

The Bihar State Government's recent move to finally implement the 2008 Bihar Open Prison Rules to run an open prison in the district of Buxar is undoubtedly a welcome progress in the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners by helping them socialize and adjust with the outside world, aiding them in providing for and living with their families. http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2008-08-07/patna/27904616_1_open-jail-jail-officials-inmates

The Open Jail system in Bihar would borrow from the Sanganer model in Rajasthan, which was the first open jail in India. With a unique disciplinary system in place, convicts can find opportunities to make a living, and in time can afford facilities that were earlier unavailable to them. The Open Jail would dissociate convicts from a life of crime ushering the hope of reformation.

This is in refreshing contrast to Bihar Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar's initiative known as the "Civil Consequences of Crime" launched in January 2012 which would make convicts, despite having served their jail term, ineligible for government jobs, BPL cards, contracts, passport, holding offices in NGOs and licenses for arms, petrol pumps and gas agencies. The website of the initiative, <http://210.212.23.50/prison>, created by the Home Department under 'civil consequences of crime' project has uploaded information of about 1450 convicts lodged in various jails of the state who would be thus ineligible.

Such an initiative is particularly incongruous when seen with the latest data released by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, New Delhi, in *Prisons Statistics of India*, July 2011 for 2008-09 showing that Bihar jail inmates earned the highest income in the country through sales of products manufactured in the state prisons, over and above Maharashtra and Delhi prisons. http://www.telegraphindia.com/1120106/jsp/bihar/story_14968189.jsp

The Chief Minister should seriously reconsider and withdraw his discriminatory initiative, "Civil Consequences of Crime" in the light of these developments.