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INSPECTION NOTE OF SHRI A B TRIPATHY, IPS (Retd): SPECIAL
RAPPORTEUR, NHRC, ON DISTRICT JAIL, PHULBANI ON 24/08/04

I inspected the Phulbani District Jail on 24th Aug, 04. The Superintendent along with his staff was present during my inspection. Phulbani is the district headquarters of Phulbani district which was formed after independence of the country. This is one of the most backward districts in the State with virtually no industrial activity, rail communication and other infrastructural facilities. The population is predominantly tribal and hence overall crime rate is low. This reflects on the number of prisoners in the district jail.

PRISON POPULATION: Although it is a district jail, the total no. of prisoners on the day of my visit was 118, including one child. The no. of convicts was 70, 69 males and 1 female and 46 under trials, 42 males and 4 females. There are 2 civil prisoners. The classification is indicated below:-

Up to 1 year	01
Up to 3 years	11
Up to 7 years	14
Up to 10 years	04
Life imprisonment	40

AREA & BUILDING: The prison has an open area of 4.30 Ac. The covered area is 2.30 Ac. There is one big hall which houses almost all the prisoners. As there is no over-crowding there is not much accommodation problem in the jail. In addition to the main hall there is another small hall where some prisoners are accommodated. These halls urgently need repair. The roof has ^{peeled} pilled off in many places. The condition of the toilets also is very bad.

One additional ward and hospital building have been constructed out side the perimeter wall. While the civil portion has been completed the PHD and E. I works are yet to be taken up. Once these buildings are available, problem of accommodation will not be there.

Many prisoners represented that ceiling fans should be installed as the place becomes very hot in summer. This is a subject which I have discussed in my earlier inspection notes on Orissa Jails and it is necessary that the IG, Prisons takes up this issue on a phased basis after assessing the requirement in all the districts.

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HEALTH & MEDICAL FACILITIES: On the day of my inspection the Medical Officer was absent. He was on leave and had overstayed. Although there is a sanctioned post of Pharmacist, the post is lying vacant as the incumbent has been transferred out of the Jail. One Medical Officer from the district hospital visits the jail and prescribes medicines.

Many prisoners complained of inadequate the medical facilities. They pointed out that medicines are not available as and when needed. The Supdt. indicated that whenever necessary medicines are purchased locally within his powers to meet the day to day need. The Prison Hqrs, however, may look into this and also take up steps to expedite posting of a Medical Officer. Some prisoners complained about the quality of food.

KITCHEN:- The Kitchen is managed by a Panchayat. While the Panchayat members in charge of the Kitchen expressed satisfaction about food this needs to be verified as members did complain about the quality of food. In fact they pointed out that the quality has improved in view of my visit to the jail. There should not be any scope for complaint on the quality and quantity of food. The scale of food prescribed for prisons in Orissa is quite adequate and they are generally happy about it.

STAFF :- The sanctioned strength and the present staff position of the prison is indicated below:

Sl.No.	Name of the Post	Sanctioned strength	Present Position
1.	Superintendent	1	1
2	Jailor	1	1
3	Astt.Jailor	1	Vacant
4	Sub-Astt.Jailor	2 (1 is under deputation)	1
5	Medical Officer	1	1
6	Pharmacist	1	Vacant
7	Teacher	1	1
8	CCT	1	1
9	Head Warder	5 (2 are under deputation)	3
10	Warders	18	16 (2-Vacant)
11	Female Warder	1	1
12	Sweeper	2	2
13	Orderly Peon	1	1
	TOTAL	36	29

It will be seen that while the Medical Officer has over-stayed the leave there is one vacancy in the rank of Sub-Assistant Jailor, 2 in the rank of Head warder and 2 in the rank of Warder. It is hoped that steps are being taken up by the Prison Hqrs to fill up the same.

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UNDER TRIALS:- There are 46 Under trials in the jail. Considering the fact that it is a district jail, the number is quite low. 5 Under trials are here varying from 6 months to 1 year, 2 from 1 year to 18 months, 4 from 18 months to 2 years, 3 from 2 years to 3 years and 7 above 3 years

There are 5 Courts including a Sessions Court at Phulbani for the trial of the prisoners. No difficulties are experienced in getting escort from the Police Department.

EDUCATION & WELFARE: There is one sanctioned post of Teacher, who gives in-formal education to the prisoners. Presently there are no vocational activities in the jail although there are 70 Convicts. The prisoners are deprived from getting incentive and hence there was complaint on this score. The Supdt. informed that there are proposals to start one Agarbathi Manufacturing Unit and one Khalli (Plates made of leaves) manufacturing Unit. Since not much investment is called for, these Units may be started to provide vocational activities for the prisoners.

Both the male wards and female wards have been provided with T.V.Sets. The sets, however, have become very old and need replacement.

GRIEVANCES: The common grievances as I have pointed out in the foregoing paragraphs relate to the quality of food, medical facilities, replacement of TV sets, repairs to the building, provision of funds for starting vocational activities. The individual grievances are indicated below:

1. Life convict Duryodhan Kanhar who has served more than 18 years represented for his premature release. I was told that his case was put up before the State Review Board in May, 03 and it was decided that it would be reviewed after one year. The IG, Prisons may take necessary action.
2. Life convict Emesa Pradhan prayed for his premature release. The Prison Welfare Officer informed that his application has already been recommended by the Superintendent of Police and is pending with the Collector.

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3. Convict Ramnaik Pradhan, who has become very old, prayed for special remission. The Superintendent may send the proposal to Prison Hdqrs. as a special case.
 4. Convict Mata Naik and Banua Patra prayed for transfer to other jails which may be considered on merit.
 5. Prisoner Luisa Kenhar prayed for cataract operation. The Superintendent informed that as this has to be done at Bhubaneswar it will be taken up in due course.

NOTE ON G. UDAYAGIRI SUB-JAIL

I was to visit G. Udayagiri Sub-jail on 25th August, 04. But due to bad road communication could not go. The Superintendent came to Phulbani and gave me a brief note about the Jail

G. Udayagiri is a Tehasil Hdqrs. with a jail. The prison has 2 Convicts and 33 under trials including one female. The Jail has an area of 1.2 Ac, out of which the constructed area has 0.75 Ac. This Jail was constructed in the mid 80s out of the up-gradation grant of the Finance Commission. At present the accommodation is adequate. The general condition of the wards is reported to be good. TV sets have been provided in the wards.

Since it is a Sub-jail one Medical Officer from the Hospital looks after the health of the prisoners. There is a sanctioned post of Pharmacist also.

No major problem was indicated by the Superintendent.


(A.B. Tripathy)
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