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# HARMONISING THE MODEL PRISON MANUAL (2016) WITH THE MODEL PRISONS ACT (2023): LEGAL GAPS AND DRAFTING CONFLICTS

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## Abstract

The Model Prison Manual (2016) together with the Model Prisons Act (2023) depict India's boldest attempt to overhaul prison administration and align it with a right, based correctional framework. But, the existence of a non, binding administrative manual alongside a newly enacted statutory regime has led to significant legal and operational tensions. This paper explores how far the 2016 Manual's reform, oriented standards, these include prisoner rights, health, welfare, gender, sensitive protocols, rehabilitation, staff training, and oversight, are either in harmony or in conflict with the 2023 Act's provisions.

By means of doctrinal comparison, the research points out the major issues in draft work such as conflict of definitions, lack of disciplinary chapters, unclear normative hierarchy, and instances where the manual is more progressive in terms of safeguards than the Act is either weaker or omits. Besides these, the study throws light on the structural problems that arise because of India's federal setup where prisons come under state jurisdiction. This results in different pace of implementation, resource gaps, and divergent rules at the state level, which make it difficult to achieve harmonisation.

The article ends with the argument that the 2023 Act entails a risk of reinforcing a security, dominated approach if it is not accompanied by a definite mechanism for the integration of the reform principles of the Manual at the statutory level. According to the paper, the final outcome of prison governance in India should be a coherent, humane, and accountable system which can be achieved through a harmonisation roadmap comprising of the suggested amendments, unified standard operating procedures, periodic compliance audits and incorporation of constitutional rights jurisprudence.

## 1. Introduction: Evolution of Prison Reforms and Need for Harmonisation

India's prison administration has been a typical example of fragmented polices and an uneven implementation from state to state besides an institutional culture that is still very much influenced by the colonial era

legislations. The primary law governing prisons for over a hundred years – the Prisons Act, 1894 – was, in essence, a law based on giving punishment and hence it revolved around discipline, segregation, and order as the most important aspects; rehabilitation and restorative justice were the least considered. With time the criminal justice system has been guided by constitutional jurisprudence and

international human rights norms and so it became obvious that the prison framework needed a complete makeover. Committees like the All India Committee on Jail Reforms (Mulla Committee, 1980–83), the Krishna Iyer Committee (1987), and the Justice Amitava Roy Committee similarly voiced their opinion about the necessity of the transition from the retributive model to the reformative and rehabilitative one. Nevertheless, the reform of the legislation has been at a standstill for quite a few decades although there have been strong suggestions.

The Ministry of Home Affairs came up with the Model Prison Manual (MPM), 2016, in 2016, which was a well-thought-out and forward-looking policy document meant to be a guide for the states in revising their old prison rules. The Manual respects human rights and is based on UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules) and it is primarily oriented towards prisoner dignity, vocational training, health facilities, gender-sensitive norms, legal aid, and modern management practices. Nevertheless, since it is only a non-binding policy framework, its implementation is a matter of individual states' discretion and capacity. The result of this was that there was a large range of states doing different things: some of the states were very enthusiastic and adopted as much as 75% of the Manual, in some states only a few chapters were implemented, and in many states, there were only minor changes made or no changes at all to prison rules. In the absence of a statutory force, several important reforms especially those related to grievance redressal, prisoner classification, and rehabilitation programmes have been quite a challenge in terms of uniformity and practical execution.

The Government of India, realising the shortcomings of the present system and the necessity of a single legal document, has replaced the colonial 1894 law by enacting the Model Prison Act, 2023. The 2023 Act reflects a significant structural change: it brings in up-

to-date management ideas, concentrates on security and discipline, introduces the features of high-risk offenders, controls the use of gadgets, and lays down the administrative hierarchies more clearly. Moreover, the Law tries to do so by combining welfare provisions, correctional services, and the minimum standard of living into one. However, the Act, which has been modernized in its approach, does not fully incorporate or correspond with a lot of the reform measures already set forth in the Model Prison Manual, 2016. The lack of coordination between the Manual and the statute confuses the administrators, reform process results become weaker, and the possibility of different states carrying on with varying practices is still there.

The issue about the need for synchronisation of points between the MPM, 2016, and the Model Prisons Act, 2023 is talked about by multiple reasons. First, the Manual offers various rights-based measures,

e.g. mental health care, aftercare support, rehabilitation planning, and gender-sensitive policies, which are either not explicitly included in the Act or ones that are there in a weakened version. Without a firm legal backing, these provisions can still be overlooked at the time of execution. Second, there is a good number of the Manual's operational instructions that are at odds with or are in agreement with the statutory changes of the Act. For instance, differences in prisoner classification standards, disciplinary procedures, and use-of-force protocols can lead to officials at the prison trying to figure out which regulations they should take as their bases. Thirdly, the Act doesn't explicitly mention the Manual nor does it suggest how the states should merge its provisions when they prepare prison rules, thus giving them a lot of freedom that can lead to big differences in the prison systems.

A coordinated system is crucial to set up standards that are the same across the board, get rid of difficulties in interpretation,

and encourage the taking of responsibility. What is more, harmonisation brings prison law in line with the constitutional ideals under Articles 14, 19, and 21, which stand for equality, due process, and respect for human dignity. As the Supreme Court has time and again pointed out, prisoners are entitled to all fundamental rights that can go together with detention, and prison management is not allowed to function in disregard of the constitution. The Model Prison Manual, 2016 was developed on the basis of these core tenets, whereas the Model Prisons Act, 2023 is aimed at providing a legal ground for contemporary prison governance. Therefore the two tools do not only have to work together from an administrative point of view, but they also have to be in line with each other according to the constitution.

The history of prison reforms in India reveals the progress that has been made as well as the gaps that have persisted over the years. The 2023 Act is an important landmark in the country's legislation, yet its goals can only be practically achieved when there is a coordinated, rights-based, and operationally consistent framework which is based on the principles of the 2016 Manual. The problem that awaits is to overcome the regulatory and administrative differences so as to make Indian prisons not only compliant with the law but also institutions that take care of the human side of incarceration and thus reflect a modern democracy.

## 2. Doctrinal Comparison of the Model Prison Manual (2016) and the Model Prisons Act (2023)

The Model Prison Manual, 2016 (MPM 2016) and the Model Prisons Act, 2023 (MPA 2023) are two landmark moments in India's prison reform narrative; however, they differ in terms of their normative foundations. MPM 2016 serves as a guideline, based administrative framework, while the MPA 2023 is a binding statutory instrument mainly aimed at replacing colonial, era laws such as the

Prisons Act, 1894. A doctrinal comparison performed between them shows divergence in aspects of purpose, structure, rights orientation, and implementation pathways, thus indicating that these documents are not only complementary but also contradictory in some respects.

### 2.1. Purpose, Scope, and Normative Framework

The MPM 2016 is tied to human, rights concepts which are the progeny of the Supreme Court's ever, widening jurisprudence on the dignity of prisoners, the Mandela Rules, and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recommendations. Its aim is to set up model standards for the management of prisons, rehabilitation, prisoner welfare, and staff training. The document is advisory and every state is expected to personalize it in accordance with the local conditions.

On the other hand, MPA 2023 seeks to reform prison administration through a statutory mandate and security, discipline, and technological integration are its main emphases. It legalizes categorisation of prisoners, the use of security devices, and handling of the high, risk inmates. Although it continues to promote welfare as a minor theme, the MPA adopts a more custodial and regulatory stance with welfare being an integral part of a security, first framework.

### 2.2. Rights, Welfare, and Reformatory Philosophy

The MPM 2016 is completely rights, based. It provides for the health of the prisoners, sanitation, education areas, legal aid, vocational training, aftercare programmes, grievance redressal mechanism, and protections for female prisoners, children in prisons, transgender persons, elderly inmates, and prisoners with mental illness. The Manual focuses on non, discrimination, rehabilitation, and reintegration as being at the core of its goals.

The MPA 2023 still has some reformatory

elements, such as vocational training, open prisons, parole, and furlough, but these are only allowed within a security and discipline, centred statutory framework. For example, the Act creates more rigorous regulations controlling violent behaviour, the undertaking of high, risk prisoners, and the usage of technological surveillance like CCTV, body scanners, and AI, enabled monitoring. Although the critics accept the necessity of this modernization, they hold that it does not adequately provide for the welfare assurances that the Manual elaborates in detail.

### 2.3. Institutional Structure and Administration

The MPM 2016 suggests exhaustive administrative instructions: hierarchy of prison staff, tasks of officers, training modules, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and cooperation with the judiciary, police, and health departments. It gives a very strong emphasis on capacity building and the professionalisation of the prison staff.

The MPA 2023 provides for administrative authority in a more formal way through statutory

provisions but gives less detailed operational guidance hence, a lot is left for the subordinate rules and state, level variations. The Act, among other things, empowers the state to have more control over prison security, provides for heavy disciplinary measures, and establishes a legal basis for the technologies that the Manual only suggests.

### 2.4. Security, Discipline, and Use of Technology

While the MPM 2016 largely through guidelines addresses security and discipline and the MPA 2023 law these:

- Statutory provisions for segregation, punishment for violent conduct, and high-risk prisoner management.
- Legal basis for using electronic

surveillance, forensics, and modern security equipment.

- Stricter rules relating to prison offences, searches, seizures, and monitoring of visitor interactions.

This shift from advisory norms to statutory enforceability marks a doctrinal transformation in prison governance.

### 2.5. Gender, Vulnerable Prisoners, and Special Needs

The MPM 2016 goes into a lot more detail to identify the different groups of people who are indubitably women, women who are pregnant, kids whose mothers are in prison, LGBTQ+ community members, non, nationals, undertrials, elderly prisoners, and persons with mental disorders. Besides simply naming these groups, it offers quite a few standards: it foresees specialised cells for them, their dietary norms, medical care standards, counselling, and non, stigmatising treatment. The MPA 2023 gives recognition to some of the vulnerable categories; however, it lacks the profundity and the exactness of Manual. Many advanced welfare provisions, especially those related to mental health, reproductive health, and transgender identity, are not equally mirrored in the statutory text, thus generating doctrinal gaps that the states have to fill by issuing rules.

### 2.6. Oversight, Accountability, and Transparency

The MPM 2016 envisages strong oversight mechanisms: visitors' boards, human, rights audits, grievance redressal systems, and the participation of civil society organisations. The Act, while making provision for grievance mechanisms and inspections, is not as detailed in its prescriptions and thus, the external accountability may be somewhat weakened unless the states have adopted Manual, based SOPs.

### 2.7. Overall Doctrinal Relationship

From a doctrinal point of view, the MPM 2016 is

comprehensive, rights, based, and focused on the welfare aspect, whereas the MPA 2023 is more limited, security, oriented, and can be enforced by law. Theoretically, the Act should be used to put the Manual into practice, but there are quite a few differences, especially those concerning welfare norms, vulnerable groups, and administrative details, that cause contradictions. Although the Manual is still required for interpretative guidance, its provisions run the risk of being overlooked if not supported by law.

### 3. Legal Gaps and Drafting Conflicts

The comparison of the Model Prison Manual (MPM) 2016 with the Model Prisons Act (MPA) 2023 reveals that there are legal gaps and conflicts in drafting that affect the uniform implementation of rights, based prison administration in India. The MPM, 2016 is an elaborate manual detailing the administrative aspects with a focus on the welfare of prisoners, their rehabilitation, and human rights observance. The MPA, 2023, on the other hand, looks to establish a legal framework for prison management with a dominant focus on security, discipline, and the use of technology for oversight. This difference in emphasis in addition to inconsistencies in the scope and wording of the documents leads to both structural and functional issues of reconciling the two instruments.

To begin with, one of the main points of contention between the texts is the contrast in their normative nature which is reflected in their foundation. The MPM, 2016 is a non-binding and advisory document, while the MPA, 2023 is a model legislation at the central level, which is intended to be adopted by the states. The Manual is filled with many progressive ideas which are not embodied in the 2023 Act. For instance, detailed welfare programmes, set standards for education and vocational training, mental health provisions, and gender-sensitive guidelines, these are some of the concepts that are not statutorily reflected in the 2023 Act. Hence, there is a normative gap

existing as the Manual directs prison administration in a humane and reform, oriented way but the Act remains silent or minimalistic on leaving these parts of the prison system less enforceable. For instance, the extensive sections in the Manual about counseling, aftercare, legal aid, and special protections for the vulnerable prisoners have no counterparts in terms of obligations in the Act, thus leading to a possible lowering of welfare standards.

Secondly, unclear definitions and scope in the 2023 Act leave the reader puzzled as to the meaning of the Manual when both documents are considered together. The 2023 Act defines “high, risk prisoners, ” “security hazards, ” “discipline violations, ” and “prohibited articles” vaguely, to allow wide administrative discretion. On the other hand, the manual offers more clarity, categorization principles, and procedural safeguards for disciplinary actions, but the Act does not require them by law. Consequently, prison authorities may exercise the broad disciplinary powers stipulated in the Act while neglecting the Manual's more detailed procedures, thus creating inconsistency and the possibility of abuse of authority.

Third, the Act has made provisions regarding the use of technology. For example, the use of CCTVs, electronic surveillance, and digital record, keeping has been mentioned in the Act, but there has been no mention of privacy safeguards or data protection. Confidentiality of prisoner records and the ethical use of technology are among the requirements of the Manual, however, the Act does not explicitly refer to these protective clauses. As a result, there is a mismatch between administrative standards and statutory powers which raises concern about the violation of Article 21 of the Constitution.

Fourth, the significant drafting gaps in the areas of solitary confinement, use of force, and disciplinary penalties are apparent. The Manual highlights the detailed checks like

medical examination before and after isolation, daily monitoring, and restrictions on the duration. However, the Act offers broader authority for the segregation of prisoners for security reasons with less obvious safeguards. This gap can cause the prison management to be overly dependent on separation as a means of control, which is against international human rights standards like the UN Standard Minimum Rules (Nelson Mandela Rules).

Fifth, the provisions concerning parole, furlough, remission, and open prisons substantially vary. Detailed frameworks of behavioural assessments and periodic reviews that foster rehabilitation and conditional liberty are some of the features in the Manual. The Act, conversely, depicts a more security, focused approach, thus wording the states with great discretion in decision, making as far as the release of the different categories of prisoners is concerned. The conflict here is between the reformative vision of the Manual and the restrictive tendencies of the Act, thus accentuating the problem of the return of the prisoners to society.

Sixth, the 2023 Act has limited provisions for gender, responsive and vulnerable, group protections. The Manual is committed to providing separate facilities for women, arranging for childcare, providing maternity, and prenatal care, including transgender, and preparing protocols

for the mentally ill prisoners. Nonetheless, the Act is merely pointing to such things and leaving their implementation to state rules. The drafting gap here is that the risk goes back in the rights' protection, especially in those states which may not actively incorporate the progressive measures of the Manual.

Lastly, mechanisms for oversight and accountability constitute another area of conflict. The Manual envisages various internal and external monitoring agencies, makes provision for regular inspections, set,

up of grievance redressal systems, and allows for the public to get data on prisons. The Act, albeit, providing for advisory boards and inspections, is devoid of the Manual's detailed procedural provisions and transparency requirements. Without the support of law, these mechanisms may become inefficient or may be implemented differently in various states.

To sum up, it is apparent from the legal gaps and drafting conflicts that the Model Prisons Act, 2023, albeit modernizing certain facets of prison administration, is still far from fully integrating the rights, centric and welfare, oriented framework envisaged by the Model Prison Manual, 2016. A harmonized strategy, through changes, extra rules, and state, level SOPs, is necessary to bring the disciplinary and technological focus of the Act in line with the human, rights, based standards of the Manual.

#### **4. Federalism, Administrative Barriers, and Implementation Challenges**

The combined usage of Model Prison Manual, 2016 (MPM 2016) and Model Prisons Act, 2023 (MPA 2023) is significantly influenced by India's federal system, according to which prisons are included in the State List (Entry 4, List II, Seventh Schedule). Although the Centre can prepare model laws and manuals, it is the states that have the sole power to decide about their adoption, modification, and implementation. This very constitutional set, up leads to the differences in the pace of reforms across the states of India and subsequently, the wide, ranging variations in conditions, governance practices, and compliance with the national standards. Therefore, federalism is not just the administrative background, but the principal factor, which determines how the harmonisation between MPM 2016 and MPA 2023 is reflected in the reality.

One of the biggest problems stems from the fact, that the MPM 2016 is non, binding. Being a manual, it is the reference framework, however, it does not have legal force. Some

states have implemented it fully, they have incorporated all the chapters, while others just have operationalized few sections such as classification of prisoners, health care protocols or legal aid guidelines. Consequently, the situation with MPA 2023 as a model central legislation gets even more complicated: on the one hand, the Act has a statutory form, but on the other, it still needs to be formally enacted or adapted by respective states. Some of the states, for instance, can postpone or refuse the adoption because of political, financial or ideological reasons. This inconsistency, between a non-binding manual and a model statute requiring a state action, results in a fragmented legal landscape.

Another problem associated with state unequal resourcing is that it has a direct impact on the implementation of the policy. MPM 2016 calls for changes such as modernized sanitation facilities, gender sensitive infrastructure, video conferencing rooms, open prisons, rehabilitation workshops, and psychological support units. Such changes require not only large capital expenditure but also recurring operational budgets. It is a fact that a lot of states, especially those with overburdened correctional systems, do not have enough financial allocations to even achieve baseline compliance. So, harmonisation becomes more of an aspiration than a concrete goal. With its focus on technology, driven surveillance, MPA 2023 is calling for more financial resources from the states to meet the increased staffing norms.

Limitations in human resources also influence negatively the issue of the execution of the policy.

Firstly, both the Manual and the Act envision a professional, trained, and sensitive prison workforce. Nevertheless, persistent employee shortages, lack of new recruitments, limited career opportunities, and absence of specialized training academies in most states

have led to inconsistent reform efforts. At the same time, without adequate training in human rights standards, legal procedures, mental health care, and modern security protocols, prison staff will not be able to implement the integrated framework successfully.

One of the barriers related to federalism is the absence of uniform Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Even if the MPM 2016 suggests SOPs in great detail for different activities such as prisoner admission, discipline, and rehabilitation, most of the states have either prepared their own versions or have been following long established prison manuals. With MPA 2023 coming in, states are required to reconcile existing SOPs with new statutory requirements. Without central oversight facilitating timely harmonisation, divergent SOPs continue to result in unequal treatment of prisoners, thus, thwack the intention of a model national framework.

Moreover, political will for this issue is different from state to state. Generally speaking, compared to the police, infrastructure, education, or health, prison reform is given low priority. The states having the capital and leadership inclined to reform may take the positive steps such as updating prison legislations and incorporating the progressive provisions of MPM 2016. Other states may prioritise the maintenance of order hence that will be the only MPA 2023 security, oriented provisions selectively implemented with the welfare and rights, based aspects ignored.

The MPA 2023 technology, driven provisions like electronic monitoring, data integration, surveillance systems, and digital record, keeping will require a sound IT infrastructure and skilled personnel. States are very different concerning their technological readiness and without central funding or technical help, the progress will be uneven. Also, inconsistent digitisation is thwarting transparency, monitoring, and cooperation between the

states.

At last, oversight mechanisms are still of poor quality and different in strength. Even though the Manual and the Act propose monitoring by State, level bodies, human, rights commissions, and internal review boards, these organizations frequently lack freedom, staff, or clear objectives. The absence of strong oversight means that the gaps in implementation are left unattended and that states have no incentives to align their practices.

To sum up, India's federal structure together with financial challenges, shortage of human resources, outdated SOPs, fluctuating political commitment, and technological gaps record a very unequal ground for the integration of the Model Prison Manual, 2016 with the Model Prisons Act, 2023. The effective harmonisation is possible only through coordinated, cooperative federal approach, supported by central incentives, capacity building and administrating with a rights, based mindset.

### **5. Conclusion and Way Forward: Need for a Harmonised Framework**

Integration of the Model Prison manual, 2016, with the Model Prisons Act, 2023, is a vital step towards updating the prison governance framework in India. But it is not a straightforward integration; the Manual and the Act vary quite a lot in terms of their goals, layout, and moral perspective. To put it simply, the 2016 Manual is a welfare, oriented operational guide that draws on the best practices of human rights law and is very detailed, while the 2023 Act is a legal framework that has more of a security, focus and is less detailed from the administrative side. The differences between the two result in ambiguities in the interpretation of the law, inconsistencies in the execution of the law, and a disjointed approach to prisoner management in different states. Hence, the first and most fundamental reason for synchronising them is to be able to convert

the prison into the institution of rehabilitation, which is in line with constitutional morality, rather than being the place of punishment.

One of the biggest problems is that the Manual is a non, binding document and is therefore frequently overshadowed by the 2023 Act's statutory provisions, even in cases where the Manual offers better rights, based safeguards. For example, the Manual has very detailed instructions for care of the vulnerable categories of prisoners, mental healthcare, vocational training, segregation protocols, and grievance mechanisms, while the Act has no or only very few such provisions. In those areas where the Act is silent or is only vaguely drafted, states may decide to follow the Manual, but lack of clear legislative guidance leads to differences in implementation across different jurisdictions. The issue is further complicated by India's federal setup whereby the administration of prisons is under state subjects. Without uniform guidelines, the states can choose the provisions selectively, which results in different kinds of treatment of prisoners and varying standards of care, which is against Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

In order to overcome these obstacles, it must start with the creation of a harmonised framework plan which systematically aligns the moral imperatives of the Manual with the legal requirements of the Act. The Central Government is allowed to establish a panel of experts comprising judges, law professors, police officers, representatives of the National Human Rights Commission, and members of the general public, whose task will be to examine the conflicting provisions and suggest changes. Turning to the committee should be the identification of the most important issues, terminology, the rights and duties of disciplinary officers, isolation standards, categories of prisoners, parole and remission regulations, and well as gender, specific precautions. The committee's report can then be used as the foundation of statutory change or a set of Model Rules

binding uniformly accepted by the states.

Another prerequisite for the success of the Act and Manual texts is to set Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that reflect both documents in a uniform, practical way. The SOPs undoubtedly have to be written at a central level; nevertheless, the implementation has to be at the local level, and there should be a provision for state, specific circumstances. These SOPs should standardise the various activities from admitting prisoners, health checks, to record, keeping, staff roles, emergency plans, grievance redressal timeframes, and reintegration programs. The existence of a coordinated SOP framework will thus go a long way towards standardising the care that prisoners are entitled to, and at the same time, it will limit the freedom of officials to dispense the care in their own way and thus leave prisoners at the mercy of their particular state administration's approach to custodial care.

Next, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the enhancement of skills and knowledge. Without the participation of prison staff, a group that covers officers, medical personnel, welfare officers, and psychologists, in the presented changes to the legal framework, the simple document harmonisation will be a failure. The introduction of the Act focuses more on tech issues, surveillance, and discipline, while that of the Manual is more concerned with the counselling, instruction, and reform of the rescindable. Training academies should include subjects such as human rights, stress management techniques, awareness of the problems faced by women, mental health issues care, and also training in non, violent means of resolving disputes. It should be a must for every officer to go through continuous in, service training and to have their skills regularly certified.

After that, there is a desperate need to reinforce monitoring mechanisms along with accountability ones. The Board of Visitors,

State Human Rights Commissions, NHRC, and judicial officers are examples of independent oversight bodies that could be given authority and resources for ensuring that all stakeholders comply with the harmonised framework. The boards can keep track of the visits, and the organizations and government officials can hold up a mirror to what has been achieved through annual audits, social auditing models, and easily accessed reporting. Making public the levels of compliance will serve as an impetus both to states being willing to join

the competition and therefore speed up the necessary reforms and administrations that are lagging and thus give them another push besides the expectation to perform.

The last point is that conformity to the harmonised set of laws should be regulated by the constitutional objectives of dignity, equality, and rehabilitation. The Supreme Court has, on multiple occasions, asserted that prisoners' fundamental rights are to be respected even at the prison gate. Hence, the seamless system should not only be designed for managing resources more effectively, but also at the same time, it should strive to have correctional institutions that are humane, trauma, informed, and reform, oriented. This surely implies the improvement of prison facilities, addressing of the overcrowding problem by way of reforms in bail and sentencing, better legal aid access, and more work and education opportunities which are the most effective means to solve the recidivism issue.

In a nutshell, the process of the Model Prison Manual, 2016, and the Model Prisons Act, 2023, integration is not a technical matter per se, rather it is a structural shift that decides the orientation of the prison system administration in India, in the future. A single, rights, based, and operationally viable framework has the potential to convert jails from places where neglect and assault on the custodial rights are rampant to those institutions that, in fact, are

instrumental in the treatment and eventual reintegration of prisoners. The solution is to combine legislative clarity with administrative uniformity, sufficient funding, professional training, and strong supervision. Only then will India be able to develop a prison governance system that is in tandem with constitutional values as well as international human rights standards.

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