CHAPTER VI

THE SETTING

Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa, accessible by air and conveniently situated on Calcutta-Madras (now Chennai) railway line is a beautiful city. It is a city in two district parts: the old and the new. Nowhere else in India can be seen such remarkable coexistence of ancient serenity with modern elegance. The new Bhubaneswar is a well laid out town with broad avenues flanked by residential houses, shops, offices, interspersed with trees and gardens. In the Capital City, among other institutions, the correctional institution is known as the Special Jail, Bhubaneswar. Previously this special jail was a sub-jail which was established after independence. Subsequently, when the state capital began functioning at Bhubaneswar, it was named as Special Jail, Bhubaneswar.

The Bhubaneswar Special Jail is located in the Jharpara Area to the eastern side of Bhubaneswar city, just near Laxmisagar Police Station. The total area of the Special Jail is 12 acres. From all sides it is surrounded by high walls.

Wards and Cells

The Jail consists of 13 wards and 4 cells. On 18th January 1993, the total number of inmates in the jail was 332.
Officers and Staff:

The various officials and staff working in special jail, Bhubaneswar are thirty seven in number. They are:

a) Superintendent : 1
b) Jailor : 1
c) Assistant Jailor : 1
d) Sub-Asst. Jailor : 3
e) Prison Welfare Officer : 1
f) Warders (including chief head warders) : 30

Total : 37

Industry

In the Special Jails there are some looms in the workshop for weaving of cotton products and blankets of soddy wool. For this purpose a weaving and dyeing trainer is there to train the prisoners. The prisoners get Rs.1 to Rs.1.50 per day for their work.

Hospital

There is a 15-beded hospital in the jail. One whole time doctor and one pharmacist are working for both indoor and outdoor patients. No nurse, either male or female is serving from the side of the government.
But those inmates who have efficiency in nursing work or had training in nursing may be appointed by the superintendent as nurse with the advice of the jail doctor.

Clothing for Prisoners

The convicts get the following clothes from the jail in every 6 months.

1. Under wear : 2
2. Half shirts : 2
3. Gamuchha
   (Cotton Towel) : 1

For their bedding they get,

1. Mat : 1
2. Durry : 1
3. Blanket : 2
4. Pillow : 1

The female prisoners get the following clothes in every 6 months from the jail.

1. Saree : 2
2. Blouse : 2
3. Saya : 2

However, if prior to the completion of six months any inmate's cloth will be torn he/she will be provided with substitute clothes. The undertrial prisoners are to bring their own clothes from home.
Letters and Interview Provisions for Inmates

In order to keep contact with their near and dear ones, the inmates are provided with postal writing materials like 2 postcards in every 15 days. They are permitted to write letters to their relatives by the Superintendent which is to be posted through the Prison Welfare Officer.

The Prison Welfare Officer is duty bound to travel to the villages of the inmates to contact their families and to enquire about their problems such as land dispute. Also the Prison Welfare Officer goes to the Magistrate for legal approach in case any of the case of any inmate pending in the Magisterial Court.

Entertainment

The District Probation Officer is in charge of showing feature films of educative and moral value, from which inmates can learn some good things and try to reform themselves. This can be done in an interval of fifteen days.

For their regular relaxation and entertainment, television sets are provided in both male and female wards by the government. Also some donors have donated TV sets for this purpose.

Sports and Games

In the field of outdoor games, volleyball is the only game to be played by the inmates since no provision for any other outdoor game is
provided there. However, inmates are given facilities to play indoor games like Carrom, Ludo and Chess. Cards are allowed to the inmates for playing purpose only.

**Bathing Facility**

The bathrooms and latrines constructed for the prisoners are insufficient in comparison to the number of the inmates. This is so due to the fact that the number of the inmates are increasing everyday exceeding much more than the original capacity.

For washing their clothes, the inmates are given 50 grams of washing cake each per week. For their own use they are given one piece of soap each, every month.

**Educational Facility**

In the Jail, a full time teacher is appointed by the Government, who is to teach in the school inside the jail. The teacher is appointed to teach the youthful offenders. Prisoners desirous of learning are given adult education. Books of primary standard and reading and writing materials are provided to them. Those inmates who are illiterate also get training in writing alphabets from the teacher.

Library facility also is provided to the inmates. Books mostly on the lives and works of great men and having some educative value are
kept there. Religious magazines and newspapers are provided to those who are interested to read.

A Day in the Jail

In the jail the day begins at 5.30 A.M. everyday. All the inmates are to wake up at this hour with an alarm bell. Then the warder unlocks the wards and cells in the presence of either the Jailor or Asst. Jailor and the counting of inmates is done. The prisoners then step out of their cells and wards into the jail campus after they are searched by the Chief Head Warder.

The inmates then are given time for their daily routine work like attending to their natural calls, washing faces, brushing teeth, etc. Then they are to sing the Ramdhun (Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram) in groups after which they are served with the morning tiffin at 6.30 A.M. The inmates are served with 'Khichudi', a mixture of rice, dal and salt in their morning tiffin. For each individual prisoner the quantity of each item is indicated in Table VI.1.

| Table VI.1 |
| Morning Tiffin for Inmates |
| Rice - 115 grams |
| Dal - 15 grams |
| Salt - 3 grams |
As a substitute of this tiffin, for a change, sola (gram), suji or atta (flour) of the same price may be given after being cooked. After the breakfast, the inmates wash their own utensils. Then alarm bell is given and the prisoners are divided into different groups, according to the nature of labour they have to perform and are to go under the care of a convict officer supervised by a warder. The allocation of work to them is made by the jailor in accordance with the jail-manual. Again it is to be seen by the jailor that no inmate be given any work to do, which is harmful for his health.

After the working hour is over the inmates return and take their bath. The lunch break begins at 10.30 A.M. Before discussing about the diet chart of the inmates, let us know about kitchen provision.

Kitchen

In the kitchen, adequate cooking materials and utensils are provided to the convicts working there for cooking. These members in charge of the kitchen take dietary articles from the jail godown under the supervision of the Panchayat Sardar and prepare food, three times daily for the inmates.

Cooking is done by coal oven. The convicts who are to cook food are selected by the Superintendent on the basis of their cooking efficiency and after getting the certificate from the jail doctor that they are disease free and cooking by them is safe.
The convicts are of two types, (1) the R.I. (Rigorous Imprisonment) and the (2) S.I. (Simple Imprisonment). The R.I. prisoners get a little more rice in their daily diet than the S.I. prisoners and undertrials. However, following chart shows the mid-day food (lunch) and early dinner for the prisoners.

The diet scale of prisoners are provided as follows:

**TABLE VI.2**

Mid-day Meal and Early Dinner for Inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the dietary item</th>
<th>Quantity for RI Prisoners</th>
<th>Quantity for SI Prisoners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>715 grams</td>
<td>615 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dal</td>
<td>100 grams</td>
<td>100 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>250 grams</td>
<td>250 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Meat/Fish (weekly)</td>
<td>120 grams</td>
<td>120 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>25 grams</td>
<td>25 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mustard Oil</td>
<td>15 grams</td>
<td>15 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Onion</td>
<td>5 grams</td>
<td>5 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Spices</td>
<td>5 grams</td>
<td>5 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Firewood</td>
<td>465 grams</td>
<td>465 grams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For vegetarian inmates, cheese, milk or any other protein food in lieu of meat or fish is provided by the authorities. Eggs are given once in a month. If any inmate is advised by the prison doctor to take egg for his week health, he is given egg, milk or such protein in his diet. Due to the system of early dinner, the inmates are also provided with 100 grams of 'chuda' (perched rice) and 30 grams of 'guda' (molasses) for making a mixture to be taken in night. Apart from the above diet, leafy vegetables of 55 grams weight also is given to the inmates thrice a week.

On the holidays like Independence Day, Utkal Dibasa and Gandhi Jayanti, each prisoner is given sweets at the extra rate of 75 paisa per prisoner.1

The inmates take rest for some times after their lunch. At 1.30 P.M. with the ringing of a bell, the inmates go again to their working place and work there till 5 P.M. They return to their shelters after their work. Then they get ready for their early dinner at 5.30 P.M. after washing their hands and faces. The inmates then go to their wards and cells when they are thoroughly checked and counted with attendance by the jail authorities. The usual hour of lock up is between 5.30 to 6.00 P.M. in winter season and from 6.00 to 6.30 P.M. in summer season. After locking, the keys of the wards are kept in the fixed almirah and its key is kept in the custody of the jailor.

Gardening inside Jail

There is a small space inside the jail premises where prisoners raise kitchen garden. In this garden flower plants and leafy vegetables are planted by them. Due to water scarcity, it is difficult to raise big gardens, the jail authorities said. For the same reason no provision for the growth of agricultural products is made.

Vocational Training

In the jail, no specific vocational training is given. Only an industry for blanket making is there and eligible convicts get training in weaving and blanket making while working in the workshop.

The jail staff supervises whether the particular work, assigned to a convict is done properly or not by him. Again on the basis of the assessment of work made at the end of the training period, gratuity may be granted to a convict.

Jail Panchayat

Before discussing about jail panchayat, we should know what a panchayat is. Panchayat system was prevailing in the Indian villages even in the Pre-British era. However, Gandhijee, during the freedom struggle wanted to make every village a self-governing unit by reviving the ancient institution of panchayat. Panchayat in a village does mean an institution of five important and learned persons of the village who
are like guardians of the village people and decides disputes among them when necessary. It is in practice even now in the villages of India. Inside the jail also, the panchayat system is introduced for the jail inmates. By this system the jail inmates are made conscious about their voting right and also duty, so that after their release they can lead the life of a true citizen.

Thus every year a jail panchayat is constituted which begins functioning on 1st April. The panchayat members are elected from among the inmates through secret ballot. This panchayat system is introduced in the jail in accordance with the Home Department order No.18043 dated 20.05.1970. The rule says that only the convict prisoners are eligible for voting and to be elected for this panchayat.

The jail superintendent is to conduct the election. Before the election the desiring convicts file nominations in the jail office. The election is conducted during the last part of March. Five members securing the five highest votes are elected as panchayat members, and the candidate who gets the highest vote among all becomes the sardar of the panchayat. Members of the panchayat are assigned duties connected with the kitchen, food distribution, sanitation, entertainment and amusement.

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2. Information given by the Assistant Jailor, Bhubaneswar Special Jail.