

A/CONF.6/C.2/L.21

FIRST UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION  
OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS  
GENEVA 1955

## OPEN INSTITUTIONS

THE REFORMATORY FARMS AT BUREWALA,  
PUNJAB (PAKISTAN)

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UNITED NATIONS

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In accordance with the tradition of past Congresses, it has been possible to secure the co-operation of certain national prison administrations for the printing of documentation for the First United Nations Congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, which is from an historical point of view the Thirteenth International Penal and Penitentiary Congress. Thus the present report has been generously printed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons of the United States of America, in the prison printing plant at Leavenworth, Kansas.

A/CONF. 6/C. 2/L. 21

8 March 1955

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### I. THE PROBATION SYSTEM IN THE PUNJAB<sup>1</sup>

The Punjab is Pakistan's largest provincial unit in area and second largest in population. It covers an area of 62,245 square miles and has a population of 18,826,000 which gives an average population density of about 300 persons per square mile.

Since November 1926 an Act known as the Good Conduct Prisoners' Probationary Release Act has been in operation in the Punjab. The Act provides for the provisional release of good conduct prisoners in certain cases. If a prisoner is considered likely to abstain from crime and lead a useful and industrious life he is permitted by licence to remain on probation under the supervision of a probation officer or in an institution under the control of the Government. While on probation he has to comply with certain conditions regulating his daily life and general conduct and behaviour, as laid down in his licence. Prisoners sentenced to a term of 3 years or less are eligible for probationary release without serving any specified period of their sentence of imprisonment in prison, while prisoners sentenced to a term of more than three years have to serve a minimum period of a year and a half of their sentence in prison in order to become eligible for probationary release. In any case, the unexpired term of imprisonment of such prisoners should not be less than six months. Short-term prisoners, i.e. persons sentenced to less than 6 months imprisonment, and prisoners convicted of heinous crimes like murder, dacoity<sup>2</sup>, robbery, offences against the State and other serious offences are not eligible for the probationary release. The Act does not exclude from consideration the cases of habitual offenders, but so far probationary release has been restricted to first offenders. In the Punjab, in the majority

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the concept of probation used in this report differs from that described in the United Nations Study on Probation and Related Measures.

<sup>2</sup> Certain types of gang-robbery, usually accompanied by violence.

of cases, imprisonment is the result of quarrels over land or water, family feuds and other disputes of similar nature. These offences in the eye of the law may be serious but the moral character and outlook on life of the offenders are far from "criminal". The aim of the Act is, therefore, to remove from the society of offenders with definite criminal tendencies persons who have been sentenced for offences, but do not show the same criminal characteristics.

Under the Act a prisoner after his probational release is called a probationer, and he is required to remain on probation until the expiry of the term of his sentence. Any violation of the conditions of his licence may result in forfeiture of remission of his sentence for good conduct or, in case the offence is serious, in the revocation of his licence and his return to prison to complete his remaining sentence. The probationers are responsible for earning their own living. They are employed in different trades in accordance with their qualifications and taking into account their occupations before conviction. The system induces the ordinary prisoner to behave well and keep his record clean in order to qualify himself for probational release. This, indirectly, is also extremely helpful to the prison administration. The prisoner's willingness is a condition of probational release. In fact, his voluntary co-operation with the administration in helping him to re-adjust in life, socially, morally and economically, is the keynote to the success of the system. The probation system in effect in the Punjab also contributes to the solution of the thorny problem of over-crowding in prisons and to considerable savings in prison expenditure.

The probation system is an improvement on the system of the Revising Boards which has the drawback that, if the recommendations of the Board are accepted by the Government, the release of the prisoner is instantaneous and absolute. In that case no opportunity or assistance is afforded to the prisoner to educate himself once more for a free life, and no safeguards are provided for society and for the State against the unwholesome effects of the abrupt release of the prisoner. These defects are eliminated in the probation system which provides valuable safeguards in this respect as the initial release is only provisional, and during the probation period all

possible facilities are afforded to the prisoner to make himself fit for a life in free society. To ensure the efficient operation of the system, the application of the Act has been entrusted to a separate and independent Department, the Reclamation Department, which functions under the administrative authority of the Home Department of the Government of the Punjab.

## II. THE REFORMATORY AGRICULTURE FARMS, BUREWALA

### 1. Nature, size and situation

Agriculture is the principal industry of the Punjab and the main occupation of its people, 80 per cent of the population directly or indirectly depending on it. The same proportion of the prison population in the Punjab is of the agricultural class; of a total daily average of 8,000 prisoners in its prisons over 6,000 are agriculturists. Of the total area of 37 million acres of the Province about 20 million acres is cultivated land. On an average a peasant cultivates about 6 to 12 acres of land (1 acre = 4840 square yards).

Accordingly, since 1927, the Department operates two Government Reformatory Agriculture Farms where the majority of probationers of the agricultural class are employed. These farms are situated to the South-West of Lahore, the capital of the Punjab, 5 miles from the Town Mandi Burewala (Multan district) which is connected with Lahore by a 175 mile rail and 157 mile road. They extend over an area of 3,000 acres of canal irrigated land. One of the farms is for adult prisoners and the other for young offenders (Borstals); they cover areas of 2000 acres and 1000 acres, respectively, and are separated by a water distribution canal. Both farms comprise approximately 200 tenancies, each tenancy being of 10 acres. Each prisoner is allotted one tenancy on the *Batai* system at the ratio of 60 : 40, the former being the probationer-tenant's share and the latter rent to the Government as landlord. Originally the practice at the farms was to pay daily wages to the probationers for their work, but this was given up in 1931 in favour of a tenancy system which provides the probationers with an incentive for energetic and hard work. Improved and up-to-date agricultural implements are sup-

plied to the probationers free of cost by the Government. They pay no land revenue, but they have to pay water tax and other nominal local cesses. Recoverable advances for the purchase of a pair of bullocks, cost of maintenance, manure and seeds, etc. are made up to an amount of Rs. 500 (approximately 150 dollars) to each of the probationers till the gathering of the first harvest. These advances are gradually recovered from them out of the proceeds of their share of the produce.

There are 200 family quarters and 100 single quarters for probationers at the Adult Farm, and 26 family quarters and 20 barracks for bachelor probationers at the Borstal Farm. Every member of the staff is given free residential quarters. In addition, there are office buildings, store-rooms, civil and veterinary hospital buildings, school buildings and several sheds for livestock, etc., covering an area of over 200 acres.

## 2. Method of selection and duration of probation

There is no criterion for the selection of probationers for admission to the farms other than that they should be agriculturists by occupation and physically and otherwise fit for acquiring practical and scientific knowledge in improved methods of agriculture. As the probationers are first offenders, no discrimination is made from the point of view of the nature of their offence in selecting probationers for the farms except that long-term probationers receive priority in this respect. The period of probation varies in each case, as it is equal to the unexpired term of sentence of the probationer, which generally ranges between 6 months and 4 to 5 years, or even more.

## 3. Nature of work performed by the probationers

The farms provide agricultural work for the probationers and also afford an opportunity to this class of prisoners of getting agricultural training in modern and improved methods during the period of their probation, which is not available in a prison. A small number of probationers are also employed at the farms in menial jobs.

Two model farms of about 250 acres are maintained, one for each group of offenders, for demonstrating the advantages of improved seeds, scientific methods of agriculture,

new varieties of crops and soil improvements and to provide practical training in the improved methods of agriculture. The cultivation of this area is under the direct supervision of the Government and advantage is taken of these model farms to short-term probationers on monthly wages.

The land held in tenancy by the probationers is farmed under the block system, i.e. 2 to 4 tenancies are combined for the purposes of water distribution and mutual help; this system not only effects economy in the use of water but also develops a spirit of co-operation and healthy competition among the probationers.

There is an orchard of citrus and other fruit trees covering an area of 25 acres, with a nursery garden attached to it, where the probationers are given training in gardening and in the selective breeding of plants of different kinds.

Training in sericulture is also conducted at both farms:

There are about 300—400 bullocks and about 100 milch animals at the farms, including the Government bullocks which are used for cultivation of the demonstration farms. Each of the probationers is allowed to keep a pair of bullocks and one milch animal for which he grows fodder on his land. The staff is provided with ponies at Government expense for supervisory work in the fields.

There are two main crop seasons: *kharif* (summer) and *rabi* (winter). The principal *kharif* crops are: cotton sugar-cane, millet and rice; the *rabi* crops are wheat, barley, gram and oats.

There are two co-operative supply shops, one at each of the two farms, which purchase commodities, seeds, etc., and supply them at cheap rates to the probationers, and also serve to train them in co-operative methods. The income accruing to the probationers from these shops is over Rs. 3,000 (910 dollars) every year.

## 4. Method of treatment of probationers

During the period of their stay at the farms, stress is laid on the rehabilitation of the probationers, and the tenure of probation is fully utilized for their reform. They are kept in the open and there are no armed guards nor prison bars. There is no forced labour nor any restrictive conditions as in the

prisons. Probationers have to conduct their life under strict supervision and discipline, in accordance with a set of rules governing their daily routine and they have to keep themselves fully occupied. Moral and religious instruction, including social topics such as civic duties, is provided by preachers at regular intervals and they have to offer prayers regularly and in congregation. They receive individual attention, advice and guidance from the members of the staff and their conduct and behaviour is kept under constant observation. Except that their movements are restricted to their residential area at night and to the farms area during the day they enjoy all the normal conditions of life including that of being able to keep their families with them at the farms. This privilege has had salutary effect on their moral rehabilitation, apart from the fact that the members of his family are a great help to the probationer in his occupation. Probationers are allowed to receive visits from their relatives and friends and good conduct and hard work earn them the privilege of going to their homes on short leave at regular intervals. These increasing privileges and facilities, sympathetic advice and proper treatment and a normal atmosphere of life contribute to their rehabilitation. Moreover, the considerable amount of earnings accumulated during the period of their probation which they may take home upon their final release not only prevents recidivism but also enables them to be welcomed by the community to which they return as useful citizens. The conduct of finally released prisoners is observed by the Department, and it is most encouraging to note that during the last seven years no case of relapse into crime has been reported.

Approximately three to four hundred prisoners are handled at the farms every year, including a number of non-tenant probationers employed at the demonstration farms or in other administrative jobs.

#### **5. Management of the farms**

The management of the farms is entrusted to a Superintendent who is a gazetted officer and an expert in agriculture. He is assisted by a Deputy Superintendent who is mainly responsible for the work relating to the reformatory aspect of the treatment. Under these officers there are two farm man-

agers and two assistant farm managers, one at each of the two farms, and a number of field-men well-versed in agricultural work as well as clerical and menial staff. In addition to the Superintendent's office there is a small office at each of the two farms.

#### **6. Education, medical care, recreation**

Adult education, including moral and religious instruction is provided for the probationers. A small library also exists for their use. For the education of the children of the probationers and of the staff there are two schools at the farms, one for boys and the other for girls, giving instruction up to the primary standard. Education is free. Books and other stationery materials are also supplied to the children of the probationers free of cost.

There are two dispensaries, one civil and another veterinary, at the farms. All the probationers and the members of the staff and their livestock are given free medical and veterinary attention at the dispensaries. Suitable arrangements for indoor-patients are also provided at the civil dispensary.

Scouting, wrestling, village games, and other recreational activities are encouraged at the farms as means to improve the health of the probationers and to develop in them a healthy spirit of co-operation.

#### **7. Finance**

In the Punjab the expenditure involved in keeping an offender in a closed prison amounts to approximately Rs. 360 (109 dollars) per annum. The total annual expenditure of the farms is approximately Rs. 70,000 (21,212 dollars) while the net income for the Government derived from the farms is approximately Rs. 1,000,000 (30,303 dollars) per annum. The average total earnings of a probationer at the farms amount to approximately Rs. 500 (150 dollars) a year; the probationer who secured the highest yield from his tenancy recently earned approximately Rs. 1,800 (545 dollars) in a year. This compares very favourably with the average per capita annual income in Pakistan which is Rs. 230/6 (69.8 dollars). These figures clearly show that there is a considerable gain for the economy of the country in respect of every offender who is enabled to earn his living as a tenant-probationer on these

farms instead of being kept in a closed institution at Government expense and without performing productive work.

### 8. Statistical Information

The following table gives a numerical picture of some aspects of the life of the probationers at the farms during the period of one year:

Probationers granted home leave.....	75
Probationers having their families with them.....	122
Probationers who received visitors.....	698
Probationers granted special remission for good conduct and work.....	115
Probationers whose remission was forfeited for violations of conditions of their licence.....	20
Probationers whose licences were revoked.....	2
Escapes from the farms.....	8
Probationers who received adult education.....	80
Children of probationer who attended school (25 boys, 15 girls).....	40
Indoor patients treated at the dispensary.....	621
Outdoor patients who attended the dispensary.....	7222

### RESUME

Le système de probation<sup>1</sup> est réglementé au Punjab depuis 1926 par la loi relative à la libération sous probation des détenus ayant un bon comportement, qui prévoit la libération à titre conditionnel de délinquants primaires choisis en raison de leur bon comportement continu pendant la durée de leur peine. Le délinquant ainsi libéré conditionnellement est requis de se conformer à une série de conditions précise qui lui imposent une vie journalière réglée sous la surveillance d'un organisme gouvernemental nommé le *Reclamation Department*. Pendant la période de probation, qui est normalement de la durée de la portion de peine de prison qui reste à subir et est généralement de six mois à cinq ans, on fournit au délinquant les facilités qui lui permettront de gagner sa vie.

L'un des traits importants de l'activité du *Reclamation Department* est le groupe de fermes de Burewala, qui est située à 175 milles de Lahore, la capitale de la province, et qui comprend 3,000 acres de terrain agricole irrigué par des canaux. Le délinquant libéré conditionnellement est généralement installé comme fermier du gouvernement, selon un système de participation à la récolte, sur l'une des parcelles de dix acres de la ferme, qui en compte environ deux cents. Il est exempté du paiement de l'impôt foncier (mais il paye la taxe pour l'eau et les autres taxes locales nominales), il reçoit sans frais de bons accessoires agricoles et on lui avance une somme d'argent remboursable allant jusqu'à cinq cents roupies, ou environ 150 dollars pour l'achat d'un couple de bétail, d'engrais et de graines. L'établissement comprend deux fermes, l'une pour délinquants adultes et l'autre pour les jeunes adultes (Borstal). Les familles des délinquants sont autorisées à vivre à la ferme, dans des locaux construits par le gouvernement. Le régime ne comprend pas de travail obligatoire ou d'autres restrictions rappelant la vie de la prison. Il tend cependant à occuper le délinquant à des travaux difficiles sur sa parcelle et à lui enseigner une bonne pratique agricole, ainsi qu'à lui donner une instruction morale, religieuse et civique. L'ensemble de ce régime tend à créer un climat favorable pour la réadaptation morale des délinquants. Le personnel dispense un traitement individuel et des conseils aux délinquants. L'établissement comprend deux fermes

<sup>1</sup> Le terme "probation" est utilisé dans ce rapport dans un sens différent de celui qui a été retenu dans l'étude des Nations Unies sur "la probation et les mesures analogues".

This archiving project is a collaborative effort between United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. Any comments or questions should be directed to Cindy J. Smith at [CJSmithphd@comcast.net](mailto:CJSmithphd@comcast.net) or Emil Wandzilak at [emil.wandzilak@unodc.org](mailto:emil.wandzilak@unodc.org).