



18 January 2019

JAIL MAIL: PRISONS AND PARLIAMENT – WINTER SESSION 2018

Dear friends,

This newsletter is in continuation of our previous [jail mail](#) on the Monsoon Session of Parliament that was held from 18 July to 10 August 2018 with 18 sittings.

The Winter Session had 17 sittings between 11 December 2018 and 8 January 2019; it saw 32 questions on prisons on a variety of issues such as deaths in custody, torture, legal aid, Indian nationals in foreign custody, and prison conditions, among other things. 19 of these questions were asked in the Rajya Sabha and 13 in the Lok Sabha. Three duplicate questions were asked in both Houses on the observation of Supreme Court judges on jail conditions, medical officers and convicts in correctional homes.

The most questions, three each, were asked by Vandana Chavan, a Rajya Sabha MP from Maharashtra, and Rabindra Kumar Jena, a Lok Sabha MP from Odisha. Most questions were directed to the Ministry of Home Affairs (19), followed by Ministry of External Affairs (7), Ministry of Law and Justice (7), Ministry of Women and Child Development (2) and Ministry of Human Resource Development (1).

The attached note contains a summary of information received from responses to the questions asked in this session on prisons along with links to the questions.

What can you do?

- You can suggest questions that you would like to be asked in the next session of Parliament that will be held from 31 January 2019 to 13 February 2019.
- You can inform your representative about the issues and challenges that you face or are important to you.
- You can also ask questions on these issues from your MP or other MPs who may, in turn, ask the relevant ministry. The admissibility of the question in parliament is governed by the Rules and Procedures and Conduct of Business in the [Lok Sabha \(Rule 41\)](#) and [Rajya Sabha \(Rule 47\)](#). You can also look at the questions earlier asked in the Lok Sabha [here](#) which can help you in drafting your questions. Your questions can be sent to MPs through these links: [Lok Sabha Members details](#) and [Rajya Sabha Member details](#).
- To understand the areas of work of your MP or other MPs, you can use PRS Legislative Research's [MP Track](#).
- You can also send questions to Parliament using the platform [here](#).

Write to us at chriprisonsprog@gmail.com with your comments and suggestions.

Best regards,

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The questions listed below were asked by Members of Parliament during the 2018 Winter Session¹. These questions pertain to issues relating to prisons and prisoners.

DATE & QUESTION NUMBER	TOPIC	QUESTION ASKED BY	FORUM	ANSWERED BY (NAME & DESIGNATION)
LEGAL AND INSITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK				
02.01.2019/223	Implementation of procedural safeguards for arrest	Smt. Vandana Chavan	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
12.12.2018/226	Implementation of New Prison Manual, 2016	Shri Binoy Viswam	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
28.12.2018/1862	National Judicial Data Grid	Shri Parimal Nathwani	Rajya Sabha	Shri P. P. Chaudhary – Minister of State for Law and Justice and Corporate Affairs
HUMAN RESOURCE				
02.01.2019/2304	Medical officers appointed for each prison	Shri P.L. Punia	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
01.01.2019/3331	Medical facilities in prison	Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal: Shri Rabindra Kumar Jena: Shri Jagdambika Pal	Lok Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
DEATH UNDER CUSTODY/ IN PRISON				
02.01.2019/2321	Custodial deaths	Shri Vikas Mahatme	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
02.01.2019/2330	Deaths in prisons	Smt. Vandana Chavan	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
LEGAL AID				
28.12.2018/1865	Legal aid for poor and rural areas	Shri Parimal Nathwani	Rajya Sabha	Shri P. P. Chaudhary – Minister of State for Law and Justice and Corporate Affairs
28.12.2018/1868	Impact assessment study of legal aid schemes	Dr. Vinay P. Sahasrabudhe	Rajya Sabha	Shri P. P. Chaudhary – Minister of State for Law and Justice and Corporate Affairs
PRISON CONDITIONS/INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRACTICES				
20.12.2018/1191	Cooking of Mid-Day Meal by jail inmates	Shri Ranjib Biswal	Rajya Sabha	Dr. Satya Pal Singh - Minister of State in The Ministry of Human Resource Development
19.12.2018/1017	Study about condition of jails	Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy; Smt. Ambika Soni	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir - Minister of State In The Ministry of Home Affairs

¹ Links to answers given in the Lok Sabha are hyperlinked. The Rajya Sabha website, however, does not allow hyperlinking of questions. You can access Rajya Sabha questions by putting in the question number at the required space on this [webpage](#). Please ensure that the current session no. 247 is selected.

19.12.2018/1040	Improving condition of jails	Shri Naresh Gujral	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir - Minister of State in The Ministry of Home Affairs
19.12.2018/1046	Solitary confinement in prisons	Smt. Vandana Chavan	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
19.12.2018/1057	Observation of Supreme Court Judges about condition of jails	Shri D. Raja	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
01.01.2019/3313	Physically Disabled Prisoners	Prof. Prem Singh Chandumajra; Shri V. Panneerselvam	Lok Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
01.01.2019/3359	Overcrowded Jails	Smt. Neelam Sonker	Lok Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
18.12.2018/1167	Condition of Jails and Observation Homes	Shri C.N. Jayadevan	Lok Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
12.12.2018/245	Modernisation of jails in the country	Shri Abdul Wahab	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
18.12.2018/1259	Torture in Prisons	Shri A.P. Jitendra Reddy	Lok Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
18.12.2018/1302	Retention of Prisoners	Shri Pinaki Mishra	Lok Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
12.12.2018/237	Convicts in correctional homes	Shri Ripun Bora	Rajya Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
18.12.2018/1371	Convicts in correctional homes	Shri Sisir Kumar Adhikari	Lok Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
18.12.2018/1252	Prison Reforms	Shri R. Dhruva Narayana	Lok Sabha	Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir – Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs

SHELTER HOMES AND JUVENILE HOMES

13.12.2018/40	Running of shelter homes illegally	Shri Kapil Sibal	Rajya Sabha	Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi - Minister Of Women And Child Development
04.01.2019/4107	Juvenile Homes	Smt. Bhavana Pundalikrao Gawali Patil; Smt. Supriya Sule; Shri Dhananjay Mahadik; Shri Mohite Patil Vijaysinh Shankarrao; Dr.	Lok Sabha	Dr. Virendra Kumar - Minister Of State In The Ministry Of Women And Child Development

		Heena Vijaykumar Gavit:		
INDIAN NATIONAL IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND PRISONER EXCHANGE				
13.12.2018/329	Bilateral agreement with Pakistan for release of prisoners	Shri T. Rathinavel	Rajya Sabha	Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) - The Minister Of State In The Ministry Of External Affairs
19.12.2018/132	Exchange of list of prisoners	Shri Ram Charan Bohra	Lok Sabha	Smt. Sushma Swaraj – The Minister for External Affairs
27.12.2018/1607	Indian citizens in jails abroad	Shri K. Somaprasad	Rajya Sabha	Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) - The Minister of State In The Ministry of External Affairs
27.12.2018/1619	Release of Indian fisherman in custody of Sri Lanka	Shri C.M. Ramesh	Rajya Sabha	Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) - The Minister of State in The Ministry of External Affairs
12.12.2018/453	Fisherman in neighbouring countries jails	Shri S.P. Muddahanume Gowda; Shri Rajeshbhai Chudasama	Lok Sabha	Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) - The Minister of State in The Ministry of External Affairs
26.12.2018/2310	Indian prisoners lodged abroad	Shri Ravindra Kumar Jena; Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal	Lok Sabha	Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) - The Minister of State in The Ministry of External Affairs
19.12.2018/1425	Consular Access	Shri Rabindra Kumar Jena	Lok Sabha	Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) - The Minister Of State In The Ministry Of External Affairs

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Legal and institutional framework

The Ministry of Law and Justice was asked to elaborate on the reasons behind the pendency of cases in district and subordinate courts as per the data of National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and whether the common man suffered due to this pendency. The reply entailed a figure of **2,92,58,826 pending cases as on 24.12.2018 in district and subordinate courts** as per NJDG data. The reasons behind this huge figure were attributed to a wide variety of non-exhaustive factors, including assistance from stakeholders to availability of judges and infrastructural capacity. It was mentioned that no time frame has been prescribed for the disposal of cases by the courts.

The reply further stated that appointments in lower judiciary were the responsibility of concerned High Courts and state governments. It was said that between 1 January 2014 and 26 December 2018, 27 judges were appointed in Supreme Court, 446 new judges were appointed and 379 Additional Judges were made permanent in the High Courts. The sanctioned and working strength for district and subordinate courts was 15,115 working against the sanctioned strength of 19,518 as on 31.12.2013 and **17,509 working against the sanctioned strength of 22,644 as on 30.09.2018**. The Ministry had written to all High Courts and Chief Ministers to monitor vacancies in district and subordinate courts and to ensure timely appointments by a letter dated 14 August 2018.

On the matter of implementation of procedural safeguards contained in section 41 of Cr.P.C., 1973 and statistical details of persons issued notice under section 41A, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said that public order and police were state subjects and hence no such data was maintained by the Central government.

The MHA was asked questions about the policies on overcrowding, delay in trials, inadequate food and clothing, deficiency in communication of prisoners and plans to facilitate voting among prisoners. A question also sought state-wise details of legal aid clinics and cases settled under provisions of Cr.P.C. (Sections 436 and 436A). The response stated that though prisons are a state subject, the Central government had issued an advisory dated 27.9.2014 forwarding the directions of the Supreme Court for establishing a permanent framework for providing relief to undertrial prisoners, apart from entailing other provision in Cr.P.C. such as sections 265 and 436A. The reply also stated that the Central government regularly issued advisories to states on various issues of prisons such as funds, overcrowding and general welfare. On the issue of legal aid, the reply stated that there are a total of **1,126 legal service clinics running in jails and that 9,563 remand advocates were providing legal services to arrested persons in criminal courts.** It also mentioned that **NALSA had launched a web application on 29.6.2017 for legal aid to undertrial prisoners.** Further, it was informed that **929 under-trials had been released under 436A in 2016.** Lastly, relying on the information received by the Election Commission, it said that the **existing law does not provide voting rights to prisoners.**

Human resources

The MHA was asked to provide statistics for medical officers appointed in prisons, including the medical officer-prisoner and gynecologist-women prisoner ratio in prisons across the country. The question also sought details of steps taken to improve medical infrastructure and appointments. The ministry replied that as per the data provided by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), there are **657 medical officers working in prisons across the country against the sanctioned strength of 1,152** as on 31.12.2015. On the question of steps taken, the ministry replied **that as per the Model Prison Manual 2016, hospital accommodation should be provided on the scale of 5% of the authorized capacity** of all Central and District Prisons. However, it was said that there is no centrally maintained data on ratio of gynecologist to women prisoners.

Deaths in custody or in prison

On the question about custodial deaths in the country in last three years, the MHA relied on the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) data to provide separate statistics for judicial and police custody. The figures for cases registered under the incident head of **'custodial death' in judicial custody were 1668 in 2015-17, 1616 in 2016-17 and 1636 in 2017-18 till 31 March**, whereas for **police custody, the numbers were 151 in 2015-16, 145 in 2016-17 and 146 in 2017-18 till 31 March.**

On another question to the same ministry on number of natural and unnatural deaths in prison during the last three years and other details such as enquiry and compensation, the ministry responded that as per the NCRB data, the total **number of deaths in prisons across India were 1,597 in 2013, 1,701 in 2014 and 1,584 in 2015.** Prison statistics have only been published up to 2015. The response further stated that **monetary relief has been paid to a total of 340 cases against the NHRC recommendation for 423 cases** of deaths in judicial custody, during the period of 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018. It must be noted here **that 114 deaths are from the state of Uttar Pradesh alone.** The Ministry further stated that since prisons is a state subject, data regarding judicial enquiry is not maintained centrally.

Legal aid

Two questions were asked to the Ministry of Law and Justice to provide the details on the government's efforts on ensuring legal aid to rural areas (especially Gujarat and Jharkhand), on introducing digital and mobile courts and on impact assessment studies conducted on key legal aid schemes, if any. The Ministry in its responses stated that National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has set up legal services institutions at all levels including the rural areas, under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The reply inter-alia states that **2631 persons in Gujarat and 2,750 persons in Rajasthan have benefitted from the Jail Legal Aid Clinics.** Further, the Ministry said that under the Access to Justice programme of the Department of Justice, initiatives like **"tele-law"** implemented in 11 states --Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar -- provided **legal advice in 44,017 cases out of 50,431 registered cases** and that the **"pro-bono legal services"** scheme registered **341 cases of marginalised persons and 362 pro-bono**

lawyers, as on 24.12.2018. The response further states that the **government had computerised 16,845 courts in the district and subordinate judiciary under its e-Courts mission mode project**, which includes 1,108 courts in Gujarat and 351 courts in Jharkhand.

On the question of impact assessment study of legal aid scheme, the Ministry stated that field assessment of the tele-law scheme was done by Quality Council of India (QCI). The main findings were that publicity and outreach of the scheme needs to be enhanced, a consolidated dashboard should contain visualisations and assessments of cases, beneficiaries, etc., and regular trainings should be conducted for PLVs and village-level entrepreneurs.

Indian nationals in foreign custody and exchange of prisoners

The MHA was asked about the details of the number of Indian citizens in foreign jails between 2014-15 and 2017-18 and the steps taken by the government in this regard. The ministry responded that currently there were **8,445 Indian nationals imprisoned in 68 foreign countries**. It further stated that all possible assistance by visiting the jails and consular services are extended along with **providing legal assistance through the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)**. Responding to another question on list of embassies that have been granted access to Indian Nationals via consular access, the Ministry stated that no such list was maintained as this is a 'normal activity'. On the question regarding the format for seeking consular access by Indian embassies abroad, Ministry stated that a request through a 'Note Verbale' including the name of the Indian nationals to be visited and the place of detention as well as the name (s)/designation(s) of the Consular Officers of the Mission/Post is sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Nodal Authority of the country concerned.

Another question asked the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to elaborate on the efforts made by the Indian missions to get complete information on Indian nationals in foreign prisons where privacy laws do not exist and where such laws exist. The Ministry responded that in countries where the laws allow the details to be revealed, Indian missions try to get all the concerned information from the relevant authorities as soon as they get the information of arrest. In countries which have strict privacy laws, the missions request for consular access and obtain the information on Indian prisoners by visiting them in jails.

Responding to the question on details of fisherman held by Sri Lankan authorities, the Ministry stated that **18 Indian fishermen and 11 fishing vessels are currently in Sri Lankan custody out of 1,353 fishermen and 230 fishing vessels taken into custody during the last three years (till 20 December)**. It further stated that **fishermen's issues were raised by the Prime Minister with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister during the latter's visit to India in October 2018**, had figured in the **Ministry's discussions with the Sri Lankan leadership** and a **bilateral Joint Working Group mechanism** and meeting of the Ministers for Fisheries of the two countries was institutionalised to address these issues with Sri Lanka.

Responding to another question on Indian fishermen in Bangladesh and Pakistan custody, the Ministry responded that there were **482 prisoners in Pakistan's custody, out of which it acknowledges only 391, whereas Bangladesh has no Indian nationals in custody**.

The MEA was also asked about the details of exchange of prisoners with Pakistan, if there is an exchange of the list of prisoners along with the jails they are imprisoned in, the details of released persons by both the countries and future proposals in this regard. The Ministry stated that **India and Pakistan had signed an agreement on Consular Access on 21 May 2008, which stipulated that both countries have to exchange a list of civilians and fishermen lodged in jails on 1 January and 1 July of every year**. The response said, "According to the lists exchanged on 1 July 2018, there were **108 Pakistan fishermen and 249 Pakistan civilian prisoners in India's custody**. Pakistan had acknowledged the custody of **418 fishermen and 53 civilian prisoners who are Indian or believed-to-be Indian in their jails**. In addition, there is the issue of **83 missing Indian defense personnel, whose custody has not been acknowledged by Pakistan so far**."

The response further stated that **in the last three years, the number of Indian civilian prisoners released by Pakistan is 17, the number of Indian fishermen released by Pakistan is 1,540, Pakistani civilian prisoners released by India is 135 and Pakistani fishermen released by**

India is 183, as on 13.12.2018. It said that it had suggested to the High Commissioner of Pakistan in October 2017 that the **two sides could work on humanitarian concerns of elderly, women and mentally unsound prisoners in each other's custody.** It was also proposed that **Indian medical experts be allowed to visit such Indian prisoners in Pakistan to which Pakistan positively responded on 7 March 2018.** Following this, India shared details of the medical expert's team and the reconstituted Joint Judicial Committee with Pakistan.

Prison conditions, reforms, overcrowding and practices

The MHA was asked questions about the conditions in jails and studies on it, steps taken and budget for improving conditions, data on states with Board of Visitors (BoVs) appointed for their prisons, conditions of women prisoners and Supreme Court's observation of primeval conditions in jails and observation homes. The Ministry responded that **two Supreme Court judges had visited the Faridabad jail and observation home on 3 June, 2018 and found numerous discrepancies** ranging from a shortage of staff to under-trained human resources and poor prison conditions. After the judge's visit, the **Delhi government took certain steps to improve conditions in jails, including installing CCTVs, enhancing medial facilities, NGO partnerships, etc.** Further, the Ministry stated that since prisons were a state subject, it does not maintain data about BoVs and respective budgets centrally. It further provided generic responses with regard to conditions of jails and the steps taken to improve them, which include provisions of Cr.P.C. for timely release of UTs, issuing advisories and engaging with Director Generals and Inspector Generals of prisons to deliberate on concerned issues. The ministry also stated in its responses that the government had implemented the e-prisons project to provides nation-wide integrated information about inmates and assistance to inmates in booking visits and information related to their term of sentence, parole, etc.

The MHA was also asked questions about the legality and practice of solitary confinement in prisons along with statistical details of prisoners kept in solitary confinement, studies done on its effect, on retention of prisoners beyond their time of release and torture in prisons from January 2014 till June 2018 and details thereto. The Ministry stated that **solitary confinement practice has a legal sanction under section 73 and section 74 of Indian Penal Code (IPC)** and that the Model Prison Manual, 2016 emphasises strict compliance of above provisions. However, on the question of statistical details and studies related to it, the responses stated that such data is not maintained centrally for 'prison' being a state subject and no study as such has been conducted.

Similarly, on the question of torture in prison, retention of prisoners beyond their release date, their subsequent assimilation into the society and about physically disabled prisoners, the Ministry said that no such data was maintained centrally.

The MHA also received questions on overcrowding of prisons, steps taken by the government to check it including policies on constructing more jails and the modernisation of prisons. The Ministry's response stated that **as per the NCRB data, there were 41,9623 inmates lodged in prisons as on 31.12.2015 against the capacity of 36,6781 inmates, which is an occupancy ratio of 114.4%.** The response stated that construction of more jails is a state domain, and therefore, the central government did not have any policy on it. However as per the stated response on steps to check overcrowding, NALSA has been continuously conducting legal awareness along with its **1,125 Jail Legal Aid Clinics** to provide legal assistance to the prisoners in need.

The MHA said that the **government had advised all states and UTs to engage the local jails for preparation of mid-day meals under the mid-day meal scheme,** in a response to the question on engaging inmates for preparation of mid-day meals. It further told that **Chandigarh has involved the local jail for preparation of mid-day meal under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS),** where 100 Anganwari centres and 46 creches run by Indian Council for Child Welfare are beneficiaries.

Shelter homes and juvenile homes

The Ministry of Women and Child Development was asked to respond on the details of women shelter homes along with the details on cases of torture and abuse. The question also asked about whether the Muzaffarnagar Shelter Home was being run illegally, to which the Ministry replied that it was not running

illegally and that **the Centre provided funds to states under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme for setting up and managing homes.** The response accepts that **there were reports of sexual abuse in this particular home** after which the Centre had asked **Chief Secretaries of all states to inspect the Child Care Institution and report to the ministry** and for the particular home government of Bihar has been asked to investigate and report. Further, the response said that as per the information received from the states and UTs, **539 CCIs have been closed for various reasons out of a total of 8,244 registered CCIs.** The response further states that under the Swadhar Greh scheme, **the number of Swadhar Greh are as 289 in 2015-16, 551 in 2016-17 and 544 in 2017-18.**

On the question of Juvenile justice homes in the country and number of children living in these homes, the Ministry stated that **11,052 children were housed in 364 homes across the country.** Further, on the question of funds for these homes, the Ministry stated that under the Child Protection Scheme, the allocation of funds for the last three years has been: Rs 43892.10 in 2015-16, 50847.97 in 2016-17, 52469.95 in 2017-18 and 41497.81 in 2018-19 as on 31.12.2018. However, the response did not mention the units of the above-mentioned figures, so they can range from thousands to lakhs.

About Jail Mail

Jail Mail is a regular series of Prison Reform Updates from CHRI for readers interested in the rights of prisoners and the reform of prisons as a matter of public concern. The engagement of civil society in the management and monitoring of prisons and the rights of prisoners is vital to the transparency of this traditionally closed institution and to ensure the practical realisation of the rights of those behind bars. *Jail Mail* invites discussion between civil society members and those entrusted to oversee and manage prisons.

Evidence-based research and watch reports of CHRI's Prison Reforms Programme, interviews with critical stakeholders, topical issues and developments concerning the liberty of prisoners, and health of prisons in India and around the world will form the sources of *Jail Mail*. Its periodicity will depend on the urgency of issues and the interest they generate.

About CHRI and the Prison Reforms Programme

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation headquartered in New Delhi, with offices in London, United Kingdom and Accra, Ghana. CHRI works for the practical realisation of human rights across Commonwealth countries. It has specialised in the areas of Access to Justice (Police and Prison Reforms) and Access to Information for over two decades. It has special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and is recognised for its expertise by governments, oversight bodies and civil society. It is registered as a society in India.

The Prison Reforms Programme of CHRI is more than 15 years old. The programme focuses on improving prison monitoring through the strengthening of undertrial review mechanisms and prison visiting system nationally, and ensuring early safeguards against unnecessary pre-trial detentions, specifically in Rajasthan and West Bengal. The programme also advocates for timely repatriation of foreign national prisoners and immediate release of asylum seekers. Evidence-based research, advocacy, capacity-building of actors of the criminal justice system including prison officials, welfare and probation officers, criminal defense lawyers, magistrates, legal aid functionaries and civil society actors are the regular activities of the programme.

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