Appendix III:
CULTURE THERAPY
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Music
Music therapy Concert - Music is being promoted in the correctional homes of the State. Various music programmes are being organised from time to time. A music school was inaugurated by renowned classical maestro Pt. Jasraj at Presidency Correctional Home on January 26, 2007. The same day, following the inauguration of the music school, a Music Therapy Concert was organized for the inmates of Presidency Correctional Home by the great maestro of Hindustani classical music, Pandit Jasraj who graciously accepted our invitation to honour us with a performance. This is the first time that he has ever performed inside any Jail. The Hon’ble Governor of West Bengal Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi graced the occasion by being there among the mesmerized audience.

Theatre
Taser Desh : Theatre workshop at Berhampore Central Correctional Home. After seven weeks of ‘Theatre Workshop’ and rehearsals under the direction of Sri Pradip Bhattacharjee, of Berhampore Repertory Theatre a group of 24 convicts – 18 male and 6 female, staged Rabindranath Tagore’s “Taser Desh” in an open stage performance at Berhampore Central Correctional Home on 26th November, 2006. The event has opened a new vistas and marked the “take off” of the culture therapy programme undertaken by West Bengal Correctional Services sending the message loud and clear: “The correctional homes are pools of human resources with abundance of human potentialities and talents only requiring to be unlocked and encouraged.” The project envisages manifestation of human resources detained in Correctional Homes, paving the way for their return to the mainstream. That is exactly what correctional services are all about. This play was staged at Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata in presence of Sri Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Hon’ble Chief Minister of West Bengal and other renowned personalities from different fields as part of 146th ‘Rabindra Jannotsava Celebrations’ organized by I&CA Deptt, Govt. of West Bengal. It was for the first time in the country that the prisoners performed in public.

Shivmangal : Theatre workshop at Alipore Central Correctional Home. If the inmates of Berhampore Central Correctional Home can stage a play like Taser Desh, can the inmates of Alipore Central Correctional Home remain far behind? On the demand of inmates authorities of Correctional Homes arranged another production oriented theatre workshop ‘Shivmangal’ at Alipore Central Correctional Home when eminent theatre personality Smt Jolly Guha Roy of Maru Behag approached authorities of Correctional Homes and expressed her desire to conduct a theatre workshop for inmates. The workshop culminated in its performance in presence of Sri Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, Mayor of Kolkata at Alipore Central Correctional Home on 03.05.08. The theatre workshop was supported by Rotary Club of Calcutta Mahanagar.

Tota Kahini : Theatre workshop at Berhampore Central Correctional Home. After the successful stage performances of ‘Taser Desh’ at different venues of the State and
New Delhi, the inmates of Berhampore Central Correctional Home are now staging their new production Rabindranath Tagore’s ‘Tota Kahini’ under the direction of Sri Tuhin Kanti Dey, an active theatre worker of Berhampore Repertory Theatre.

Recitation
From the Depths of Darkness : Recitation Workshop. A Recitation Workshop by Smt. Bratati Bandyopadhyay, a renowned personality in the field of recitation (Abriti) was inaugurated on December 4, 2006, at Presidency Correctional Home, Kolkata. A total of 28 convict inmates from different correctional homes of the State took part in the workshop.
A recording of the recitation by 14 inmates – 8 male and 6 female, was done at HMV-SaReGaMa Studio and an audio CD titled “Andhokarer Utso Hote” (From the Depths of Darkness) containing poetry pieces by renowned poets of Bengal and rendered by the inmates was released by Sri Biswanath Chowdhury, Minister-in-charge, Jails Department on 11th October, 2007 at Sisir Manch, Kolkata. The release of the audio CD was followed by a live performance of excerpts from the audio CD by the inmates who were taken out of Presidency Correctional Home on 6-hour parole for this purpose. This is probably the first venture of its kind anywhere in India.

Dance
Brotherhood Beyond Boundaries : A Dance Production by Ms Alokonanda Roy. A six month long workshop for the inmates was undertaken at Presidency Correctional Home under the direction of eminent danseuse Ms Alokonanda Roy since April, 2007. A dance production entitled ‘Brotherhood Beyond Boundaries’ has been created by her with participation of male and female inmates using various martial and folk dance forms of India. Around 60 inmates from different correctional homes of the State took part in the workshop. A stage performance of the dance programme was held on December 13, 2007 at Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata as part of Uday Shankar Dance Festival’07.

Valmiki Pratibha : Dance Drama
The ‘Culture Therapy’ programme has resulted in remarkable changes in the lives of the prisoners. It has been noticed that it has led the inmates on a journey from the pit of darkness and ignorance to the pinnacle of light and knowledge.

The phenomenal success of ‘Brotherhood Beyond Boundaries’ had encouraged the inmates to come up with another dance recital. While scouting for a theme for this programme authorities of Correctional Homes thought it proper to choose something that would in some way reflect this journey from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge. And perhaps no other work of literature more appropriately reflected this journey than Tagore’s musical drama ‘Valmiki Pratibha’, which traces the transformation of Ratnakar from a dreaded dacoit to a holy sage, Valmiki, the creator of Ramayana. The story of Valmiki symbolizes the propensity for both good and evil in the human psyche and the tremendous ability of the human will to crush the demonic self with penitence. That, in a nutshell is what ‘correction’ in the correctional homes is really all about. For the first time this classic ‘geeti natya’ of kabiguru was conceived as ‘nritya natya’. The Director also used ‘Chhau’ dance in the production for the first time ever. The results have been spectacular. The public shows of ‘Valmiki Pratibha’ are drawing huge crowds at different venues including university and colleges. The unprecedented response to the open air performance of the dance drama at Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan on the eve of Vasantotsava on March 10, 2009 has become a talking point all over India and abroad.
Jatra
Jatra is a form of folk-theatre in West Bengal. Jatras are usually epic four-hour-long plays featuring loud music, harsh lighting and dramatic props played on giant outdoor stages. In 2008 two such folk theatres – 'Godhuli Belay Shes Dekha' and 'Sat Takar Santan' were prepared and staged at Midnapore Central Correctional Home with participation of 22 inmates. In 2009 another two such folk theatres – 'Ma Mati Manush' and 'Rakta Diye Boner Biye' were produced and staged at Midnapore Central Correctional Home with the participation of 25 inmates under the direction of Correctional Homes own staff and inmates.
Public performances of the jatras are under consideration.

Art
State Level Art Workshop
A State Level Art Workshop was organised at Art & Craft School of Alipore Central Correctional Home under the guidance of Sri Chitta Dey of ‘Flight to Harmony Foundation’. Sri Biswanath Chowdhury, MIC, Jails and renowned artist Sri Ramananda Bandopadhyay inaugurated the programme on February 01, 2008. The workshop continued for eight-months. The Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata is a partner in this venture. An exhibition of the paintings and other art works including clay modeling was held at its premises after the workshop was over.

Painting in Prison : A Unique Exhibition of Paintings & Sculptures by Prisoners of the State. An exhibition of 288 paintings and 92 sculptures made by 31 inmate-students of different correctional homes of the State in course of an eight month long Art Workshop conducted by renowned artist Chitta Dey at Alipore Central Correctional Home was organised by West Bengal Correctional Services in partnership with Birla Academy of Art & Culture and Flight to Harmony Foundation. The exhibition at Birla Academy of Art & Culture was inaugurated by Sri Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal on 24.09.08 in presence of Sri Biswanath Choudhury, MIC, Jails Deptt and Sri Ramananda Bandyopadhyay, an eminent artist. The exhibition was on from 24.09.08 – 19.10.08. A large number of paintings & sculptures were sold during exhibition. A part of the sale proceeds was contributed to West Bengal Prisoners' Welfare Fund.

The President of India Meets the Prisoners :
It was a moment of supreme significance in the history of prisons in India. The President of India, the country’s first citizen, met those who have long been considered society’s outcasts. It symbolized the new meaning of imprisonment, which is a journey of hope from the lowest level of existence to the highest of inspirational possibilities. To make the moment last forever, the prisoners presented her with a symbol of eternal peace. They had toiled night and day for months to create with their own two hands a sculpture which would appropriately represent their aspirations. In anticipation of Her Excellency The President’s visit to Kolkata, the prisoners had been working on the Peace Plaque, a clay sculpture they created at the art workshop inside Alipore Correctional Home under the direction of artist Chitta Dey.
The sculpture, which depicted hundreds of birds ready to spread their wings, represented the prisoners’ own sense of inner liberation. And on August 23, 2008, on the auspicious day of Janmashtami, at the Raj Bhavan, history was made when Debashish Chakraborty and Chandan Chanda, two convict students of the art
workshop presented to the President a Peace Plaque. To the prisoners’ delight, the
President spent considerable time talking to them, asking them about life in prison,
about the art workshop and other issues.