officials in the Department of Prisons, Himachal Pradesh. Appendix IV is a copy of the "Questionnaire" provided to the Jails Superintendents of various jails of Himachal Pradesh to collect the data pertaining to the library facilities available within the jails. Appendix V is a copy of a "Questionnaire" used to ascertain data from the libraries of the District Public Libraries of Himachal Pradesh.