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**Establishment of Centre for Psychosocial Care, Rehabilitation
and Reintegration Project at Central Jails at Rajkot, Surat and
Vadodara in the State of Gujarat**

In light of numerous directions issued by Hon'ble the Supreme Court of India to enhance the mental well-being of long suffering jail inmates in various central jails across the country, the Gujarat State Legal Services Authority (GSLSA) with kind cooperation and in collaboration with Ministry of Home and Prison Department, Government of Gujarat and Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) established the Psycho- Socio Care Centre at Sabarmati Central Jail Ahmedabad. The centre was inaugurated at the esteemed hands of Hon'ble Mr. Justice U.U. Lalit in the August presence of Hon'ble the Governor of State of Gujarat Shri Acharya Devvrat, Hon'ble Chief Minister Mr. Bhupendra Patel, Judges of Supreme Court of India Minister of Home and prison development Mr. Harsh Sanghvi and other dignitaries on 19th August, 2022.

It is globally accepted across all the psychologists that holistic mental well being of the jail inmates is absolutely necessary as the stigma attached creates hindrances for their seamless assimilation into society once their prison term is over. The subjects often lapse into recidivism as the underlying mental health issues are not addressed. Clinical counseling is also necessary for changing their neuropath so that person doesn't

indulge into repeated criminal acts. To overcome above issues the centre was established at Sabarmati Central Jail as a pilot project. The impact assessment of the project was done after one year of the completion of the project and it transpired that the project has been a huge success. Average 25 inmates make visit to the centre every day. During one year, total 2169 individual sessions of the inmates had been conducted. Total 64 women prisoners have been provided necessary counseling.

The services provided by the centre include psychological assessments and need based counseling and intervention sessions. The methodology applied by the team of psychologists of RRU are semi projective, projective and objective psychological testing and evaluation of overall mental wellbeing. The psychological evaluation is working in two way; it is providing the present mental state of the person and at the same time an opportunity for catharsis to the beneficiary. The method is showing excellent outcome. The same method is applied weekly on the same client to identify the changes, assess and progress and it is found effective. Hence, this method has been applied to all the categories of inmates.

The RRU team of experts has also taken other initiatives to increase awareness and cohesiveness among prisoners including drawing competition, painting, mehndi competition etc. Periodically, the team has started spreading mental health awareness and available services on prison radio.

Later, GSLSA has introduced few more activities such as Music therapy, Sudarshan kriya, and Vipassana. The team of GSLSA has started providing psychoeducation, and breathing exercises (Anaapansati) with the aim to calm them and generate self-awareness in turn. It has shown

excellent results and the number of beneficiaries have increased. The project was also appreciated during the Regional Meet of NALSA on 08th March 2023 at Udaipur.

Considering the success of project, it was decided to expand it to other three central jails in the State namely, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara. Due to swift and well coordinated efforts of Hon'ble the Chief Justice, High Court of Gujarat and Patron In Chief - Mrs. Justice Sunita Agarwal, it has become possible that Centres can be established at above referred Central Jail in a very short time. The Government of Gujarat has approved budgetary sanction for the scheme. RRU has already completed the task of appointment of the team of Psychologists. Superintendent of Police, Rajkot Central Jail has already made allocation of suitable place for establishment of the centre at Rajkot Central Jail. The project is going to be monitored and coordinated by Gujarat State Legal Services Authority in association with the respective District Legal Services Authorities.

(RAHUL A. TRIVEDI)
MEMBER SECRETARY