

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

School of Rural Development

Concept Note on

“Consultation Workshop on Rural Crime & Justice”

(A precursor to a proposed research project on “Trends in Rural Crime & Criminal Justice Processes and Its’ Impact on Victims and Families of Offenders in Marathwada Region (Eight Districts) of Maharashtra”)

Venue: Board Room (New Campus), Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Date : Thursday 5th February 2009 between 9.00 am and 6.00 pm

“Crime breeds backwardness and backwardness breeds crime”. The significance of rural crime in the process of rural development can not be overlooked. The dimension of the poverty and the cause of the crime are more or less same e.g. lack of livelihood strategies, inaccessibility to resources, insecurity and frustration, inability to maintain and develop social relations etc. Similarly the other impeding factors like exploitation, discrimination, prejudices, casteism, patriarchy, communalism and parochialism also leads to causation of various crimes in the society and adversely affects development of rural populace.

Rural under-development and rural crime are interrelated. Each one effects and perpetuates the other. Crime could hinder development and in turn underdevelopment could be responsible for crime. Both go hand in hand. While to curb crime, we need to develop socio economic conditions with inputs for rural development, especially in backward regions, we need to devise tailor-made measures to restrain region-specific crime trends.

Rural crime has both direct and indirect affect on the wellbeing of the individual, family, community and society as a whole. Criminality of the individual affects the perpetrator as much as it affects his victim, his family and community. Many offenders from the backward regions initially get involved in petty offences primarily due to poverty and lack of livelihood options and/or discriminatory practices. Subsequently, they succumb to the insensitivity of the criminal justice processes and are forced to take to crime as a full time or part time occupation. Consequently it becomes difficult for him/her to get back to normal life. In the process, he/she usually gets rejected by the family as well as his community.

Yet another dimension is the fact that incarceration of primary bread winner of the family could cause irreversible damage to his/her family and would result in serious family disorganization and victimization of children. Besides all this, crime has the potential to impact the victim and his/her family in an irrevocable manner. There are many cases of victims and/or their families, especially children, suffering as a result of crime, re-victimized and straying away from social main stream.

In this context, School of Rural Development has proposed a study on **“Trends in Rural Crime & Criminal Justice Processes and Its’ Impact on Victims and Families of Offenders in Marathwada Region (Eight Districts) of Maharashtra”**. The proposed study would broadly be concerned with the etiology of crimes in rural areas, impact of incarceration on the families of rural offenders, impact of rural crime on victims of such crimes, analyzing the processes of the criminal justice system in dealing with rural crime, and the and inter-linkages of rural crime and

rural development. The proposed study would focus on the issue of rural criminality in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, which comprises the districts of Osmanabad, Latur, Beed, Jalna, Aurangabad, Parbani, Nanded, and Hingoli. The study in this region, which is identified as a backward region on the basis of various development indicators, will provide learning opportunities in research and would open up a new dimension in rural development for students of the School of Rural Development of TISS.

As a precursor of the study the School of Rural Development (SRD) has decided to organize consultation workshop with various experts in the field. SRD had a round of consultation with team members of Centre for Criminology and Justice, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences. There was consensus during this consultation that there is no adequate emphasis given by criminologists on the subject of rural crimes and therefore there is a need for special focus on rural crime and its impact. It was also felt that in view of the nature of the proposed research, it would be strategically important to involve various functionaries from the criminal justice agencies and voluntary sector right from the formative stages of the study. It was therefore decided by both SRD and CCJ to jointly proceed on organizing a State Level Consultative Workshop on 5th February 2009 in TISS Mumbai Campus. A group of experts from Government Officials, NGO Sector and Academicians will be invited for this consultation.

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