

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON RELEASED PRISONERS



India Vision<sup>™</sup>  
Foundation

#SaveTheNextVictim<sup>™</sup>

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A SITUATIONAL AND NEED ANALYSIS

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# ABOUT US

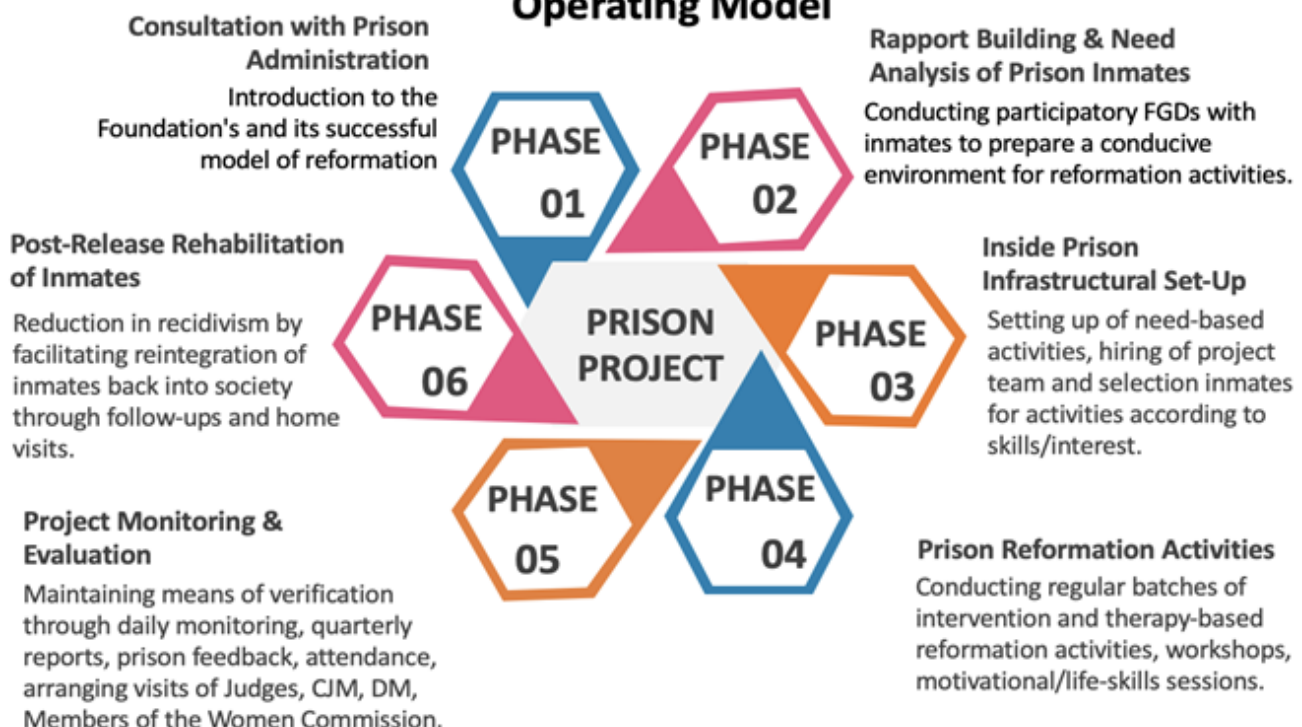
Founded in 1994, India Vision Foundation is a voluntary non-profit, non government organization registered as a Trust in India vide No. 4595, dated August 1, 1994. The foundation was born out of Ramon Magsaysay award (Equivalent to Asia's Nobel Peace Prize) conferred to Dr. Kiran Bedi, the first lady IPS (Indian Police Services) of India, for forging 'positive relationships' between people and police through creative leadership during her tenure as Inspector General of Tihar Prison, Asia's largest prison.

The Foundation works on a "3S Model of Reformation" in the prisons of 5 States namely Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh , Punjab and Maharashtra.. The 3S model of reformation encompasses the components:



Through its Reformation to Rehabilitation Prison Operating Model, India Vision Foundation is touching more than **3000** lives every day through projects both inside as well as outside prison. The Foundation is striving hard to give a new hope to the prison inmates and their families, especially children through positive reinforcement, education and values that not only help them to become responsible and conscientious citizens of the society. The Foundation has successfully reached out to more than **2,50,000** beneficiaries under its Prison Reforms and Rural Development project.

## Reformation to Rehabilitation Operating Model



Protiviti is a global consulting firm that helps companies solve problems in finance, technology, operations, data, analytics, governance, social impact, risk & internal audit. We function across 75 countries serving clients in different industry segments such as Auto, Banking, Insurance, Investment Companies, Telco, Manufacturing, Logistics, Healthcare, Pharma, Hospitality, Real Estate & Construction.

## “Our three-flagship social sector global initiatives are:”



### i on Hunger Programme

Through our global effort we have delivered more than 5 million meals to hungry people around the world through our initiative.



### iCare

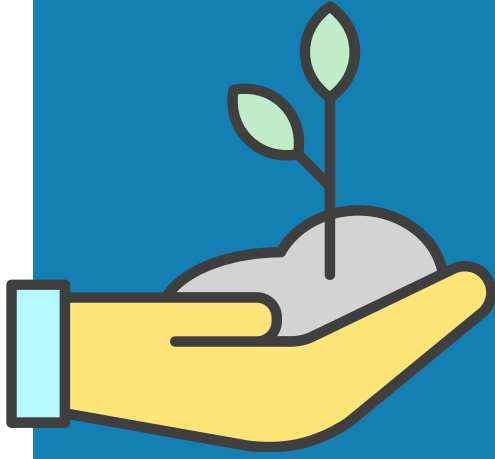
We are proud to support employees & their charities of choice through programmes.



### The Protiviti Green Team

As we grow, we always have environmental impact as a priority in our decision making.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Coronavirus outbreak was declared as a 'public health emergency of international concern' by the World Health Organization (WHO) in January, 2020<sup>1</sup>. In an attempt to combat the virus transmission, nations have adopted precautionary measures such as social distancing and lockdowns, which poses a serious threat to the global economy and by effect, the very subsistence of vulnerable communities. The Supreme Court in March had directed states to release prisoners in an attempt to decongest prisons and curb the spread of the virus in them. Protiviti India was contracted by the India Vision Foundation to design and conduct an impact assessment of the Covid-19 pandemic on these released prison inmates. The scope was later extended to include prisoners who were released pre-Covid as well, either on bail, parole or after completing their term.

The genesis lay in an effort to understand the manifold repercussions the pandemic and the concomitant lockdown measures have had on this vulnerable community with an aim to streamline strategies and re-align programs to the beneficiaries' current needs.

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS



- To ensure the sample size was large enough, we adopted a modified convenience sampling approach for the survey keeping the timelines and resource/stakeholder availability in consideration. The foundation had a database of 200 released prisoners of which 99 were interviewed for the purpose of data collection. We further stratified our sample based on gender and of the 99 released inmates interviewed, 47 are male and 52 are female.
- This included exploratory interviews with prominent secondary stakeholders/experts who are deeply involved in the domain of prisoner reformation and rehabilitation. While interviews with the primary stakeholders are critical to understand the situation on the ground, the secondary stakeholders help us to gain a policy and operational understanding of the impact which is imperative to acquire a more holistic perspective of the situation in order to design effective programs going forward. The qualitative data analysis complement and aid the interpretation of the quantitative findings. A total of 9 secondary stakeholders were interviewed as part of the qualitative data collection efforts, and they include academicians, policy makers, NGO heads, social workers, legal experts, psychologists and the prison officials.

## DATA COLLECTION



In-depth survey questionnaires were prepared which were tailored to the different stakeholders identified for the study. For quantitative data collection, a survey questionnaire (google forms) was shared with Protiviti and India Vision Foundation field staff who administered the interviewees over a phone call. A large sample was reached out to after training the field team in data collection procedures. The teams were sensitized about the context and the background of our beneficiary group. All the qualitative interview conversations were recorded, transcribed and translated by the Protiviti team. These transcripts were then analyzed to draw inferences which helped enrich our understanding of the impact. Due to the restrictions imposed from the lockdown, all the interviews were conducted telephonically. Qualitative data collection took place concurrently with the quantitative data collection and both were completed in the duration of 10 days.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



To analyse and interpret the results, we chose to follow a descriptive, and graphical method. In some of the sections, we split the results according to certain natural classifications such as age, gender, conviction status, social categories, and income. The quantitative results are presented with a visual flair, followed by the qualitative analysis, in which we explore the underlying themes and testimonies of the stakeholders.



## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The overall objective of the impact study is to generate actionable information and draw insights to inform program design and improvement. We used a mixed methods approach where we performed a qualitative and quantitative analysis on the data collected from different stakeholders. We divided our stakeholders into two sets – primary and secondary. The primary stakeholders are the released prisoners and the secondary stakeholders are the experts and members of the community working on prisoner reformation and rehabilitation.

Various socio-psycho-economic factors were kept in mind while designing the survey questionnaires. We identified 3 broad categories to help assess how the pandemic effected released inmates,

- Impact of Covid-19 on Economic Status of Released Inmates
  - Impact of Covid-19 on Emotional Well-Being of Released Inmates
  - Assessing Hygiene, Health and Nutrition Standards of Released Inmates during Covid-19
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# IMPACT OF COVID19



EMOTIONAL  
WELL-  
BEING OF  
RELEASED  
INMATES



FINANCIAL  
HEALTH  
OF  
RELEASED  
INMATES



HEALTH,  
HYGIENE,  
NUTRITION  
STANDARDS

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# EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF RELEASED INMATES

## STRESS



As an aftermath of Covid-19, stress appears to be the primary emotional state reported by most respondents.

4 out of every 5 women and half of all men reported feeling 'stressed' induced by the pandemic.

## UNCERTAINTY



85% of all women, and 64% of all men reported frequent thoughts of uncertainty about the future.

## HOPEFUL

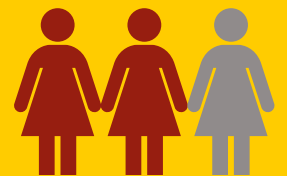


Only 30% of all released convicts and only 13% of released under-trials report feeling 'hopeful' about the future.

## SADNESS



1 out of every 5 men and nearly 2 out of 3 women reported generally feeling 'sad' in recent times of social isolation.



“

Released inmates have a hard time reconnecting with their families as they have to acclimatize to a new family dynamic. They begin to show depressive and delinquent tendencies as a result of the accumulated emotional burden. Social distancing and restricted mobility has resulted in decreased familial and community support. People are struggling to find their space and privacy. ”

DR. GAURI SHARMA,  
PROGRAM MANAGER, TURN YOUR  
CONCERN INTO ACTION.



# Recommendations

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- Additionally, basic legal training should also be imparted to released prisoners.
- Regular counselling sessions via a psychologist either telephonically or by online platforms, particularly for women.
- A majority of the released prisoners are under-trials and are awaiting judgement on their cases. Most of them do not possess an understanding of their legal rights or court procedure. There is a need to connect these released prisoners with lawyers willing to work on pro-bono basis to help them seek fair legal representation.
- Organize and facilitate virtual/ telephonic sessions with law students/lawyers for the benefit of released inmates..
- Peer groups and support groups should be created as they are instrumental for learning and therapy.
- Inmates with similar interests and hobbies should be identified as specific clusters. Within these clusters, activities of interest should be structured and targeted. The inmates should then be encouraged to practice and share their experiences.



# Recommendations

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Bi-monthly virtual meetings should be conducted where they are asked to share their interests. They can also share photos and videos of their creativity on WhatsApp groups.



On a quarterly basis, an expert could be invited to attend and provide further guidance.



All the sessions should be facilitated and moderated by an India Vision Foundation member.



# FINANCIAL HEALTH OF RELEASED INMATES

## JOB LOSSES



**53%** of women, and **43%** of men of the sampled released inmates are currently unemployed.

More than a third of all respondents who were currently unemployed had lost their job in the lockdown period, as a result of the pandemic.

## REDUCED INCOMES



After the lockdown, the median reduction in monthly earnings was Rupees **10,000** for female and Rupees **12,000** for male released inmates.

**62%** of the female inmate respondents and **69%** of male inmate respondents saw a fall in the monthly income level.

## NEGATIVE SAVING AND RISKY BORROWING



**75%** of women and **85%** of men had little to no savings left at the time of the survey.

More than half of all respondents had to tap into family savings in the lockdown period.

**78%** of respondents resorted to informal borrowing as a means for survival during the Covid-19.

“ A large number of released prisoners have lost their jobs due to the lockdown and have no source of earning a livelihood. Finding a job in the first place is a very big challenge for ex-inmates given the stigma against them. In a situation of rampant loss of livelihood for millions, an inmate with a criminal history stands almost no chance of procuring employment. This makes it all the more difficult for them to re-enter society. ”

-DR. VIJAY RAGHAVAN  
CENTRE FOR CRIMINOLOGY AND JUSTICE,  
TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

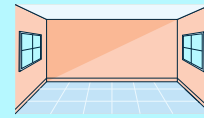
# Recommendations



- A customized curriculum should be prepared for released inmates. The learning content can be shared regularly in the form of audio/video files on their phone devices. Support and guidance by India Vision Foundation staff will be needed at regular intervals.



- The Delhi government has a policy of giving grants to released prisoners. CSR funds and donations can also be tapped into for this purpose.



- Set up livelihood centers where released inmates can access vocational training. India Vision Foundation can also tie up with Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across the country which offer a range of vocational training courses with certifications.



- A secondary way to generate livelihood opportunities is by encouraging them to set up their own small business.

## Set up a placement cell:



- Career Counselling - Career counselling can help them identify their skills and chart career progress plan.
- Skill Mapping - Maintain a database of skills and interests of beneficiaries and utilize that to find suitable employment opportunities.
- Placements - Establish and facilitate a network of employers and job placement agencies.

# HEALTH, HYGIENE, NUTRITION STANDARDS

## AWARENESS OF PRECAUTIONARY METHODS



**93%** of the respondents were aware of the recommended precautionary measures to curb the spread of the Covid1-19 virus.

Almost all of them wash their hands frequently and wear a mask when they step outside.

## DECLINING FOOD INTAKE



Food consumption from pre-COVID times declined by 57% for men and **63%** for females.

## SHORTAGE OF SOAPS, SANITIZERS, AND MEDICINES



**68%** of the respondents expressed requirements for soaps and sanitizers and **31%** for medical supplies.

“Most released inmates reside in urban slums that are densely populated where social distancing is often infeasible to practice.. Furthermore, the inadequacy of preventive products such as soaps, masks, and sanitizers makes them and their family members highly susceptible to the disease.

”

- DR. PINKY GOSWAMI  
PRACTICING PSYCHOLOGIST ,CLINIC OF  
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH CONCERN

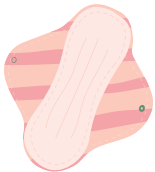
# Recommendations



- Set up a telephonic helpline interface which connects beneficiaries to identified NGOs based on their location and needs.



- Pandemic related needs of the beneficiaries should be assessed and met. The top ask by the beneficiaries were **sanitizers (72), soaps (62), masks (52), sanitary napkins (47), vitamin tablets (32), medicines (30)**. They should be provided with a medical kit containing the necessary medical supplies and products.



- Among women, good menstrual hygiene needs to be supported by ensuring availability of sanitary napkins



- During the lockdown, many people went through an acute shortage of ration and were unable to meet their family dietary requirements. Additionally, due to non-availability of ration cards they were unable to avail benefits from government schemes as well. The top requirements of the beneficiaries with regard to **food supplies were fruits(65), milk(55), vegetables (52), grains/pulses (37)**.



- Partner with the local food industry, corporates and NGOs involved in COVID relief efforts in order to construct a mechanism to provide rations to marginalized families at minimal cost.



# Acknowledgement

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We would like to acknowledge the contributions of several organizations and stakeholders that helped to bring this impact assessment report to a successful completion.



This study could not have been brought to fruition without the unwavering support and consistent guidance from Ms. Monica Dhawan, Director, India Vision Foundation throughout the process.

Ms. Renu Nag and Ms. Jannat Fatima Farooqui from Learning & Development Vertical of India Vision Foundation were deeply involved in knowledge sharing, coordination and reviewing processes at every stage of the research.

We cannot miss the contributions of Mr. Ravi Srivastav, Head of Inside Prison Project, India Vision Foundation and his dedicated team of workers including Mr. Pritesh Singh, Ms. Nazia Naaz, Ms. Greeshma George, Mr. Gagan Sharma, Mr. Govind Singh and Ms. Pawan Khatana. The entire team was instrumental in tireless beneficiary data-collection during difficult times of Covid-19.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to every stakeholder interviewed during the data collection. Their inputs have proven to be insightful to assess the impact of Covid-19. Most importantly, we are thankful to all the released prisoners and children of prisoners for answering our survey questions with solemnity and patience. Their inputs and views were critical and laid the foundation for a rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Last but not the least, we are thankful to every team member from Protiviti who worked painstakingly on the impact assessment report, from project designing, data collection, analysis to the final report writing and presentation.



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