

Role of Prison Libraries in Rehabilitation of the Prisoners in Central Prisons of Kerala

*Thesis submitted to the
University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the Degree of*
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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2025**

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled ***“Role of Prison Libraries in Rehabilitation of Prisoners in Central Prisons of Kerala”*** is an authentic record of research work carried out by me, for my Doctoral Degree under the supervision and guidance of Dr Vasudevan T. M., Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Calicut. This has not been previously submitted for the award of any diploma, degree, title, or recognition. The contents of the thesis have undergone plagiarism check using iThenticate software at C.H. Mohammed Koya Library, University of Calicut, and the similarity index found within the permissible limit. I also declare that the thesis is free from AI generated content.

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CERTIFICATE

I, Dr. Vasudevan T. M., do hereby certify that the thesis entitled “*Role of Prison Libraries in Rehabilitation of the Prisoners in Central Prisons of Kerala*” submitted to the University of Calicut is a record of the bonafide study and research carried out by Ms. Sreelatha K. under my supervision and guidance. The report has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other title, of similar recognition in this university or any other university or institution of higher learning.

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ABSTRACT

The present study, *“Role of Prison Libraries in Rehabilitation of Prisoners in Central Prisons of Kerala,”* investigates the contribution of library services to the rehabilitation of prisoners within Kerala’s correctional system. Guided by reformative and humanistic penal philosophies and drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of Bentham, Foucault, and Goffman, the study situates the prison library as an instrument of educational, psychological, and social transformation rather than a peripheral welfare facility.

The objectives of the research were to assess the current status and infrastructure of prison libraries in Kerala’s central prisons; to examine prison officials’ perceptions of their role in rehabilitation; to analyse the extent of institutional support and constraints; and to develop strategies for strengthening the rehabilitative potential of prison libraries. A mixed-method design was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches within a pragmatic research paradigm. Data were collected from 381 prison officials, 11 prisoners assigned duty in libraries across the Central Prisons and Correctional Homes of Poojappura (Thiruvananthapuram), Viyyur (Thrissur), and Kannur and 6 higher officials from prison headquarters, through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and correlation tests, while qualitative responses were thematically interpreted to validate and enrich the statistical results.

Findings reveal that prison libraries in Kerala function with minimal infrastructure and resources but maintain a positive presence in the rehabilitation process. Although professional librarians are absent and digital facilities are lacking, the majority of prison officials acknowledge the constructive influence of libraries in promoting literacy, emotional stability, discipline, and self-confidence among inmates. Library reading habits were found to enhance moral reasoning, reduce stress, and foster pro-social behaviour, confirming their therapeutic and educational value. The study identified financial constraints, inadequate policy enforcement, and limited

administrative support as major barriers to effective functioning. Despite these limitations, both officials and inmates perceived libraries as safe, intellectually stimulating spaces conducive to reflection and behavioural change.

The research concludes that the prison library is a vital yet underutilized component of correctional education and rehabilitation in Kerala. To maximize its impact, the study recommends the formulation of a *Kerala Prison Library Policy* aligned with IFLA (2023) standards; appointment of qualified librarians; introduction of bibliotherapy and reading-circle programmes; multilingual and inclusive collections; digital modernization; and collaborative partnerships with universities, NGOs, and public libraries.

The study contributes to the fields of Library and Information Science, correctional education, and social rehabilitation. It reaffirms that the right to read and learn is fundamental to human dignity and that prison libraries, when adequately supported, can serve as bridges between confinement and reintegration transforming prisons into learning communities and reaffirming society's commitment to reform rather than retribution.

Keywords: Prison libraries, Rehabilitation, Correctional education, Kerala prisons, Bibliotherapy, Library services, Prison officials.

സംഗ്രഹം

തടവുകാരുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ, മാനസിക, സാമൂഹിക പുനരധിവാസത്തിൽ കേരളത്തിലെ ജയിലുകളിലെ ലൈബ്രറി സേവനങ്ങൾ ഏതു വിധത്തിൽ പങ്ക് വഹിക്കുന്നു എന്നത് വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നതാണ് “സെൻട്രൽ ജയിലുകളിലെ തടവുകാരുടെ പുനരധിവാസത്തിൽ ജയിൽ ലൈബ്രറികളുടെ പങ്ക്” എന്ന ഈ ഗവേഷണപ്രബന്ധം. ബെൻതാം, ഫുക്കോ, ഗോഫ്ഫാൻ എന്നിവരുടെ ശിക്ഷാതത്വങ്ങളെയും സാമൂഹിക പുനരധിവാസ സിദ്ധാന്തങ്ങളെയും അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കി , ജയിൽ ലൈബ്രറിയെ ശിക്ഷാ സംവിധാനത്തിലെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ-മാനസിക-സാംസ്കാരിക മാറ്റങ്ങളുടെ സാധ്യമായ ഒരു പ്രേരകശക്തിയായി ഈ പഠനം അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു.

കേരളത്തിലെ സെൻട്രൽ ജയിലുകളിലെ ലൈബ്രറികളുടെ നിലവിലെ ഘടനയും അടിസ്ഥാനസൗകര്യവും വിലയിരുത്തുക, പുനരധിവാസത്തിൽ ലൈബ്രറികളുടെ പങ്കിനെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള ജയിൽ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥരുടെ ധാരണകളും അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളും തേടുക, സ്ഥാപനപരമായ പിന്തുണകളും ബലഹീനതകളും തിരിച്ചറിയുക, ലൈബ്രറികളുടെ പ്രവർത്തനക്ഷമത വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ സമർപ്പിക്കുക എന്നിവയാണ് ഗവേഷണത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാനലക്ഷ്യങ്ങൾ. ഗണാത്മകവും ഗുണാത്മകവുമായ സമ്മിശ്ര ഗവേഷണ രീതിശാസ്ത്രമാണ് (mixed research methodology) പഠനത്തിന് സ്വീകരിച്ചത്. പൂജപ്പുര (തിരുവനന്തപുരം), വിയ്യൂർ (തൃശ്ശൂർ), കണ്ണൂർ എന്നീ സെൻട്രൽ ജയിലുകളിലെ 381 ജയിൽ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥരിൽ നിന്നും, 11 തടവുകാരിൽനിന്നും, 6 ഉന്നത ജയിൽ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥരിൽ നിന്നും ചോദ്യാവലിയിലൂടെയും അഭിമുഖങ്ങൾ മുഖേനയും വിവരങ്ങൾ ശേഖരിച്ചു.

പഠനഫലങ്ങൾ പ്രകാരം കേരളത്തിലെ ജയിൽ ലൈബ്രറികൾ കേവലം പരിമിതമായ സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ മാത്രമുള്ളതാണെങ്കിലും, തടവുകാരുടെ പുനരധിവാസത്തിൽ നിർണായക പങ്ക് വഹിക്കുന്നു. പ്രൊഫഷണൽ ലൈബ്രേറിയൻമാരുടെ അഭാവം, ഡിജിറ്റൽ സൗകര്യങ്ങളിലെ കുറവ്, സാമ്പത്തിക സഹായത്തിലെ അപര്യാപ്തത എന്നിവയുണ്ടെങ്കിലും, ലൈബ്രറി ഉപയോഗം തടവുകാർക്കിടയിൽ സാക്ഷരത, വായനാശീലം, മാനസികാരോഗ്യം, സാമൂഹിക അച്ചടക്കം എന്നിവ വളർത്തുന്നതായി ജയിൽ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥർ

സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. തടവുകാരുടെ ചിന്താഗതിയിൽ വായന വലിയ മാറ്റം സൃഷ്ടിക്കുകയും ആത്മവിശ്വാസവും സാമൂഹിക ഉത്തരവാദിത്വവും വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നുവെന്ന് പഠനം തെളിയിക്കുന്നു. ജയിൽ ലൈബ്രറി തടവുകാരുടെ സ്വഭാവസംസ്കരണത്തിന്റേയും പുനരധിവാസത്തിന്റേയും സുപ്രധാന ഘടകമാണെങ്കിലും കേരളത്തിൽ വളരെ കുറഞ്ഞ രീതിയിൽ മാത്രമേ പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുള്ളൂവെന്ന് ഗവേഷണം നിഗമനത്തിലെത്തുന്നു. അതിന്റെ പ്രാപ്തി വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കാൻ കേരളത്തിലെ ജയിലുകളിൽ ലൈബ്രറി നയം രൂപീകരിക്കുക, പ്രൊഫഷണൽ ലൈബ്രേറിയന്മാരെ നിയമിക്കുക, ബിബ്ലിയോതെറാപ്പി, വായനവൃത്തങ്ങൾ, ബഹുഭാഷാ പുസ്തക ശേഖരങ്ങൾ, ഡിജിറ്റൽ സംവിധാനങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. കൂടാതെ സർവകലാശാലകളും എൻ.ജി.ഒകളും പൊതുമെമ്പ്രറികളും പങ്കാളികളായ സഹകരണ ഉദ്യമങ്ങളും എന്നിവയും നടപ്പാക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. സ്വഭാവസംസ്കരണ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, സാമൂഹിക പുനരധിവാസം എന്നിവയ്ക്ക് പുറമേ ലൈബ്രറി - ഇൻഫർമേഷൻ സയൻസ് പഠനശാഖയിലും ഈ പഠനം സംഭാവന നൽകുന്നു.

വായിക്കാനും പഠിക്കാനുമുള്ള മനുഷ്യന്റെ അവകാശം അവന്റെ അന്തസ്സിനെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം അടിസ്ഥാനപരമാണെന്നും, മതിയായ പിന്തുണ ലഭിക്കുമ്പോൾ, ജയിൽ ലൈബ്രറികൾക്ക് തടവിനും പുനഃസംയോജനത്തിനും ഇടയിലുള്ള പാലങ്ങളായി വർത്തിക്കാൻ കഴിയുമെന്നും പഠനം കണ്ടെത്തുന്നു. ജയിലുകളെ വിജ്ഞാന കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളാക്കി മാറ്റണമെന്നും, പ്രതികാരനീതിയിലൂന്നിയ നടപടികളേക്കാൾ സ്വഭാവനവീകരണത്തിലൂന്നിയ ഉദ്യമങ്ങളാണ് പുനരധിവാസത്തിന് ഉത്തമമെന്നും പഠനം അടിവരയിടുന്നു.

സൂചകപദങ്ങൾ: ജയിൽ ലൈബ്രറികൾ, ലൈബ്രറി സേവനങ്ങൾ, പുനരധിവാസം, സ്വഭാവസംസ്കരണ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, കേരള ജയിലുകൾ, ബിബ്ലിയോതെറാപ്പി, ജയിൽ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥർ, നവീകരണം.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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“Hate the crime and not the criminal.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Every individual is born equal and has the right to live and enjoy liberty. When these rights and liberties are used against social ethics, those persons are deprived of their rights and punished by the state. A prison is a facility in which inmates are forcibly confined and denied a variety of freedoms under the authority of the state as a form of punishment. Prisons are a part of the criminal justice system, where individuals who are officially charged with or convicted of crimes are confined until they are either brought to trial or complete the period of incarceration. The history of prisons began with the rise of the state as a form of social organization. In ancient times, prisons were used as a form of heavy punishment rather than detention centres. The widespread torture and death penalty for even minor crimes called for protests on the part of jurors and the public. The origins of modern prison systems can be traced back to the 18th century, when reformers began to challenge the harsh and often inhumane conditions of traditional forms of punishment, such as public executions and physical torture. The seminal works of philosophers like Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and Michel Foucault (1926–1984) highlighted the potential for prisons to serve as instruments of rehabilitation and social control, rather than mere places of punishment (Strange, 2001). The shift from physical punishment to a focus on the "soul" and the regulation of behaviour marked a significant turning point in penal philosophy. Jeremy Bentham, one of the founding fathers of utilitarianism, had a profound influence on the reformation of the prison system in the 19th century (Sigot, 2009). His principle of "the greatest good for the greatest number" formed the basis of his approach to criminal justice, which emphasized rehabilitation over punishment (Songbes, 2023). Bentham believed that the purpose of the criminal justice system should be to maximize the overall happiness and well-being of society (Sverdlik, 2023). He argued that traditional forms of punishment, such as retribution and deterrence, were ineffective and often counterproductive, as they did little to address the root causes of criminal behaviour (Brockway, 1910). Instead, Bentham advocated for a system of prison reforms that would focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration

of offenders into society. At the core of Bentham's vision for prison reform was the idea of the Panopticon, a revolutionary prison design that would allow for constant surveillance and individualized treatment of inmates (Wolff, 2006). Bentham thought that by subjecting prisoners to a system of strict discipline, hard labour, and moral instruction, they could be transformed into productive and law-abiding citizens.

Michel Foucault's groundbreaking work "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison" is a seminal text that examines the historical transformation of the penal system and the emergence of the modern prison. Foucault's analysis challenges the traditional narrative of penal progress, arguing that the shift from public spectacles of bodily punishment to more subtle forms of disciplinary power was not a linear march towards humanization, but rather a strategic reorganization of power relations (Digeser, 1992; Wong, 2003).

Erving Goffman (1922–1982), a famous sociologist and social psychologist, in his work "Asylums," has long been recognized as a pivotal contribution to the understanding of the dynamics and challenges inherent in institutional settings, particularly those involving the confinement and control of individuals (Aday, 1977; Schaefer, 2017). Goffman (1961, p.68), described the total institution as "a kind of dead sea in which little islands of vivid, encapturing activity appear. Such activity can help the individual withstand the psychological stress usually engendered by assaults upon the self." The insights offered by Goffman's analysis have great relevance to the ongoing discourse on prison reformation and the rehabilitation of offenders. The insights from "Asylums" have informed the development of more holistic, therapeutic approaches to prison reform and rehabilitation (Atkinson, 1976a; see also Schaefer, 2017a). Programs that provide inmates with opportunities to take on helping or teaching roles, as well as those that focus on fostering a positive social climate within the institution, have shown promise in promoting successful reintegration into the larger community (Atkinson, 1976b; Schaefer, 2017b). These theoretical frameworks put forth by Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman provide a valuable lens through which to analyse the current state of prisoner rehabilitation and the challenges inherent in the "correctional" component of the corrections officer's role. (Schaefer, 2017c).

One key aspect of Foucault's analysis is the notion of the "docile body"—the idea that power is exercised through the subtle shaping and normalization of individual behaviour, rather than overt displays of force. The importance of setting up a library in prisons to support educational, recreational, and other information needs is highlighted from the point of view of great philosophers and thinkers. The intervention of libraries and their services can bring about changes in the long run, in the behaviour of prisoners. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Article 10(1) reiterates, “All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human/person” (p.65). India too has been a party to the covenant since 1979. The ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, 1955 are the two chief international human rights frameworks governing the administration and management of prisons universally.

The significance of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of inmates has attracted considerable interest from academics, legislators, and social advocates. This study seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the importance of prison libraries, delineate the particular circumstances of Kerala's central prisons, and establish a foundation for a more thorough examination of their influence on prisoner rehabilitation. As stated by Biju (2017), in Kerala, crime occurs as a moral problem rather than as a structural one. Immoral activities are mainly carried out because of social problems such as family breakdown, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and educational failure despite some offenders being born-criminals. Most of the causes leading to the present stage of prisoners can be rectified through proper rehabilitation activities.

In India, prison administration has gradually incorporated correctional and welfare-oriented practices, and prison reform discourse has increasingly emphasized reformation and rehabilitation rather than punishment alone (Asher et al., 2014; Tirumani et al., 2020). Kerala, in particular, has often been noted for its relatively progressive correctional initiatives and welfare-oriented prison administration (Bindu & Hebber, 2020; Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services, 2023). However, despite

this broader correctional orientation, the role of prison libraries as part of the rehabilitative environment remains insufficiently studied. Most discussions on prison reform focus on prison management, legal rights, counselling, vocational training and correctional welfare, while prison libraries often remain underexamined within both correctional studies and Library and Information Science research (Lehmann, 2000; Singh, 2014).

The central prisons in Kerala provide an important context for examining this issue. As major correctional institutions accommodating diverse inmate populations, they represent spaces where educational and rehabilitative interventions may have significant institutional value (Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services, 2023). Prison libraries in these settings are expected to support reading, information access, educational engagement and constructive leisure. Yet, the extent to which they are institutionally supported and perceived as contributing to rehabilitation requires systematic study.

The present study, therefore, investigates the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners in central prisons in Kerala. It seeks to examine the status of prison libraries, the perceptions of prison officials regarding their rehabilitative role, the extent of institutional support available to them, and the challenges affecting their effective functioning. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to the fields of Library and Information Science, correctional education and prison reform by situating prison libraries within the broader discourse of rehabilitation, information rights and social reintegration (Lehmann & Locke, 2005; IFLA, 2023).

1.1 Background of the study

The primary objective of the criminal justice system is not only to impose penalties on wrongdoers but also to facilitate their rehabilitation and seamless reintegration into the community. Rehabilitation of prisoners is a complicated challenge, for which multiple issues have to be addressed like educational, psychological, and social needs of inmates. Prisoners have a fundamental right to access information, to read, and to learn during their period of incarceration (UNODC, 2015). To enable this right to be upheld, prison libraries have an important role as educational, informational, cultural, and recreational, meeting and learning spaces for the entire prison community, including prison staff (IFLA, Guidelines 2023). The UN

Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners further emphasize the importance of prison libraries, stating that every institution should have a library for the use of all categories of inmates, adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books (Lehmann & Locke, 2013). This underscores the recognition that access to books and information is not merely a luxury but a fundamental right and a necessary component of rehabilitation.

The libraries in prisons act as a place where inmates can avail themselves of resources for reading and education, meet each other, and have their own space for learning. The services of prison libraries can foster a culture of learning and self-improvement among the inmates of prisons. Modern correctional systems have identified rehabilitation of prisoners as their prime goal. The libraries in prisons support this institutional objective. A well-functioning prison library provides inmates with access to educational, recreational, and legal resources, which contribute significantly to their cognitive, emotional, and social development (Lehmann, 2000). Through reading and learning, prisoners can gain new perspectives, acquire vocational and academic skills, and prepare themselves for reintegration into society (Conrad, 2012).

Inmates who engage with prison libraries often report increased self-esteem, hope for the future, and a greater sense of purpose (Lehmann, 2011). Moreover, access to information and literature helps prisoners cope with the stresses of incarceration and encourages personal transformation (Bozeman, 2019). Therefore, the prison library is not merely a repository of books but a dynamic agent of rehabilitation.

This study explores the role of libraries in the rehabilitation process within central prisons in Kerala, acknowledging the significant impact of education and access to knowledge. Libraries, serving as reservoirs of knowledge and venues for intellectual growth, can make a substantial impact on the educational and psychological welfare of incarcerated individuals.

1.2 Prisons in India

Prisons in India are responsible for the custody, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals who have been convicted of criminal offenses (Tirumani et al., 2020). Prisons in India and their administration are a state subject covered by

item 4 under the state list in the seventh schedule of the Constitution of India. (Government of India, Ministry of Law and Justice. The Constitution of India (see Seventh Schedule, State List). The management and administration are the sole responsibility of the state, governed by the Prisons Act 1894 (Government of India. Prisons Act, 1894) and the Prison Manuals of the respective states. Modern prison reform in India originated from the Report of the Indian Jail Committee of 1919–20. It was considered as a landmark in the history of prison administration in India, as it adopted a humanistic approach to the prisoners. The report identified reformation and rehabilitation as the real objectives of prison administration (Asher et al., 2014)

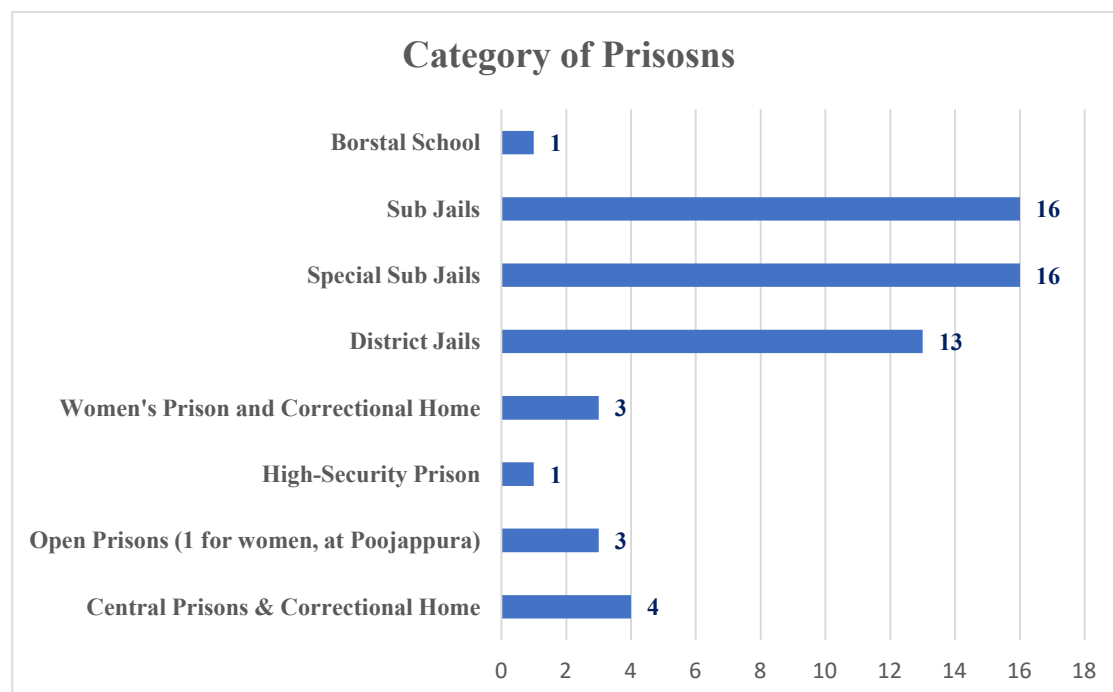
1.3 Prisons in Kerala

The history of prisons in Kerala begins in 1861 with the establishment of the District Jail in Kozhikode (Bindu & Hebber, 2020). The prisons in Kerala have been categorized as Central Prisons, District Jails, Sub Jails, Special Sub Jails, Open Prisons, Women Prisons, Special Sub Jails, High-Security Prisons, and Borstal Schools. All these institutions are functioning under the Prisons and Correctional Services Department (Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services, 2023). The table below shows the category and number of prisons in Kerala.

Table 1.1

Prisons in Kerala (category-wise)

Sl. No.	Category	Number of prisons
1	Central Prisons & Correctional Home	04
2	Open Prisons (1 for women, at Poojappura)	03
3	High-Security Prison	01
4	Women's Prison and Correctional Home	03
5	District Jails	13
6	Special Sub Jails	16
7	Sub Jails	16
8	Borstal School	01

Figure 1***Category of prisons***

The state of Kerala has four central prisons. These are maximum-security prisons where people sentenced to undergo imprisonment above 6 months, detainees (under trial), prisoners convicted by Court Martial, and civil prisoners. Remand Under Trial prisoners are accommodated, when overcrowding is felt in nearby District Jails/Special Sub Jails/Sub Jails. There are 4 Central Prison & Correctional Homes, situated at Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur, Kannur, and Malappuram. The central prison at Poojappura was established in 1886, the one at Kannur in 1869, and Thrissur in 1914, and the newest of these is at Tavanur opened in 2022. (Kerala Prisons & Correctional Services, 2023).

Figure 2

Central Prisons of Kerala



Table 1.2*Central Prisons of Kerala*

Sl. No.	Name of Central Prisons
01	Central Prisons & Correctional Home, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram
02	Central Prisons & Correctional Home, Viyyur, Thrissur.
03	Central Prisons & Correctional Home, Pallikkunnu, Kannur.
04	Central Prisons & Correctional Home, Tavanur, Malappuram

1.4 Profile of Prisons

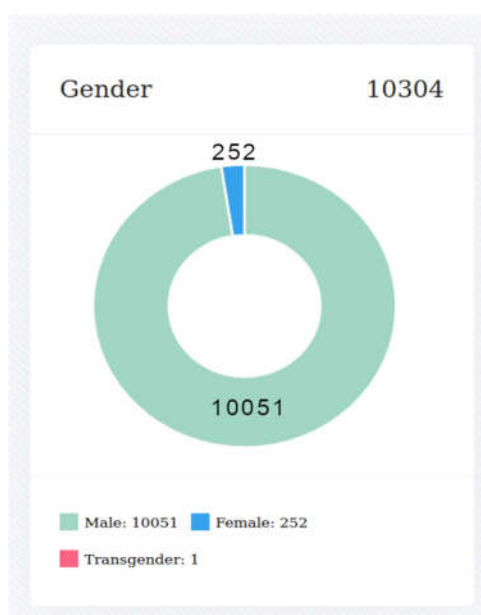
The history of the Jails Department in Kerala started with the establishment of the State in 1956. The jails in Travancore-Cochin State and British Malabar State were restructured to establish the Jail Department. The inaugural administrative report of the Jails of Travancore state for the years 1862 and 1863 was released under the tenure of Diwan Sir T. Madhava Rao. This report indicates the presence of the Principal Jail in Trivandrum (Fort), Divisional Jails in Quilon and Alleppey, as well as Sub Jails affiliated with the District or Zilla Courts. The Principal Jail at Fort, located in the former barracks of the Nair Brigade, was created in 1861 and elevated to Central Jail status in 1873. The jail was relocated to its current location at Poojappura in 1886. Industrial operations commenced at the Central Prison the same year under the auspices of Dewan Sir T. Ramarao. Subsequently, improvements aimed at enhancing the conditions of prisoners were implemented. In 1890, the sovereign of the state authorized a monetary allocation for impoverished prisoners upon their release to facilitate their return home. A distinct section was established in Central Prison for female inmates in 1904. (Kerala Prisons & Correctional Services, n.d.). The Kerala Prisons Rules was framed under Indian Prisons Act 1894 and the Travancore - Cochin Prisons Act 1950, came into force on 26.8.1958. These Rules were repealed by Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services (Management) Rules 2014 which was framed under

Kerala Prisons & Correctional Services (Management) Act 2010, enacted by the state imbibing the modern concept of Correctional Administration.

The population of the prisons in Kerala is given in the chart below;

Figure 3

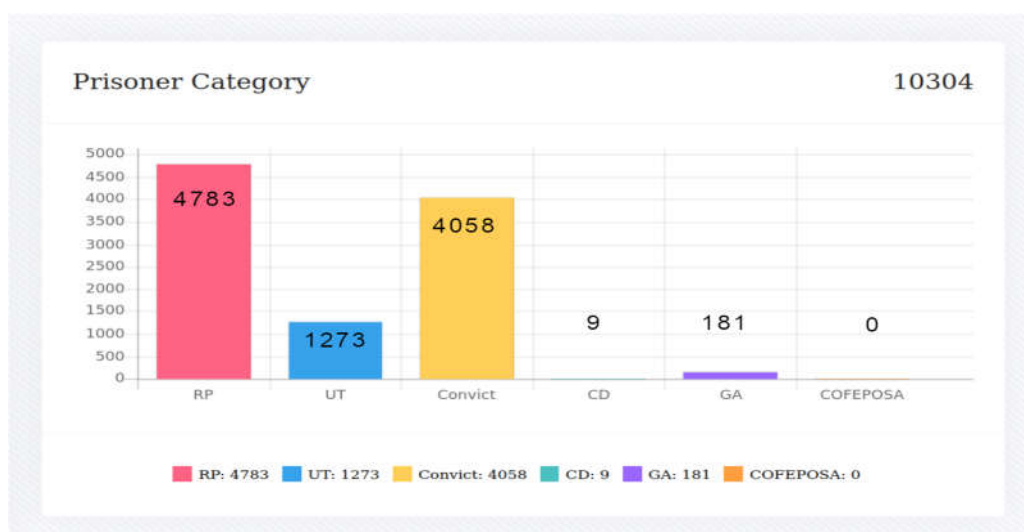
Population of Prisons in Kerala (Gender Wise) as on 29.10.2022.



Source: <https://keralaprison.gov.in/index.html>

Figure 4

Category wise Prisoner Population as on 29.10.2022



Source: <https://keralaprison.gov.in/index.html>

The total population of prisoners in Kerala is 10304. The population comprises, RP (Prisoners on remand) 4783, UT (Under trial) 1273, Convict 4058, CD (Convicted to death) 9, GA (General Arrest or General category) 181 and COFEPOSA is nil.

Table 1.3

Sanctioned capacity and number of inmates in Central Prisons of Kerala

Central Prison	Sanctioned Capacity	Inmates				
		Convicts	Under trials	Detenues	Others	Total
Thiruvananthapuram	727	851	308	6	1	1166
Viyyur	560	583	223	88	4	898
Kannur	986	782	157	65	2	1006
Thavanoor	706	177	61	0	0	238
Total	2979	2393	749	159	7	3308

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India. (ON3409)

1.4.1. Central Prison & Correctional Home, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram

The Central Prison and Correctional Home, Poojappura was established in September 23, 1886. It is functioning on 9 acres within the compound and 39.36 acres outside the compound. The capacity of the prison is 727 inmates and the present average number of inmates housed is 1350. Various vocational training is given to prisoners as part of their rehabilitation and reintegration to the society. Food Production Unit, Cafeteria, Free Fashionista Boutique Center, Beauty Parlour, Tailoring Unit, Weaving Unit, Carpentry Unit, Umbrella Making, Nettiappattam Production, Pot painting, Paper Bag Unit, Dairy Farm, Petroleum Outlet, Hawaii Chapel Production Unit etc., runs inside the prison compound. Apart from this, there is space for physical activities like playground, land for agriculture, area for recreation

and reading, a good library is also available for the inmates (Central Prison & Correctional Home, Poojappura, n.d.).

1.4.2. Central Prison & Correctional Home, Viyyur, Thrissur

The Central Prison and Correctional Home, Viyyur was established in 1914. It is functioning in an area of 139 acres. In this compound High Security Prison, Special Sub Jail & Sub Jail, Viyyur is also housed. The sanctioned capacity of the prison is 560 inmates and the present average number of prisoners housed is 600. Industrial units like Food Production Unit, Weaving Unit, Petrol Pump, Beauty Parlour, Handicrafts Unit, and Nettipattam making are there where prisoners work. A library is provided for the inmates in the prison (Central Prison & Correctional Home, Viyyur, n.d.).

1.4.3. Central Prison & Correctional Home, Pallikkunnu, Kannur

The Central Prison and Correctional Home, Kannur was established in 1869. The central prison is situated in an area of 31 acre 75 cents (Inside the compound) 46-acre 73 cent (Outside the compound). The sanctioned capacity of the prison is 948 and an average of 1000 prisoners are accommodated here. This is the oldest central prison in Kerala. Production units like Dairy Farm, Weaving, Handloom, Beauty Parlour, Tailoring, Manufactory Unit, Food Production Unit, Petroleum Outlet work here where prisoners work. This is the part of rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. A functional library facility is available for inmates to utilise their time in prison (Central Prison & Correctional Home, Kannur, n.d.).

1.5 Prison Libraries

Prison libraries were the result of the Prison reforms movement during the 18th century. The prison congress believed in rehabilitation of convicts rather than retribution, and education and rewards for good behaviour. The library was seen as an incentive for this. The first manual for the prison library was published by ALA in 1915. In India immediately after independence, in 1952 a conference of the Inspector Generals of Prisons was held at Bombay to discuss the rehabilitation programmes. On the recommendations of the Government of India, the Model Prison Manual was

revised and many welfare facilities were included. In the Model Prison Manual for the Superintendence and Management of Prisons in India - 2003, chapter 15 deals with the provision for libraries and how the library should function. The Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services (Management) Act 2010 in chapter XV – Welfare Programmes for Prisoners gives a provision for a prison library. According to the Act, there shall be a library in every central prison, open prisons, and women's prisons to cater to the intellectual needs of the inmates and to facilitate their reformation. All the central prisons in Kerala have libraries with a separate building with limited facilities.

1.5.1 Prison library policies and guidelines

Various international standards and policies have made clear that all humans have the right to access information, free education and practice intellectual freedom (Finlay,2020). Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that, everyone has the right to “freedom of opinion and expression” and to “receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.” Article 26 later affirms the right of every human to access free education. The *Public Library Manifesto* drafted in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) underlines the importance of “equality of access for all” including people in prison (1994, para.6). There is clear global agreement that all people have the right to access library and information services and that this right does not end when a person enters prison.

IFLA’s *Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners -Report 92* (Lehmann & Locke, 2005) offers international guidance on various aspects of prison library provision which can be adapted according to local circumstances. This document recognizes both the educational and recreational role of the prison library and again emphasizes that prisoners have not “relinquished the right to learn and to access information” and that “the prison library should offer materials and services comparable to community libraries in the ‘free’ world” (p. 4). IFLA’s *Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners* (Garner & Krolak 2023) brought out by IFLA’s Working Group for Library Services to Prisoners, taking contributions from experts

from more than 30 countries around the world. Global guidelines and standards for prison library standards were developed by this group. The guidelines can be adopted by any prison library, with changes according to their region.

The American Library Association (ALA) has recently updated its guidelines for prison libraries, aiming to reflect current and emerging best practices for serving incarcerated and detained individuals. These new standards, set to be published in September 2024, significantly expand upon the previous 1992 guidelines. The ALA Guidelines earlier known as Library Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 1992. It contains separate sections for prisoner's rights to read, staffing, constitution, collections, access, etc. (ALA Guidelines, 1992). Both IFLA and ALA revised their guidelines for library services to incarcerated persons.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

Prisons are expected not only to confine offenders but also to facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. In this process, access to education, information, reading and constructive intellectual engagement is increasingly recognized as important (Coyle, 2002; UNODC, 2015). Prison libraries can potentially contribute to these objectives by providing inmates with opportunities for reading, self-learning, emotional support, legal awareness and meaningful use of time (Lehmann, 2000; Conrad, 2012). They may also function as institutional spaces that support literacy, reflective thinking and personal development within the prison environment (Rubin, 1973; Garner, 2017).

Despite this potential, prison libraries often remain marginalized within correctional systems, particularly in terms of infrastructure, staffing, funding, policy attention and professional management (Lehmann & Locke, 2005; IFLA, 2023). In India, and especially in Kerala, prison reforms have received increasing administrative attention, yet the role of prison libraries has not been adequately examined from a Library and Information Science perspective (Singh, 2014; Sharma & Tiwari, 2021). Existing discussions on rehabilitation largely emphasize vocational training, counselling, education and welfare activities, while the contribution of prison libraries remains insufficiently documented (Ansari, 2024; Rai & Singh, 2024).

Further, there is limited empirical evidence regarding how prison officials perceive the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation process, what forms of institutional support are available to these libraries, and what barriers affect their functioning. Since prison officials play a central role in prison administration and implementation of correctional services, their perceptions are important for understanding the institutional place of prison libraries within rehabilitation efforts (Kerley et al., 2011; Udem, 2024).

Against this background, the problem addressed in the present study is the lack of systematic understanding regarding the role, status, support systems and rehabilitative significance of prison libraries in central prisons in Kerala. Hence the problem of the present study is entitled **“Role of Prison Libraries in the Rehabilitation of Prisoners in Central Prisons of Kerala”**.

1.7 Need and Significance of the Study

The increasing emphasis on restorative justice and rehabilitation over severe punishment and detention calls for the need for supportive institutions like libraries. Despite being traditionally underestimated, prison libraries serve as critical platforms for educational development, psychological well-being, and the social reintegration of inmates (Lehmann, 2000). Studying their role is especially important in contexts like India, where correctional systems are grappling with overcrowding, understaffing, and inadequate rehabilitation frameworks (NCRB, 2023). Moreover, the role of prison libraries is not limited to education; they also contribute to mental stability and offer a space for reflection and personal transformation (Bozeman, 2019). Many developed nations like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, and European countries have well-developed prison library policies to follow. A few examples are, the Library Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 1992, and the revised one yet to come in September 2024 by ALA (American Library Association), The Minimum Standard Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners set up by ALIA (Australian Library & Information Association, 2015), and CILIP (The Library and Information Association) of the UK also have standards for maintaining prison libraries. IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations) and

UNESCO always make amendments to their guidelines for prison libraries to suit the situation. In our country, we don't have such guidelines or policies regarding prison libraries. To draft such guidelines and policies, evidence-based information is necessary. In India, there is a paucity of research focused on the role of libraries in prison activities. The study is significant for several reasons. Primarily it provides empirical insight into the present status of prison libraries in central prisons in Kerala. It examines the perceptions of prison officials, who are directly involved in the administration and functioning of correctional institutions. It also identifies the extent of institutional, financial, operational and policy support available to prison libraries. The research highlights the challenges that hinder the effective utilization of prison libraries for rehabilitative purposes. Finally, the study offers practical suggestions that may be useful for policy formulation, prison administration and future development of prison library services.

The results of the study can aid in framing policy decisions, implementing better rehabilitative measures, and enhancing prison library services. Understanding the impact of library services can help improve the overall prison conditions and the well-being of inmates. The findings of the study can serve as a foundation for future research into the manifold aspects of prison establishments

1.8 Definition of key terms

1.8.1 Role

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the role as “the function assumed or part played by a person or thing in a particular situation” (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.).

Collins Dictionary of Sociology defines Role as “The expected behaviour patterns, obligations, and privileges attached to a particular social status.” (Collins Dictionary of Sociology, 2000).

Encyclopaedia of Social Theory defines Institutional role as “*A set of expected functions and responsibilities carried out by an organization as it interacts with other entities in a structured social system.*” (Encyclopaedia of Social Theory, 2005). The Cambridge English Dictionary defines the term role as “the position or purpose

that someone or something has in a situation, organization, society, or relationship." (Cambridge English Dictionary, n.d.)

Within prison rehabilitation, the library assumes an institutional role that includes educational, reformative, and therapeutic behaviour patterns important for promoting positive change. Hence the above definitions are consulted which are most suited in the context of this study.

1.8.2 Prison libraries

As per the Indian Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Science, prison libraries are the libraries functioning in prisons to cater to the needs of the inmates of the prison (p. 259).

The American Library Association (ALA) defines a prison library as a library located within a correctional facility that provides access to a variety of informational, educational, and recreational resources to incarcerated individuals. These libraries serve as crucial instruments for personal development, literacy, and rehabilitation efforts. The role of prison libraries, according to the ALA, includes ensuring the intellectual freedom of inmates, supporting their right to read, and offering services that help with their reintegration into society upon release.

IFLA's *Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners* (Garner & Krolak 2023) "The prison library can be a vital information resource that can assist prisoners to prepare for their lives after prison through the provision of resources that support re-entry into the community" (p. 7).

Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Sciences defines a Prison Library as "A correctional library situated within a prison or detention facility, providing access to recreational reading, educational resources, legal information, and re-entry support for inmates." (Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Sciences, 2010).

1.8.3 Rehabilitation

Cambridge Dictionary defines rehabilitation as "the process of returning to a healthy or good way of life, or the process of helping someone to do this after they

have been in prison or ill, etc.” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) e.g., rehabilitation of violent offenders.

Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders, 2018 refers rehabilitation as “a wide variety of interventions aimed at promoting desistance from crime and the restoration of an offender to the status of a law-abiding person”. It was also mentioned that the process of rehabilitation is supporting prisoners to lead crime-free lives by addressing the causes of their offending, including education, vocational training, and social reintegration.” (UNODC, 2018).

In the criminal justice system, rehabilitation refers to the process of restoring offenders to a law-abiding life. It aims to address the root causes of criminal behaviour and help offenders acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to reintegrate into society (McKee, n.d.).

From the above definitions, in the correctional context, rehabilitation refers to the process of enabling incarcerated individuals to facilitate their reintegration into society as responsible, law-abiding individuals through addressing behavioural, educational, and social deficits through structured interventions such as education, vocational training, recreation, reading and personal development programs of which prison libraries are a key component. Libraries act as tools for educational intervention and social reintegration, aligning with international correctional standards.

1.8.4 Prisoners

According to the Prisons Act of 1894 (India), a convicted criminal prisoner refers to any individual sentenced by a court or court-martial, including those detained under Chapter VIII of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1882 (Act 10 of 1882) or the Prisoners Act, 1871 (Act 5 of 1871). In contrast, a *civil prisoner* is defined as any person who does not fall under the category of a criminal prisoner (Government of India, 1894).

According to Michel Foucault, in his work “Discipline and Punish” a prisoner is a person who is oppressed by a system of power that controls their body and soul.

Prisoners, also known as inmates, are individuals who have been convicted of crimes and are serving their sentences in correctional facilities. They are deprived of certain freedoms as a form of legal punishment and are under the custody of the state or federal government (Roth, 2006). In this study the words ‘prisoners’ are used in the context of convicted persons.

1.8.5 Central Prisons

(Kerala Prisons & Correctional Services, 2023) Central prisons are the maximum-security prisons established on a territorial basis with a larger capacity. For a jail to be categorised as a central prison, the common feature observed throughout India is that prisoners sentenced to imprisonment for more than 6 months are confined in the central prisons, which have a larger capacity, and these prisons have rehabilitation facilities.

1.8.6 Kerala

The southern state of India, which is known by the name. Kerala was formed on November 1, 1956, with the integration of Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar states. (Manorama Year Book, 2015).

1.9 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the current status, infrastructure and services of prison libraries in the central prisons of Kerala.
2. To assess the perceptions of prison officials regarding the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation of prisoners.
3. To analyse the extent of institutional support available to prison libraries in the selected central prisons.
4. To identify the accessibility, utilisation and functional relevance of prison libraries, their resources and programs in the rehabilitation programs.
5. To identify the major constraints affecting the effective functioning of prison libraries in the central prisons of Kerala.

6. To suggest measures for strengthening prison libraries as supportive components of correctional rehabilitation in Kerala.

1.10 Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is a significantly positive perception among the prison officials regarding the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of the prison officials regarding the role of prison libraries across the selected central prisons.
3. The opinion of the prison officials regarding the functions of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of inmates is significantly positive.
4. There is no significant difference in the opinion of the officials regarding the functions of prison libraries across central prisons.
5. There is no prison wise difference in the utilization of prison libraries by prisoners as perceived by prison officials.
6. Financial support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala in the rehabilitation of prisoners are significantly high.
7. Operational support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala in the rehabilitation of inmates are significantly high.
8. Overall support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala in the rehabilitation of inmates is significantly high.
9. There is no prison wise difference in the support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala.

1.11 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Prisons constitute one of the most neglected components of the criminal justice system. The prisoners are cut off from the world as a part of their punishment, and they are, in a sense, “information poor” (Lawrence, 1984). The present scenario of prisons and the services to prisoners is changing from the traditional picture. Prisons

have long been at the center of much social, political, and even philosophical debate. What rights prisoners should have, what works to rehabilitate them, and how much money the government should spend for supporting prisons have been key issues in both recent years and throughout history. Yet of all the liberties afforded to prisoners, access to a library and the materials and classes it provides can be one of the most useful in preparing them for life outside the prison. The government has taken steps to rehabilitate the inmates in prison through education, skill development, behavioural therapies, and implementing literacy programs. The prison libraries act as a supporting system for the programs. The latest Model Prison Manual, published in 2014 also stresses the importance of prison library services. As per IFLA Professional Report No. 92: Guides to Library Services to Prisoners, "Several internationally endorsed documents serve as foundations for the establishment and support of library services to prisoners:

1. Rule 40 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1955) reads: "Every institution shall have a library for the use of all categories of prisoners, adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books, and prisoners shall be encouraged to make full use of it." This was repeated in the *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, The Nelson Mandela Rules (Rule 64)*. (United Nations, 2015).
2. The Charter for the Reader (1994) developed by the International Book Committee and the International Publishers Associations and published by UNESCO, states that "reading is a universal right."
3. IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1995) calls for public libraries to serve prisoners.
4. The Education in Prison report, endorsed by the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 1990), includes a chapter on the prison library. It recommends that the prison library function with the same professional standards as libraries in the community, be managed by a professional librarian, meet the interests and needs of a culturally diverse population, provide open access for prisoners, and provide a range of literacy and reading-related activities.

Here comes the importance of library services to prisoners to fulfil their educational, informational, and recreational needs. Prison libraries act as correctional centres and can change prisoners' lives. It is the only place where a prisoner can spend his or her free time productively. Understanding the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners may lead to improved literacy rates and educational opportunities and aid in planning more effective strategies to reduce re-entry. The present study aims to find out the role played by prison libraries and their importance in the central prisons of Kerala.

The study is on the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners in the central prisons of Kerala. Hence, the tenure of imprisonment is most important, so the study is confined to 3 central prisons where libraries are attached and the prisoners have been convicted for more than 6 months. Apart from the 3 Central Prisons, there are 16 Sub Jails, 16 Special Sub Jails, 13 District Jails, 3 Women's Prisons and Correctional Homes, 1 High-Security Prison, 3 Open Prisons, and a newly formed Central Prison at Tavanur which is yet to begin its operation. Prisons other than central prisons were excluded as the population was not under the purview of the study. The present study focuses primarily on the perceptions of prison officials regarding the rehabilitative role of prison libraries. Prison officials were selected as the principal respondents because they are directly involved in the administration, management and facilitation of library services within correctional institutions. Access to prisoners for research purposes is highly restricted due to the sensitive nature of custodial data, ethical considerations, and regulatory limitations. In particular, permissions for extensive interaction with inmates, especially for interviews of a sensitive nature, are governed by strict institutional and governmental regulations. Consequently, only a limited number of prisoners assigned duties within prison libraries were included in the study to provide supplementary insights.

Further, the study is confined to central prisons in Kerala, where only male inmates are housed. Women prisoners are accommodated in separate institutions and are not part of central prison populations. As the research permission was specifically granted for central prisons, the scope of the study is limited accordingly. The focus on

male inmates allows for a more context-specific understanding of the institutional environment and rehabilitative practices within these settings. It is also important to note that male and female prisoners often have differing rehabilitation needs and programme structures; therefore, studying them separately enables greater analytical clarity and depth.

In the Indian context, relatively limited scholarly attention has been given to the perspectives of prison officials, despite their crucial role as institutional stakeholders in the implementation, regulation and support of prison library services. Examining their perceptions provides valuable insights into the practical functioning, constraints and potential of prison libraries within the correctional system. Therefore, this study is significant in bridging the gap between theoretical discussions on prison libraries and their actual institutional role in rehabilitation, particularly within the context of central prisons in Kerala.

1.12 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into five chapters, as follows:

1.12.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the background and key concepts regarding the problem of the study, the background of the study, the need and significance of the study, the statement of the problem, the definition of key terms, the research objectives, the hypothesis, the scope and limitations of the study, and the outline of the thesis.

1.12.2 Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter covers a review of related literature conducted in India and abroad on the topic of role of prison libraries in rehabilitation of prisoners, rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners, educational and literacy programs

supported by libraries, prison librarians, case studies of successful initiatives, and general reviews and news related to prison libraries,

1.12.3 Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology chapter includes the methodology adopted for the investigation, variables used for the study, sampling design, data collection tools, data collection procedures, style manual followed, and statistical analysis used for the study.

1.12.4 Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation

The results obtained by the analysis of the data using various statistical techniques are explained in this chapter with the help of tables and graphs. By critical evaluation of these results, the researcher interprets and arrives at valuable conclusions, which are presented in this chapter.

1.12.5 Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusions, and Suggestions

This chapter summarizes the major findings, the tenability of the hypotheses, suggestions based on the study, recommendations for further research, and conclusions.

Appendices, and bibliography, are included at the end of the thesis. The present study follows the guidelines of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Style Manual (APA, 7th edition) for referencing and citation. All sources consulted during the research process are acknowledged through in-text citations and a comprehensive reference list at the end of the thesis. In-text citations include the author's surname and year of publication, enabling readers to locate the corresponding full reference easily. The reference list is arranged alphabetically by the authors' surnames and includes complete bibliographic details such as title, publication year, publisher, and DOI or URL where applicable.

1.13 Conclusion

This study was undertaken to examine the role and significance of prison libraries within the context of rehabilitation in the selected central prisons in Kerala. The research sought to understand the extent to which prison libraries contribute to correctional and rehabilitative processes, primarily through the perceptions of prison officials, and to identify practical measures for strengthening their institutional role. Rather than assuming rehabilitation outcomes, the study focused on the perceived contribution of prison libraries to literacy, educational engagement, constructive use of time, emotional well-being and institutional support within the correctional environment.

The findings of the study indicate that prison libraries are viewed as meaningful supportive spaces within the rehabilitative framework of central prisons, though their potential remains constrained by limitations in infrastructure, staffing, policy support and resource availability. The study therefore highlights the need for systematic development of prison libraries, including improved administrative support, professional staffing, enhanced resources and structured programmes aligned with correctional objectives. By documenting the current status, institutional challenges and perceived value of prison libraries, this study contributes to the broader discourse on correctional rehabilitation and inclusive library services. The findings offer practical insights that may inform policy development, strengthen institutional practices and support the integration of prison libraries as constructive and meaningful components of correctional rehabilitation in Kerala and similar contexts.

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CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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- 2.1 *Introduction*
 - 2.2 *Historical Background of Prison Libraries*
 - 2.3 *Rehabilitation Activities of Prison Libraries*
 - 2.4 *Bibliotherapy and prisoner rehabilitation*
 - 2.5 *Prison Library Services and Rehabilitation of Inmates.*
 - 2.6 *Library Extension Programs and Inmate Rehabilitation*
 - 2.7 *Role of Prison Libraries in Promoting Vocational Skills and Psychological Well-being*
 - 2.8 *Availability of Resources and Services in Prison Libraries*
 - 2.9 *Challenges in Accessing Prison Libraries*
 - 2.10 *Prisoners' Satisfaction with Library Services*
 - 2.11 *Perception of Prison Officials on Prison Libraries*
 - 2.12 *Comparative Analysis of Global and National Prison Library Practices*
 - 2.13 *Research Gaps*
 - 2.14 *Conclusion*
 - References*
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“Punishment is to be inflicted, not for the sake of vengeance, for what is done cannot be undone, but for the sake of prevention and reformation” - (Plato, Treatise, The Laws).

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is a critical analysis of the existing research on a particular topic providing a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge and identifying any gaps or areas that require further investigation (Rowley & Slack, 2004). In correctional research, literature on prison libraries spans library and information science, criminology, correctional education, and psychology. However, the treatment of prison libraries across these disciplines remains uneven. While the importance of education in correctional facilities has been widely acknowledged, there is a gap in the literature concerning the specific role of libraries in prisoner rehabilitation, especially in the Indian context (Singh, 2014). Much of the existing research focuses on prisoner education, literacy programs, or correctional welfare, with limited analytical attention to the institutional role of libraries within prison systems (Sharma & Tiwari, 2021; Rai & Singh, 2024). Understanding how libraries operate within the prison environment and evaluating their effectiveness can inform future policy decisions, resource allocation, and program development to improve overall rehabilitation outcomes. This chapter critically reviews the literature by examining prison libraries as rehabilitative spaces, information environments, and institutional mechanisms. For this, the researcher has conducted an extensive search of various information sources, like print and online journals, books, reference books, theses, dissertations, and conference proceedings. The databases such as Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, Springer Link, SAGE journals, and Taylor and Francis online, available in e-Shod Sindhu consortium were consulted. Online platforms such as ResearchGate, Mendeley, and Google Scholar were also reviewed. Search engines such as Google, CORE, White Rose, and BASE were used to review related research. Shodhganga, National Repository of Electronic Theses & Dissertations, Open Access Theses and Dissertations etc., were also consulted for a thorough literature review. All possible literature, most relevant irrespective of year of publication was taken into consideration. The review of literature is organized under the following headings:

According to Garner (2020), a Prison library refers to a designated space that is allocated within the correctional facility in jail which aims to provide inmates with access to books, reading materials, and periodicals, which can be both recreational as well as educational magazines. (Garner & Krolak, 2023) in IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners (4th edition), gives a comprehensive framework for establishing and enhancing library services in prison environments worldwide. It emphasises on inclusivity, education, rehabilitation and transformative potentials of prison libraries. It is a standard to look upon by prison libraries. The role of prison libraries has been significant as evident from a study conducted by Higgins (2021). Access to prison libraries has been firstly considered under the objective of ensuring skill development as well as self-education to inmates which ultimately will aid in improving the education rate among prison inmates helping them secure access to jobs and successfully reintegrate with society after completion of incarceration term. Access to prison libraries is also considered important to reduce extremist thoughts that may have led inmates to commit crimes. It also provides them with a constructive outlet where inmates can express their intellectual curiosity and become more effective members of society.

The origin of prison libraries in India reflects the broader transformation of the penal system from a punitive to a rehabilitative model. During the British colonial period, the prison system was designed primarily to punish and control, with little regard for reform. The establishment of prison libraries was not initially a priority, although limited access to books existed in certain jails like Alipore Central Jail and Yerwada Jail (Singh, 2012). The early prison reforms, influenced by British models such as the Borstal system and the Elmira Reformatory, began to introduce the idea of inmate education, laying the groundwork for library services. After independence, India's focus gradually shifted toward reform and rehabilitation. This was clearly articulated in the All-India Jail Manual (1960) and later the Model Prison Manual (2003; revised 2016), which emphasized the role of education, recreation, and libraries in prisoner development (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2016). According to the manual, every prison should maintain a library with a variety of books and periodicals,

accessible to all categories of inmates. The aim was to foster mental stimulation, literacy, and personal growth (National Human Rights Commission, 2020).

In recent decades, certain states have taken progressive steps in developing prison libraries. Kerala has introduced e-libraries and reading initiatives, while Delhi's Tihar Jail houses one of the most well-stocked prison libraries in the country (Shukla, 1987). Many prisons have begun collaborating with NGOs and educational institutions like IGNOU to promote academic pursuits among inmates, using libraries as a support system (Singh, 2012).

However, prison library facilities in India remain inconsistent. Challenges include a lack of trained staff, outdated materials, and limited access due to security or administrative constraints (IFLA, 2021). The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) has issued guidelines advocating for equal access, professional staffing, and user-focused services in prison libraries. While these have not been uniformly adopted in India, they provide a framework for future improvements. The prison libraries in India have slowly evolved from a neglected service to a potentially transformative tool in prisoner rehabilitation. Continued investment, policy standardization, and adherence to international best practices are necessary to ensure that prison libraries fulfil their reformatory potential.

The study conducted by Santhosh and Mathew (2021) examines the prisons of Kerala. Prisons in Kerala are managed and regulated by KPCS or Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services. It should be noted that under the administration of the Kerala government as well as KPCS, four central prisons and correctional homes have been successfully established and operated in Thiruvananthapuram (which is also the headquarters of KPCS), Kannur, Tavanur and Viyyur. Rehabilitation in the sense of all physical, psychological, mental, educational, cultural and spiritual needs of prisoners are managed by KPCS (Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services), hence they operate distinct libraries in prisons as well. Based on the above discussion, the current chapter will provide an extensive evaluation of different studies regarding the historical background of prison libraries, resources and services which are available for prisoners in libraries, prison libraries and scope of bibliotherapy, and other

rehabilitation activities which are carried out in libraries and the impact of prison library services on rehabilitation of inmates. Library extension programs as well as the role of such libraries in improving vocational skills are also covered. Analysis of the perception of library officials as well as prisoners will also be done along with challenges which prisoners face in accessing such library services. Finally, a comparative analysis of global and local library practices done to identify crucial research gaps which will be covered in the following study.

2.2 Historical Background of Prison Libraries

Historically, prison libraries evolved from instruments of moral and religious instruction to tools for education and rehabilitation (Harris, 2020; Owens-Murphy, 2022). While the literature often presents this transition as progressive, it fails to acknowledge the uneven and fragmented nature of this evolution, particularly in postcolonial contexts like India. Colonial penal philosophies, which emphasized punishment over reform, continue to influence contemporary prison systems, thereby limiting the transformative potential of prison libraries (Amrit et al., 2022a).

The legal dimension of prison library services is heavily informed by Western jurisprudence, particularly cases such as *Bounds v. Smith* (1977) and *Lewis v. Casey* (1996), which established prisoners' rights to access legal information (Coyle, 2021; Linden, 2024). However, the applicability of these legal principles to the Indian context remains underexplored. This reflects a broader limitation in the literature an over-reliance on Western theoretical and legal frameworks, with insufficient contextual adaptation to Indian socio-legal realities.

The legal landscape regarding prison libraries and access to legal materials has been shaped by several key Supreme Court cases in the United States. In *Wolf v. McDonnell* (1974), the Supreme Court ruled that prisoners facing disciplinary charges were entitled to certain procedural safeguards, including the right to call witnesses and present evidence. However, the court concluded that prisoners did not have the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses or have the assistance of counsel, establishing that an impartial tribunal comprising prison officials was sufficiently impartial (White, 2023). In *Bounds v. Smith* (1977), the Supreme Court further

expanded prisoners' rights by holding that they have a constitutional right to access the courts. This ruling required prison authorities to assist inmates in preparing and filing meaningful legal papers by providing access to adequate law libraries or assistance from persons trained in the law (Coyle, 2021). However, this mandate was somewhat weakened by the latter case of *Lewis v. Casey* (1996). The Supreme Court in this case ruled that prisoners must show actual injury to their ability to pursue a legal claim to establish a violation of their right to access to the courts. This decision allowed prisons more flexibility in how they provided legal resources to inmates (Linden, 2024). Internationally, the development of prison libraries has followed different trajectories. In Germany, prison libraries were initially run by clergy, reflecting their early focus on moral and religious education. Over time, these libraries began to be operated by teachers and professional librarians, signifying a shift towards a more educational and rehabilitative function (Peschers, 2021). In Italy, a law passed in the 1970s required every prison to have a library. However, the quality and staffing of these libraries remain uneven, indicating ongoing challenges in implementing these standards uniformly (Alicino, 2020).

The history of prison libraries in India dates back to the colonial period, marked by the establishment of the Prisons Act of 1870 and 1894, which laid the groundwork for the existing prison system (Amrit et al., 2022a). These acts were instrumental in shaping the administrative framework of prisons, indirectly influencing the provision of educational resources within these institutions. Following India's independence, significant efforts were made to enhance access to prison libraries. The All-India Jail Manual Committee of 1960 played an important role in this regard. This committee underscored the importance of prison libraries as a critical component of broader prison reforms. It recommended that each prison should maintain a library accessible to inmates, emphasising the role of reading materials in promoting education, rehabilitation, creating a positive environment conducive to the reintegration of inmates into society (Gupta, 2021). Similarly, the Punjab Government's Manual for the Superintendence and Management of Jails of 1963 advocated for the establishment and maintenance of prison libraries. This manual recommended that prison libraries should be well-stocked with a variety of books to

cater to different interests and educational needs. By enhancing intellectual engagement, the manual aimed to reduce recidivism and support the rehabilitation process through educational opportunities (Shahbaz et al., 2023). Despite these early efforts, the development of prison libraries in India has been uneven. While some prisons have made significant strides in providing library services, others continue to lack even basic resources like newspapers. For instance, the libraries in Kangra and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh have coordinated with State District Libraries to offer prisoners broader access to reading materials, demonstrating a successful model of inter-library collaboration (Amrit et al., 2022b). However, many prisons still deprive inmates of vital contact with the outside world due to a lack of resources. Noteworthy examples of well-functioning prison libraries include the Viyyur Central Jail in Kerala, which houses over 10,000 books for 800 inmates, and the Central Prison in Poojappura, Kerala, with a collection of 15,000 books. Another exemplary initiative is the library set up by the Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH) in Dasna Jail, Uttar Pradesh, which boasts over 4,000 titles (Hussain et al., 2023). In addition to these state-led and institutional initiatives, the Centre on the Death Penalty at the National Law University, Delhi, has incorporated questions about prison libraries into its research among prisoners, including those on death row. These interviews reveal that typical prison libraries are modest, classroom-like rooms seating 8-10 people, such as the SC Bose Jabalpur Central Prison Library (Bhatia & Aggarwal, 2021). Throughout India's history, people like Kiran Bedi have also brought visibility to the issue of prison reforms, including the enhancement of prison libraries (Amrit et al., 2022b). These efforts reflect a growing recognition of the importance of educational resources in prisons and the potential they hold for rehabilitating inmates.

Kerala has taken pioneering steps in integrating prison libraries into its broader correctional strategy. Following the reorganization of Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services in 1956, the state emphasized the rehabilitation of inmates through education, vocational training, and psychological support of which libraries are a core part (Government of Kerala, 2020).

2.3 Rehabilitation Activities of Prison Libraries

Several prisons around the world have engaged in providing extensive rehabilitation programs involving education and library support. One such prison system reforms which have been done in Norway aimed to focus on rehabilitation through education, vocational training, and allowing prisoners to engage in work as per the studies conducted by Ahalt et al. (2020) and Mjåland et al. (2023). It should be noted that Norway spends a significant amount (around 93000 dollars) per inmate where the major focus is on ensuring inmates get access to regular clothes, are able to participate and learn different skills from libraries and dedicated classes, and then apply such skills under reducing supervision level based on positive changes showcased by prisoners with the ultimate goal behind such activities being to engage in societal reintegration and ensuring reduction of violence or other crimes.

In this context, reform programs which have been effectively adopted and utilised by China shall also be analysed as recorded in studies by Lin (2021) and Alduais et al. (2021). The objective behind such a program is to slowly introduce inmates to desired positive behaviour or reduction of negative and criminal traits among them, which then is done through taking training classes, providing inmates with reading content which is specifically focussed on such virtues, and using an incentive system. Under this model, the final order for the release of prisoners has been largely connected to the introduction of desired positive qualities among inmates which will reduce crime when they return to society.

The role of the Marin Shakespeare company and how much ensures the rehabilitation of prisoners in San Quentin Prison in California shall be carefully taken into consideration owing to the unique perspective adopted by them regarding reading content and how to use such for rehabilitation which has been covered in studies by Shailor (2022) and Keating et al. (2022). Under this program, inmates are provided access to educational material which is related to plays by Shakespeare with a focus given on allowing inmates to read and enact such plays. In later stages, inmates are encouraged to develop more plays based on the content they read and their lives hence

ensuring inmates are able to express creativity and focus on a career in theatre and acting as well.

In this context, wild horse training programs adopted by certain prisons should be taken into consideration which often acts as a first step before ensuring prisoners are self-motivated to engage in education as per Arditti et al. (2020) and Dewey et al. (2020). Under such a program, firstly inmates are provided basic training on how to tame and train wild mustangs and in such process, learn skills such as patience, teamwork, empathy towards animals and hence empathy towards other humans, developing skills (horse training and other soft skills) which can aid them to take jobs, and finally, fostering responsibility. During later stages, inmates are encouraged to move towards learning technical skills and content from different educational resources for skill enhancement.

International efforts of rehabilitation of prisoners through education are covered under guidelines as well as active and voluntary participation of UNODC (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime) which provides rehabilitation support to many countries in the world under focus on prisoner education as well as training vocational skills as evident from studies conducted by Volkow et al., (2024) and Canton (2021). It should be noted that such organisations have been primarily engaged in developing and operating such activities in low-income and middle-income countries where the governments have been experiencing both higher incidences of crime but have lower levels of resources to spend and engage in education and rehabilitation of prisoners, which leads to aggravation of existing challenges.

Some of the Indian jails have also been conducting major rehabilitation programs in which prison libraries play a major role. Vocational training in libraries is a major aspect which has been covered in studies by Jain (2020) and Dey (2022). Skills such as carpentry, plumbing, and tailoring here are taught under the prison library program by qualified instructors primarily with the aim to help them develop skills which can ensure such prisoners are able to engage in self-employment and do not rely on crimes. This aspect is covered along with other books and literary sources which include both fiction and non-fiction resources.

In this context, rehabilitation through the library program of Poojapura Central Prison shall be taken into consideration which has been discussed in detail by Sivakumar (2021) and Riya (2021). The prison facilitates access to educational materials under a distance education program and at the same time, also provides for examination. Similarly, the personal correctional facility has also partnered with polytechnical institutions in nearby regions that provide dedicated training services as well. Hence, this prison has integrated both education as well as vocational training primarily with the aim of providing more avenues for prisoners to learn during rehabilitation for re-entry into society and engage in productive jobs.

Tihar jail in Delhi is also one of the primary examples of rehabilitation programs through prison libraries of which certain aspects have been covered in a study by Ullah (2023) and Bharti (2020). Tihar jail has an automotive manufacturing unit as well as a restaurant unit in which inmates receive training (vocational) and also engage in hands-on experience which better prepares them for different roles in society. Further, mental health and counselling services are also provided which is a significant tool in addressing concerns of criminal behaviour and promoting positive aspects as well, which further aids in achieving rehabilitation aims in prison.

2.4 Bibliotherapy and prisoner rehabilitation

A growing body of research across decades illustrates the transformative potential of bibliotherapy when embedded within prison libraries, serving not only as a tool for education but also as a structured therapeutic process that fosters psychological healing and behavioural change. Johnson (1974) laid the foundation by surveying correctional educators and administrators who perceived bibliotherapy as a valuable tool for enhancing reading habits and self-reflection among inmates. Building on this, Broderick (1975) conducted an experimental study that empirically demonstrated a significant reduction in depressive behaviours among prisoners who engaged in bibliotherapy, validating its clinical application in correctional settings. In a more recent and rigorous study, Pardini et al. (2014) used randomized controlled trials to assess the effectiveness of cognitive bibliotherapy using self-help literature. Their findings confirmed both statistically and clinically significant reductions in

depression, reinforcing bibliotherapy's potential as a low-cost, scalable, and minimally stigmatizing mental health intervention in prison environments. Likewise, Mento et al. (2023) synthesized multiple studies in their narrative review and found bibliotherapy effective in managing anxiety, pain, and psychological distress, especially when guided by therapeutic mediation. These results suggest that bibliotherapy is not only beneficial in managing mental health but also in equipping inmates with introspective tools to confront their past and reorient their behaviour toward reintegration.

On the practical and implementation side, several qualitative studies emphasize the importance of context-sensitive delivery of bibliotherapy, particularly through prison libraries. Csorba-Simon (2013), based on her experience facilitating reading therapy among juvenile inmates in Hungary, found that literary engagement particularly through familiar genres like rap lyrics and poetry fostered tolerance, empathy, and communication among youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similarly, Silva and Padilha (2019) examined literary mediation programs in Brazilian prisons, highlighting how guided discussions around literature allowed inmates to articulate emotions, confront trauma, and engage in meaningful dialogue. These findings align with Fowler (2010), who advocated for integrating bibliotherapy into probation programs in the United States, emphasizing its role in cultivating accountability and moral reasoning. Webman (1971), writing from a historical-institutional perspective, reinforced the importance of professionally staffed prison libraries and their integration into correctional education programs. Together, these studies position prison libraries not merely as passive repositories of books but as active therapeutic environments where bibliotherapy can be applied to nurture self-awareness, reduce re-entry, and support the holistic rehabilitation of prisoners. Thus, modern prison libraries, when integrated with therapeutic reading interventions, emerge as powerful tools for rehabilitation, contributing to inmates' emotional regulation, critical thinking, and social reintegration.

2.5 Prison Library Services and Rehabilitation of Inmates.

Prison library services have been noted to have a significant impact on the rehabilitation of inmates which has been covered in several studies. According to Shwan and Raza (2024), Prison libraries act as important sources for advancing the education of inmates by providing them with an educational curriculum which is based on school or college-level education. Further, such prison libraries may also allow inmates to take examinations for completion of courses or degrees by providing specific services which aid inmates to achieve educational degrees which ultimately aids them to reintegrate with society and apply for productive jobs which may require such degrees. Under educational achievement, this aspect far involves both primary or elemental education as well as college or professional education.

Prison inmates are often noted to suffer from higher levels of stress and anxiety under prison due to the environment of the prison and the inherent nature of prison where they are expected to complete their punishment for any crime committed. Prison life has also been often regarded as both full of isolation and monotony, which can make the mental health of prisoners worse, in which libraries can be of significant aid as evident from a study by Lee et al. (2021). Reading can act as therapeutic exercise which can reduce challenges faced by inmates and help them have better mental health. Prisoners as general human beings living in society, have the innate desire for personal development which is often hindered by the environment of prison and can be addressed through the development of libraries as evident from a study conducted by Sachitra and Wijewardhana (2020). Libraries can offer different self-help books or other fiction novels which can act as avenues to engage in and develop self-reflection as well as critical thinking skills, both of which will aid inmates. Further, prisoners are also able to understand different virtues and live better and more efficient lives after prison.

Behaviour improvement is one of the major aspects of any rehabilitation program which is conducted in prison and such can be achieved by the installation and operation of libraries in prison as mentioned in the study conducted by Chalmers et al. (2023). There has been a major issue that prisoners often resort to disruptive

behaviour as such can occur due to lack of any recreational activities in prison which makes them resort to violence under the already present influence of negative virtues, which can be addressed through prison libraries by providing recreational reading services as evident from a study conducted by Adeshina and Mohammed (2020). While it should be noted that recreational reading is not one of the major objectives behind the installation and operation of prison libraries, such is an important aspect as such can lead to the progress of other aspects. The opportunity to read and learn from several scholars through books and guides can act as an incentive for the adoption and promotion of good behaviour which can aid in goal achievement. Further, prison libraries can be connected with the prison incentive system further promoting more reading leading to creative thinking and good behaviour adoption.

Prisoners often come into prison for crimes such as domestic violence, violence towards strangers or connections due to a lack of anger management ability, and substance abuse issues among others. Each such aspect can be addressed by the correctional facilities in prison as evidenced by a study conducted by Genders and Player (2022). Libraries can act as a source of indirect positive influence by providing books which address such aspects and then encouraging inmates to discuss such issues and potential solutions leading to inmates themselves attempting to address such challenges. This aspect hence directly benefits all rehabilitation strategies adopted by correction facilities or NGOs. Zivanai and Mahlangu (2022) proposed a unique aspect which suggests that the adoption of digital tools such as audiobooks and the arrangement of book clubs or discussion groups can aid in achieving the goal of social skill development among members as well. This is considered crucial, as it can foster effective communication and active listening skills among inmates, capabilities that support rehabilitation and later reintegration into society (De França, 2023; Brubacher, 2023). Moreover, the engagement with literature (particularly fiction and self-help texts) can encourage the cultivation of social virtues such as integrity and honesty through moral modeling and internalization of narrative lessons Chlup, (2010). In addition, Chlup (2010) indicates that reading fiction and self-help literature can promote social virtues like integrity and honesty by presenting moral narratives that inmates may adopt.

Prison libraries are different from other libraries as such are curated primarily with the aim of aiding prisoners in rehabilitation and their reintegration into society. Re-entry into society can require several aspects such as getting a proper job (which requires job searching, resume writing, and technical skills required for the job) as well as basic financial literacy skills, all of which can be covered through the development of financial libraries as evident from a study conducted by Altier (2023). In such an aspect, prison libraries ensure inmates are ready to live normal as well as productive lives where they can earn enough to support themselves.

Based on a study by Opesanwo and Awofeso (2024), it has been evident that prison libraries can aid in developing inclusive as well as tolerant mindsets among inmates by introducing them to diverse cultures as well as diverse ideas by providing different books under prison library. This aspect can be crucial as it can ensure inmates get to analyse their self-belief from different perspectives, encouraging them to self-reflect and take steps to improve themselves without outside intervention which leads to better results from rehabilitation programs. Hence, prison libraries act as avenues for the comprehensive development of inmates and prepare them for re-entry into society.

2.6 Library Extension Programs and Inmate Rehabilitation

From the definitions of Han (2023), it is clear that library extension programs provide educational opportunities to the inmates through reading and other programs. Practically, literacy classes are formed through the programs, which help to increase their inner values to decrease the crime rates. Sometimes, the lack of educational resources is seen in the Central Prison of Kerala, however, the management always tries to arrange facilities for them through which their educational growth is commenced. Significantly, it is true that through the library extension programs, the numbers of classes are enlarged and the reading activities of people are developed. Practically, a broad and admirable reading initiative is developed through the literacy classes or the educational programs. Prisoners get feedback from others and get library membership, which motivates them in their work (Sambo et al., 2017).

Library extension programs are highly effective because it helps in improving the literacy level of inmates through which their overall skills are developed. Through all the above-discussed library extension programs, their personal development is also focused and critical thinking skills are improved. The changes are also seen in the decision-making processes through which overall personality growth is commenced. Most importantly, the extension programs develop the observational capabilities of people through which their personal development is seen. With the minute description of books, they know how to observe subtle things in their lives, which make their life more peaceful than after the crime period. From the research paper of Hussain et al. (2023), it is known that prison libraries make the health aware of prisoners and give them knowledge of sport activities, which also enhance their peaceful lives. Religious studies are also found in libraries in prisons, which also support the prisoners to develop their knowledge regarding it and from this, their spiritual lives are also developed.

Contrarily, as per the critical analysis of Han (2023), it is also known that the inmates get the chance to access different educational programs or materials through such extension programs. It genuinely helps them in developing their career after the end of the imprisonment. Apart from this, the jail environment is developed and a positive culture is found. The crime-oriented discussion is stopped there, rather, the overall opportunities are created for them. They not only become confined within the prison, rather their knowledge is developed about the outside world. It is found that different prisoners mention that they feel "freedom" in the library and they think their lives are full of enjoyment while reading books. Such materials help them to expand their regular group studies and arrange writing materials through which their basic knowledge is reflected. It is also true that when literacy activities are organised within the prison library, inmates can read aloud and participate in shared learning with their children. Such a thing shows the positive fact within the prisoners and they perform strongly in the literacy activities.

The people get lifelong learning from the library extension, which also helps them to grow their interests towards studies. Therefore, even after the completion of

their imprisonment, they can also develop this interest and do studies after this period. It is a very beneficial thing that in India, e-library benefits are provided through which both the technological skills and reading skills are improved among the people (Mawandiya & Gupta, 2023). They get regular access to poetry, stories, novels, dramas, and others of different regional, national or international writers. Thus, their knowledge growth commences and the inmates genuinely feel their progress. It is clear that the library in prison is the reality-door for the prisoners as they are isolated from others. No matter from which criminal backgrounds they are from, the opportunities are the same for all because of which they also feel equal treatment within their rehabilitation lives. Arguing the above viewpoint, Hussain et al. (2023) stated that in Indian central prisons, the information science journals are available. The regular budget update regarding different things is known by the prisoners through the libraries and the collections are updated on a regular basis. Basically, the inmate rehabilitation facilities are developed through the programs and they are motivated towards their work within the prisons.

When the prisoners make the habits, they basically link their knowledge with their culture. According to Kim and Clark (2013), the reading habits in the library extension programs help the people to know about different Indian legislations, which are appropriate for them. Their assumption on their correction period is clarified through it and their knowledge growth helps them to know about the activities, which are right or wrong for them within the society. Prisoners get the opportunities of getting different books from different genres, which help their overall knowledge development. It is significant that if the prisoners get the facilities of such programs, they become educationally strong and such a thing showcases their good conduct towards the society. Sometimes, these people are rewarded because of their activities of participation in these programs, which increase overall literacy.

It is a major process of their self-reflection development and as a part of it, criminal activity is minimised. Transformative behaviours are seen within the prisoners if they regularly participate within these programs. The prison-based educational programs support them to enhance knowledge within the humanitarian

ground and their distance learning is also progressing gradually (Atuase & Filson, 2024). It is true that the positive relationship between the prisoners and their educators is developed, which helps the people to make queries without any hesitation. The literacy programs or educational arrangements for them also help to measure whether there is any progression in the educational field or not. Several times, there are self-threats from the sides of the prisoners because of the criminal activities, however, such library extension programs make their mind quiet and help them to focus on the knowledge growth for solving such issues.

Several times, in rehabilitation, minor people are present, who do not have proper adult education because of which different problems arise within the prisons. In such a case, the variety of education is provided to them as a part of the educational programs, which develop their adult education and further crimes are not developed. Most significantly, the continuous educational facilities for them arrange the benefits for the degrees, which they use even after their imprisonment (Awofeso & Opesanwo, 2023). Security with studies is also developed through which their benefits of studying are analysed in a proper manner. The creative writing workshops are also there as a part of the educational programs or library extension programs through which the thinking skills are developed. Intellectual needs of the prisoners are developed in this manner and they get the rewards from the rehabilitation.

2.7 Role of Prison Libraries in Promoting Vocational Skills and Psychological Well-being

Mental health of inmates is also important for which the prison libraries also work on, which is proved from different articles and researchers' viewpoints. As per Valero-Garcés (2022), there is a proper comprehensive plan on the relevance of the library in the Central Prison of Kerala based on which educational experiences are developed. When the prisoners go through tough times, the educational facilities help them to become quiet and as a result, their psychological well-being is developed. In that case, the lower anxiety level is found and depression of the prisoners is reduced. It is true that prison libraries develop the sense of hope and positivity among prisoners and help to reduce the re-conviction rates significantly (Canning & Buchanan, 2021).

These libraries foster the reading and learning environment within prisons along with providing vocational models for them. Most significantly, the digital literacy of prisoners is developed and it helps them in their future career approaches.

Moreover, the vocational training facilities are found through the prison libraries because there are multiple books through which learning in these topics is developed. Necessary knowledge is developed and as a part of it, the occupational facilities are found. Sometimes, the people from the inhibition read books related to vocational training through which they learn different subjects for their occupations. Applying these learnings, they easily enhance the occupational skills, which progress their mental health too. These extension programs create a positive atmosphere through which mental stress is removed in a justified manner. In the case of Poojappura Central Prison, as per 2016 report, an innovative library was planned and e-book facilities were developed for 1300 inmates (Business India, 2016). Digitalised collections of books were found through which the overall growth in libraries commenced and supported the well-being of people. It gives more access to the prisoners about the library facilities and the inmates get gadgets to read the e-books. It is found that senior prisoners of each block collect books for interested inmates and distribute it in their cells. It develops strong relationships among them and mental health is developed through developed communication.

While studying within these programs, their trauma and anxiety are removed and most importantly, their loneliness is reduced. While studying with different people, they get others easily, and significantly, their sharing with each other is developed. It helps in the learning progression and overall, the recovery from their stress is found. From the viewpoints of Woodall and Freeman (2020), it is clear that health and well-being of prisoners is not the luxury, rather it is the necessity and legal entitlement. In different prisons, the mental health of prisoners is not considered from where the improper health outcomes are seen. Prison libraries provide different information about the health services and current health campaigns through which their mental health is developed. Well-trained supervisors are also present within the prisons through which the mental health services are developed. Their mental health-

oriented advice is given by them with which any type of depression is handled easily without any negative impacts on anger. The inmates sometimes smoke by hiding this incident from supervisors, which genuinely impacts their mental and physical health significantly. The reading facilities in libraries help the prisoners to move towards the books quitting smoking, which develop their mental health.

Contrary to the above viewpoint, Kyprianides and Easterbrook (2020) believe that the prison library helps in the societal approaches through which their adjustment capabilities are developed. While staying in prisons, the prisoners suffer from depression where studying in libraries helps them to remove the negative thoughts. Most of the time, they feel homeless because of which the library services support a lot to make the changes properly within their minds. When they study with different people, they exchange thoughts and their adjustment capability with each other is enhanced. Sometimes, they face bullying and harassment within the prisons for which the focuses towards the libraries are found as reading brings peace within their minds. Practically, it helps the prisoners to get the supportive environment within their rehabilitation and the interpersonal skills are developed. Significantly, through the libraries, they get a new way for their survival and the adaptation capacities in their lives are enhanced. When the inmates spend time in the libraries in prisons, they know their self-worth and the psychological needs are fulfilled through it.

Vocational training is also developed through the library services, which support the inner growth of prisoners. As per Dewey et al. (2020), high school education facilities are provided to the prisoners through which they get vocational certification. It is helpful for their post-release employment based on which a proper life is found. Practically, administrators and educators in rehabilitation collect as well as utilise evidence in order to guide decision making about these types of correctional education for them. In such a case, the supervision is developed, and they get the proper opportunities to get the vocational training accurately for their near future. Not only the academic learning, but the vocational education also helps the prisoners to get the technical education rightly for their critical thinking abilities or future career goals. Different tests and assessments are developed for them to qualify for the

vocational training, which is the support of the libraries for them. Importantly, when the prisoners perform positively in the vocational training, they get benefits of reducing their imprisonment period. Even, the enrollment eligibility is broadened to study further within the libraries for a long time.

Arguing the above statement, Earle et al. (2020) stated that prison libraries mainly develop the excitement among people through which their interest towards the studies is increased. It is a major thing for them to develop vocational training because the educational resources are provided from the libraries properly. Using the prison libraries, inmates easily access the library resources, which aid in their vocational training. On the other hand, the high-school equivalent skills are developed among prisoners while studying in libraries based on which their exam preparation is also done after the vocational training. It is found that in Kerala Prison and Correctional Services, the vocational training programmes are developed in a huge manner where different computer courses, LED bulb making, welding, fashion designing, and others are taught to the inmates (Kerala Prisons, 2021). It gives their economic security as well as the confidence to face the complexities within the society. For the training, literacy skills are needed, which are developed through the prison libraries within inmates. It can be said that the educational facilities are found by the inmates through the vocational training in libraries, which allow them to re-enter society.

2.8 Availability of Resources and Services in Prison Libraries

Several resources as well as services have been provided in prison libraries to aid inmates with the aim of rehabilitation. Conrad (2012) discusses the answer to the question of what books should be accessible to prisoners. Prison libraries serve a specific and special constituency. Still, certain ethical principles especially relating to fair information practices should be considered in any library regardless of the status of its patrons. Traditional books often are the main part of prison which can include books from a variety of genres which combine both fiction as well as non-fiction as evident from a study conducted by Austin et al. (2020). Wilhelmus (1999) identified the problems faced by prison librarians while selecting academic materials and making those materials accessible to prisoners. With the advent of Degree awarding

programs being offered in American Correctional facilities, it has become more important to build academic collections along with legal collection. Recognition of education, as a principal factor in rehabilitation and in the eventual re-integration of offenders as productive members of society. The objectives of the paper were to know the historical role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners, the literacy problem and the spectrum of educational needs, other roles like providing legal assistance materials, the nature of the job of prison librarians like counsellors, social workers, and ombudsman to help patrons through serious life issues, implementation of technology was another task which has to clear the security issues of prisons. In this context, it should be noted that providing books or print resources in libraries for prisoners can be a complex task as scrutiny is required to identify books or residing resources which can incite violence or promote negative behaviour among inmates that have to be banned as such resources can create a negative impact, hence only positive moral or virtue books are given preference. Further, focus can also be given to providing books in regional languages to provide a sense of belongingness.

In recent years, the focus has been on the introduction of digital resources like e-books as well as audiobooks in prison libraries as well which can be done by developing a distinct platform or using services of different platforms through formal option has been preferred as such can allow selective restriction of resources as evident from a study conducted by Agostini (2022). (E-library for inmates at Kerala jail, November 27, 2016) a report from the daily 'The Hindu' reported that, "Inmates of a central prison in Kerala will soon have e-books in their hands, thanks to a digital library being set up in the jail premises, which is considered as the first such facility in southern India. The 1300 inmates of the prison will have access to an infinite world of e-books.

Madurai prison is the first in the state to get audio books, (Times of India, 9Feb10,2023) The Department of Prisons and Correctional Service introduced audiobooks and made them available for prisoners at Madurai central prison. In this sense, it should be noted that such a platform for digital resources may be developed by central jail units and then provided to all jail units. The primary rationale behind

such an introduction has been both improving speaking as well as listening skills and encouraging prisoners to consume more books through digital content. Gunari, V (December, 8, 2019) reported in the New Indian Express daily that tThe Central Prison in Shivamogga will soon have a digital library on its campus. According to sources, many inmates are pursuing BA and MA courses through distance education mode offered by Kuvempu University. The varsity has been providing education free of cost to the inmates. The proposed digital library will also provide inmates access to NCERT books, newspapers, e-journals and e-books. Also, novels in different languages, including Kannada, English and Hindi, will be made available for the inmates”.

The focus of prison libraries has been to not only provide books for recreation or entertainment aspects but rather such firms as centres which can enhance educational outcomes for the prisoners as well. According to Giannoulis et al. (2022), such aspects can involve providing educational materials (which can include all standard books preferred for certain degrees as well as external guidebooks or publicly available supplementary materials). In this context, it should be noted such can include both school-level content as well as college-level content. Provision of examination may also be made but such depends on both educational authorities and jail officials. For this reason, only publicly accessible secondary content may be made available.

Recently, after public representation and efforts done by several activists, several prison libraries around the world have engaged in providing access to local legal resources including bare acts of both state and central governments as well as legal research guides and digital resources as evident from research conducted by Turner et al. (2022). The aim behind providing such resources is to aid inmates who want to engage in self-representation in courts and later have been allowed under general education as well. Basic education of law is also provided under the provision of ensuring inmates also know their fundamental rights.

Several prison libraries under prison administration do adopt reading programs for inmates which may be done under the assistance of NGO members as

well as evident from a study by Littman (2021). It should be noted that such programs are adopted in order to encourage inmates to become readers which can involve engaging in reading challenges (presenting challenges for inmates to read specific hours a day based on proficiency level for some rewards) as well as conducting dedicated programs to improve literacy level without any clear initiatives. Generally, such programs are done under the involvement of NGOs who may undertake language classes to aid inmates who are unable to read as well. Reading in prisons (October 4,2017) Excerpt from an interview with a prisoner on death row which was published in a blog is like,

I: Can you tell us about your experience in prison?

J: As far as I am concerned, prison has proved to be the world's biggest university.

There is no book here that I have not studied. It is true that I can no longer see the sights and spectacles of the outside world. However, when I read, I can visualize the world outside within my mind's eye.

I: When did you begin to cultivate the habit of reading?

J: It is only after I came to prison that I began to read.

I: Would you say that your understanding has expanded?

J: Yes, this has been a change that has influenced my life and my outlook.

I: This expansion of understanding- what is the reason for it?

J: All my perspectives have been enhanced by the books I borrow from the library. I have read almost 10,000 books since coming to this prison. However, it's been four years since I last stepped foot inside this library.

I: Why is that?

J: After escaping prison, I haven't been allowed to come here. I request books inside my cell and they are given to me.

I: Which kind of books do you find most engrossing?

J: If you must know, *Eyadi* is a book I've read several times. Then there's *Manushyan Oru Aamukham*, *Aarachar* and Ajith Varkey's new book.

I: We have heard that you enjoy reading philosophical works as well.

J: My cellmate ... has many philosophical books. He has been allowed to keep them in the cell. He has books about the law as well. I have read them all."

The above interview shows the importance of books and libraries in prisons. How much the books can help the prisoners recover from their mental trauma. Reading is acting as a therapy.

Different literacy programs or initiatives which are adopted by jail authorities to improve the literacy of inmates shall also be taken into consideration which has been explored in a study by Morken et al., (2021). The National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) has collaborated with state departments to introduce educational initiatives for inmates, especially targeting non-literate prisoners. These programs range from basic literacy classes to formal education support for school-level and higher education exams. The prison education model in India generally includes volunteer-led literacy training, open school enrolment, and occasional collaborations with universities for distance education (Kumar & Das, 2018).

In Kerala, the Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (KSLMA) has been particularly active in extending literacy programs into the prison system. The "Athulyam" and "Saksharatha" programs were adapted for prison inmates, enabling hundreds of them to pass equivalency and secondary school exams. These initiatives emphasize not only literacy and numeracy but also life skills and civic education (KSLMA, 2022). A study by Joseph and Nair (2019) found that participation in such programs increased inmates' self-confidence and readiness for reintegration, particularly among women inmates in the Kannur and Poojappura prisons.

NGOs have also played a significant role in implementing literacy and rehabilitation programs. Organizations such as Prayas, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), and India Vision Foundation have collaborated with prison departments to deliver literacy, vocational, and emotional development modules

(Choudhary & Sengupta, 2017). These programs often combine traditional literacy with socio-emotional learning and bibliotherapy, thus extending beyond rote learning to holistic rehabilitation. Challenges remain, including irregular attendance due to work assignments, lack of trained instructors, limited reading materials, and the absence of monitoring frameworks. However, innovative practices such as peer teaching, mobile libraries, and use of regional language materials have shown promise in overcoming these barriers (Sharma, 2021).

Vocational training has been adopted by several prison libraries in an attempt to aid inmates who want to seek profitable employment opportunities after completing their jail tenure. In such an aspect, prison libraries have been an important tool in the study conducted by Mbatha et al., (2020). Earlier, manual and skill guides for different vocational skills which will not increase re-offending (missing such skills to commit crimes or escape prison) were provided, which in recent years, have incorporated training sessions as well. In this context, it should be noted such training can be under virtual classes which can come under digital content provided under libraries.

Counseling and self-help literature have become prominent components of rehabilitative library services. Jang et al. (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of bibliotherapy and self-guided reading in reducing anxiety, managing addiction, and supporting mental well-being. These materials are especially valuable in under-resourced prisons where professional psychological support is limited. In this context, it should be noted that such material alone may not be sufficient to address challenges and needs to be integrated with actual counselling but such material does have certain benefits which makes them important in prison settings. Jang et al. (2020) further examined the impact of self-help reading on incarcerated individuals struggling with addiction, trauma, and anger issues. Their findings indicated that participants who consistently read self-help and spiritual guidance materials demonstrated improved emotional regulation and a decline in disciplinary infractions. These materials often supplemented or substituted formal counselling sessions, especially in under-resourced prisons.

Brooker (2021) explored inmates' personal narratives about reading and found that self-help literature particularly those related to overcoming adversity, addiction recovery, and moral decision-making was commonly cited foremost in fostering internal change. Prisoners often saw such materials not as entertainment but as tools for "moral realignment" and "self-reform," which aligns with Desistance Theory that emphasizes the role of identity change in reducing reoffending.

2.9 Challenges in Accessing Prison Libraries

Several challenges exist for prisoners as they attempt to access prison libraries. One of the major challenges for such libraries has been discussed in a study by Tobón (2022) which is the limited resources which exist in libraries. Prison libraries always have limited funds and receive few donations which may come through NGOs or individual donors and such may lead to either old edition books being issued to inmates or books being issued which are not in proper condition. Under both of these situations, it can become harder for prisoners to access quality books impacting their education as well in the case of vocational training or educational resources. Additionally, Steele (2021) also asserted that certain books and materials may be heavily censored as such can limit the range of books or information available to inmates. Censorship restrictions can occur due to security instructions or due to books containing certain aspects which can influence negative behaviour or certain books which are banned by the government. It should be noted that such censorship may not directly influence the availability of technical or educational materials which are used for education but rather can only influence the availability of certain fictional or non-fictional books which can influence recreational reading or prisoners wanting specific books. Overcrowding can also be a significant challenge that prisons around the world are already suffering as per a study conducted by Baggio et al. (2020). A high inmate population can make it difficult to access libraries and at the same time, further harder to borrow books at the same time. It should be noted that such aspects can be challenging under both recreational study as well as educational content aspects leading to challenges for both. Further, this might lead to an aspect of favouritism with

some members having access to books due to connection with jail officials defeating the entire purpose.

Pyrooz et al. (2020) also noted a major aspect that access to libraries and different activities which are carried out can be restricted due to security concerns. Fighting among inmates may be restricted as such can lead to damage in the library if such instances occur in the library. Further, activities such as group study sessions discussion sessions or book clubs which are organised by NGOs may find limited adoption if prison officials consider such can lead to significant security concerns which can further negatively impact the purpose. Finally, there is a need to ensure the security of NGO officials as well who engage in such services which may not be possible at all prisons. In this context, the study conducted by Kallman (2020) shall be considered who noted a significant proportion of prisoners who face certain learning disabilities or do not have basic literacy to read high-level as well as intermediate proficiency books. This situation though is being addressed by literacy initiatives but such have not been adopted by all institutions making it harder for prisoners to access libraries where such services have not been available or cannot address the literacy needs of prisoners in an effective manner, making it harder to access libraries. Technology restrictions established for libraries in prison under the context of security have been noted to hinder access to libraries as well as evident from a study by McKay (2022). In this context, it should be noted that prisoners are not allowed access to phones which can limit access to e-resources in each part of the prison, making the problem of overcrowding and limited resources a challenge again. Further, all digital databases may not be made available under censorship restrictions which makes it harder to ensure such databases are made available further impacting library quality and hence accessing libraries for prisoners as well.

2.10 Prisoners' Satisfaction with Library Services

When the prisoners get the library services, they feel blessed within their tough lives because it helps them to make a strong connection with reality. Most importantly, the community information is developed within them and they learn a way to get their survival within this tough time period. According to Gashi (2023), they get the

appropriate job centric materials through their studies and this helps the prisoners to get a new path for their career. The satisfaction level is developed through it because it helps the prisoners to get a new life after their imprisonment and within it. The paths for earning are developed and as a part of this, luxurious lives can be found in a proper manner. It is also true that the library infrastructure keeps a good energy within the people and their organised behaviours are developed. Wooden shelves, decorative arts, peaceful atmosphere, and the padded chairs within the libraries help them to develop their mental health from where satisfaction is found.

When the knowledge level is developed among the prisoners, they automatically enhance their skills as well as confidence, which increases their self-esteem. It also gives them satisfaction as a part of the society and coherent behaviours are seen among them. There are different banks, which support the prisoners in the reading processes, which help them to know their values within the society. In fact, their skills in technology-handling are developed by which they become updated in the market. Practically, as per Garner (2020), prison library facilities provide inmates the educational and recreational resources for which they never escape the reality. Sometimes, they feel a distraction from society and other people and because of that, the loneliness among them is increased. The only way to know about the outside world is the books for the prisoners and the library facilities make this possible. Therefore, it highly satisfies them and the core connection with the world is enhanced. As in the present days, prisons are considered as the correctional homes, it is important to satisfy their needs, otherwise, the criminal mentality cannot be removed. The arrangement of books for the people has given the specifications and the prisoners become able to mention their choices about books to satisfy their needs.

Viyyur Central Jail, Kerala has a separate library building with a collection with a collection of over 10000 books along with periodicals and newspapers for the 800 inmates (Public archives, 2017). It is a great satisfaction for the prisoners as they are getting different books and articles for their knowledge growth. Practically, from that year, the numbers of books, journals, periodicals, newspapers and others have been increased within the libraries and as a result, the reading habits of the prisoners

have been enhanced. As per the “*International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*” (IFLA), the library services within prisons help the inmates to develop their fundamental rights during their period of incarceration (IFLA, 2023). The most effective factor is that they get similar library services like the people from the outside world, which satisfy their needs for equality. The security issues within their minds are removed through it and the actual scenario of the prison is known. As per the discussions of Rani (2021), in Kerala, most of the prisoners are from under matriculation qualification, therefore, the library services are the new paths for their gradual growth. As they have struggled to get books or availability of resources in their lives before imprisonment, the library services satisfy them the most to connect to the outside world.

Contrary to the above statement, Onyebuchi et al. (2020) signified that few people do not have a high or minimum education level because of monetary issues. However, in the correctional centres, they get the chance to study broadly where in fact, the educators are also recruited. The library accession is found through it and this satisfies their educational needs and develops the insights. Even after the completion of inhibition terms, they get the opportunities for the accession of the libraries and as a result, they get the diverse resources related to it. This is a basic development for the library services in Kerala Central Prisons through which their self-development needs are satisfied. Within the library services, different commit books are present, which significantly satisfy the prisoners by giving a relief from stress. They enjoy reading the comic books through which improvement in mind setup is found. Moreover, the general knowledge books make them aware of current affairs, which satisfy their personal growth needs. As they spend their life within imprisonment, the adventurous stories help them to imagine a world where they easily go with dreams and satisfy their exploration needs.

Prisoners are also very satisfied with the library services because they get new information and become updated about the innovative data (Weinrath & Ricciardelli, 2023). A major reason behind their satisfaction is that it helps in developing the mental simulation and relaxation in a proper manner. Therefore, it is very important to know

whether the prisoners are satisfied through it or not. They also get the accession of self-help resources, which also broaden their knowledge on the technological sphere. During the imprisonment, the prisons do not think of themselves as normal people, however, the library services help them to meet the normalcy. Even reading and writing help to develop their educational level through which they easily make a connection with people from the society. They are also very satisfied through the services because the quality of life is improved through it. Moreover, the library services as well as educational programs help them to understand the legal systems in India by which their rehabilitation and the life after imprisonment are developed. The mentality of offensive activities or criminals act is reduced among them as books give them knowledge, which also satisfies their inner self.

2.11 Perception of Prison Officials on Prison Libraries

The above discussions have predominantly emphasized the rehabilitative potential and functional benefits of prison library services. However, a critical dimension that requires deeper analytical attention is the perception of prison officials, as these perceptions directly influence the accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of library services within correctional institutions. This reflects the present study's objective of examining institutional dynamics and that administrative attitudes significantly shape the functioning of prison libraries. Existing literature presents a divided and often contradictory perspective among prison officials. On one hand, studies such as Tanacković et al. (2021) suggest that many officials recognize prison libraries as valuable rehabilitative tools that contribute to behavioural modification, skill development, and reduction in aggression among inmates. From this perspective, libraries are viewed as informal mechanisms of discipline and self-regulation, supporting correctional goals by promoting constructive engagement. Similarly, Fasae and Folorunso (2020) argue that officials perceive reading and learning activities as contributing to stress reduction and psychological stability among inmates, thereby indirectly aiding institutional control and order. However, these positive perceptions must be interpreted cautiously. Much of the literature tends to assume a direct and unproblematic relationship between positive perception and

effective implementation, without critically examining whether such perceptions translate into actual administrative support, resource allocation, or policy execution. This creates a gap between attitudinal endorsement and operational commitment, which is central to the present study's investigation of the policy practice divide.

Most of the time, prisoners fail to make a core connection with the world because of their criminal offences and punishments. However, the library services help them to show the punishment as the correctional acts and officials think that they become reintegrated through it. According to the opinions of Fasae and Folorunso (2020), officials think that the reading and learning services in the library impact the inmates in reducing their stress within the prison. When they read multiple tough and difficult life stories of others, they know that they can also fight again with their lives after the imprisonment. Most importantly, there are different prisoners who are actually not punished for any major criminal offences, sometimes, they go to the correctional homes for minor problems. In that case, they also suffer from mental pain and try to get freedom from this life. According to the officials, the library services support them in this regard and they get a way to escape from reality.

However, there are multiple officials who think that library services are just luxuries for the prisoners and they do not deserve it (Osborne, 2023). They think that the inmates can easily breach the security of the libraries through the materials and the officials are really worried about it. On the other hand, they think more and more security services are required in the Central Prisons as the criminal offences can be developed there. Sometimes, they also think that the inmates can behave negatively for which they restrict the library services for them. Contrarily, it is said by Gama et al. (2020), awareness of officials or the entire management within the prisons is necessary through which the overall dealing with them can be enhanced. It is also true that there are some officials who are not actually aware of the services because they think that library services are not required for the prisoners.

Finlay and Bates (2021) identified that the prisoners were considered as normal humans or users other than any place in prison. The rapport between the

officials and prisoners are the foundation of the library. The perception of prison officials on the prison library has a great role in providing library services to prisoners. However, it is highly viable for the prisoners for both of their mental and physical well-being as this service increases the educational facilities for the prisoners and education is considered as the most powerful weapon for changing the society. Mostly, officials support such services and they think that inmates develop their personal areas of learning through the services and the recreational activities are found through it. Finlay (2024) opined that subjective decisions about a topic are taken by the prisoners if they get the library services correctly. The officials mention the fact that prisoners know different incidents and lives of freedom fighters during the imprisonment, which motivates them in their lives. The officials agree with the fact that frustration or any type of isolation is not seen among the prisoners if they take the library services rightly. The librarians or the educators also get chances regarding their professional development based on which the learning facilities are enhanced. Thus, the officials show their positive perceptions towards it and they support prisoners to develop their knowledge through these services as it is an encouraging act for them.

2.12 Comparative Analysis of Global and National Prison Library Practices

In the modern era, both global and local prisons develop the library practices because of which the prisoners get facilities in their educational growth. However, there are few similarities as well as differences within the practices. The first and foremost difference between the global and local prison library practices is the funding or the economic development. In the global prisons, investment for the libraries is developed and significantly, the NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) or the Governments show the interest to develop the libraries. However, the local prisons do not have such a big support for the growth of libraries (Skarbek, 2020). Moreover, there are multiple security concerns in the local prison libraries because the monitoring team is small in size and technological advancement is not there highly for the monitoring progress. However, it is definitely a common factor in the global prison libraries because there are the whole security forces and a large number of officers to take care of the situations, which help the prisoners to get

the access to the libraries easily. Technology access is easier in the global prison libraries because of the high funding, which is not seen broadly in the local prison libraries.

Apart from this, in the global prison libraries, more cultural contexts are followed and books are available from different cultures as there are prisoners from different cultural areas. However, in local prison libraries, books are from only local language or contexts because of which if anyone wants to know more about other cultures, it becomes difficult. As per Behan (2021), local prison libraries have more involvement from community organisations and volunteers, which is not seen in the global libraries. On the other hand, local prison library staff get fewer training sessions than the global library staff, which makes a clear difference between these two. However, global prison has a high population because of which the library accession is for a huge number of inmates whereas this number is quite lower in the local prison libraries.

In spite of having differences between local and global prison library services, there are a few similarities, which are basically helpful for the lives of inmates. Both the library practices try to develop the vision of the prisoners along with their educational focuses. E-book facilities are provided to them in both the libraries through which their technological skills are also improved. In both the cases, their mental health is improved and they get further opportunities for their employment (Crighton & Towl, 2021). The anxiety and depression level are reduced within prisons through which criminal offences are also minimised within the society. Moreover, both the libraries support personal growth and development of the people and it prepares the paths for the inmates to re-enter within the society with normalcy (Farley & Seymour, 2022). The organised setups of the libraries help the prisoners to enhance their mental well-being and the demands for education are developed through it.

2.13 Research Gaps

Despite the growing body of literature on prison libraries and correctional education, a critical examination reveals several conceptual, empirical, and contextual gaps that justify the present study. The existing research has largely established that

prison libraries contribute to inmate education, psychological well-being, and constructive engagement (Lehmann, 2000; Conrad, 2012; Garner, 2017). However, much of this literature is normative and advocacy oriented, often assuming a positive relationship between library use and rehabilitation without empirically examining institutional perceptions or operational realities within prison systems. As a result, there remains a gap between theoretical claims and ground-level institutional evidence.

While the international studies have explored prison library services in various contexts such as Europe, North America, and parts of Africa (Lehmann & Locke, 2005; Udem, 2024), empirical research in the Indian context remains limited and fragmented. Existing Indian studies have primarily focused on information needs, access issues, and general library services (Singh, 2014; Sharda & Tripathi, 2021), with very few examining the rehabilitative dimension of prison libraries in a systematic manner. Moreover, there is a noticeable absence of state-specific, evidence-based studies, particularly in Kerala, despite its progressive correctional framework.

A significant gap exists in terms of stakeholder perspectives. Most previous studies have concentrated either on inmates' experiences or on institutional descriptions, but the perceptions of prison officials who play a critical role in policy implementation, resource allocation, and programme facilitation remain underexplored. Understanding officials' attitudes is essential, as institutional support is a determining factor in the effectiveness of prison library services.

Earlier research lacks integrated theoretical application. Although concepts such as rehabilitation, social learning, and bibliotherapy are frequently discussed, studies rarely combine these frameworks into a cohesive analytical model. The absence of a multi-theoretical lens limits the explanatory power of existing research and fails to capture the complex interaction between individual transformation, institutional structures, and informational interventions. Hence, there is a methodological gap in the literature. A majority of studies adopt either purely descriptive or single-method approaches, with limited use of mixed-method designs that combine statistical

analysis with qualitative insights (Bolderston, 2008). This results in a partial understanding of the phenomenon, lacking both measurable patterns and contextual depth. There is therefore a need for methodological triangulation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation.

Finally, while global guidelines such as those of IFLA (2023) emphasize the importance of prison libraries as instruments of rehabilitation, there is insufficient research examining the extent to which these standards are implemented in practice, particularly in developing regions. The gap between policy frameworks and institutional realities remains largely unaddressed.

In view of these gaps, the present study seeks to provide a context-specific, empirically grounded, and theoretically integrated analysis of the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners in Kerala. By focusing on the perceptions of prison officials, examining institutional support systems, and employing a mixed-method approach, the study aims to bridge the divide between theory, policy, and practice in prison library research

2.14 Conclusion

The review of literature clearly demonstrates that prison libraries play a vital and multidimensional role in the rehabilitation of inmates, encompassing educational advancement, psychological well-being, vocational skill development, and social reintegration. Drawing from global and national experiences, it is evident that prison libraries, when adequately resourced and professionally managed, can serve as transformative spaces that not only address the intellectual and emotional needs of prisoners but also contribute significantly to behavioural reform and reduction of re-offending. Studies reviewed highlight how bibliotherapy, structured literacy programs, and access to diverse reading materials foster self-awareness, empathy, and constructive thinking among inmates. The library extension initiatives and vocational training modules facilitated through prison libraries particularly in states like Kerala offer promising models that integrate reading, learning, and skill acquisition into the broader rehabilitative process. At the same time, attention is drawn to persistent

challenges, including limited infrastructure, digital divide, censorship concerns, and inconsistent policy implementation.

Importantly, this chapter identifies significant gaps in the existing literature especially concerning the perceptions of prison officials, the unique operational context of Kerala's correctional institutions, and the alignment of Indian prison libraries with international standards such as those of IFLA. These gaps underscore the need for a focused empirical study that examines how prison libraries in Kerala's central prisons contribute to rehabilitation from the perspective of prison authorities. Hence, the present study is warranted as it intends to bridge these gaps by exploring the availability, accessibility, and perceived effectiveness of prison libraries in Kerala's central prisons. It also aims to assess the extent to which these libraries meet the educational, psychological, and reintegrative needs of inmates. The following chapter will discuss in detail the research design and methodology employed to investigate these core dimensions.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Research Design

3.3 Research Approach

3.4 Research framework

3.5 Variables

3.6 Data Collection

3.7 Population and Sampling

3.8 Data Analysis

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3.10 Limitations of the study

3.11 Conclusion

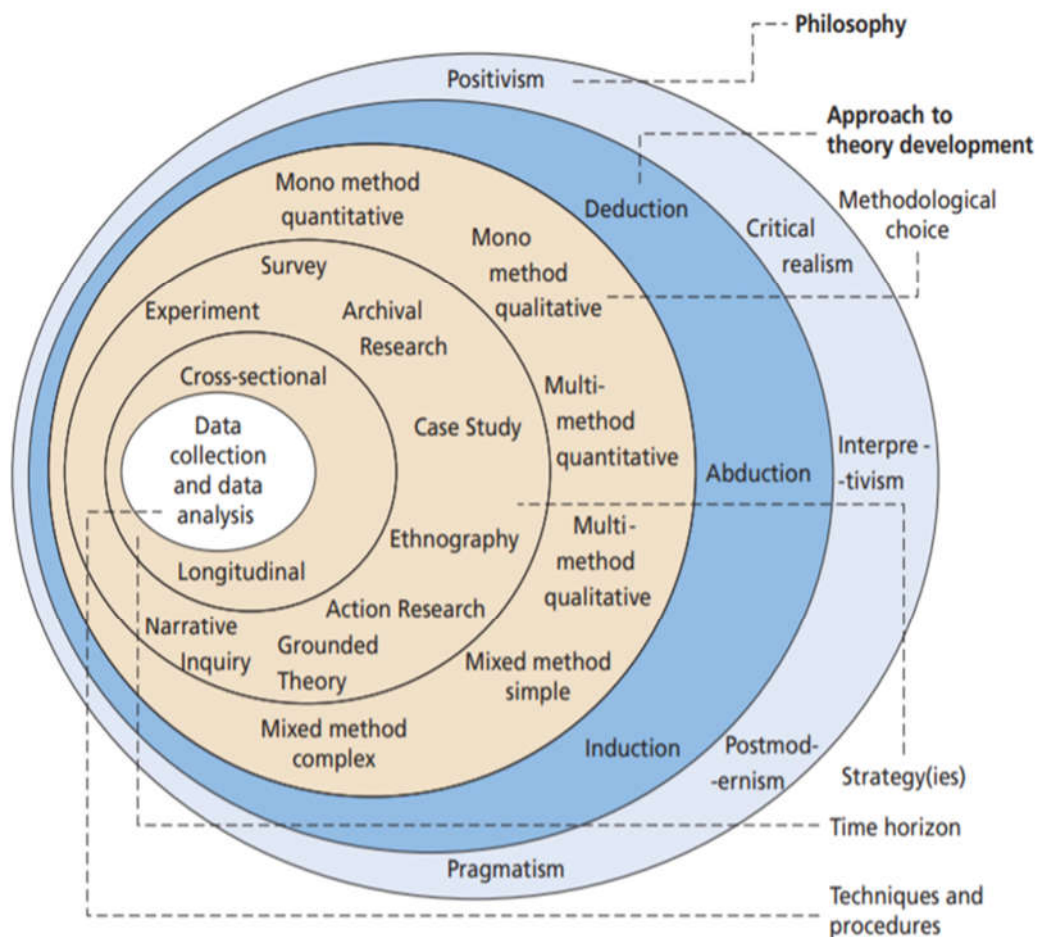
References

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology plays a significant role in fulfilling the objectives of the study. This chapter focuses on detailing the methods employed in the research to achieve the objectives of the study. The present study utilized the “Research Onion” framework as described by Saunders et al. (2019) to guide its methodology.

Figure 5

Research Onion



Source: Saunders et al. (2019, p. 130)

Figure 1 presents the "Research Onion" framework as illustrated by Saunders et al. (2019), which outlines the systematic approach for selecting and defining the methods of a study. To achieve a clear understanding of the advantages and suitability of the chosen components of methodology, every researcher needs to articulate the methodology, starting from the outermost layer, which is the selection of research philosophy or paradigm, and progressing inward to the core, which encompasses the methods of data collection and analysis. This chapter will progress from the outermost to the innermost layer of the "research onion," defining each component, outlining its advantages, and explaining the rationale for its application in the current study.

Research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs and assumptions that guide the research process, including the choice of methods, data collection, and interpretation of findings. In this study, a pragmatic research philosophy is adopted. Pragmatism emphasises the use of methods that are most suitable for addressing the research problem rather than adhering strictly to a single philosophical paradigm. It allows the integration of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The present study examines the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation based on the perceptions of prison officials, while also incorporating qualitative insights from inmates and senior officials. Therefore, the use of a mixed-method approach aligns well with the pragmatic philosophy, as it facilitates the combination of numerical analysis with contextual interpretation. The adoption of pragmatism ensures that the research focuses on practical outcomes and real-world implications, particularly in understanding institutional practices and improving the rehabilitative role of prison libraries in the correctional system.

3.2 Research Design

The term "research design" refers to the comprehensive framework encompassing the selected research methods and procedures. Researchers can utilize optimal methodologies for the study and establish a solid foundation for future success with the design they have chosen. The research design outlines in detail the methods and approaches that should be utilized in a study (Patten, 2016). The structure is

fundamentally intended to assist researchers in addressing their challenges (Turner et al., 2017). An effective research strategy is typically one that yields the least biased data while enhancing confidence in the validity, reliability, and precision of the findings. Consequently, the effectiveness of any study framework relies on selecting the most appropriate research design (Tobi & Kampen, 2018).

3.2.1 Descriptive Research Design

The objective of a descriptive research design is to systematically collect data that can be utilized to define a particular aspect of an event, situation, or population. This approach is more effective for addressing inquiries related to “what, when, where, and how,” rather than those focused on “why,” concerning the subject under investigation (Atmowardoyo, 2018). A range of research strategies is utilized to investigate the numerous factors involved. The analysis primarily depends on numerical data, with qualitative information being incorporated on occasion (Rahi, 2017).

The current study utilised a descriptive research design to collect and analyse data from primary sources, aiming to determine the perception levels of prison officials related to prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners. This approach would ensure the study maintains objectivity and yields dependable results.

3.3 Research Approach

The term “research approach” refers to the various plans and procedures that might be utilised, ranging from general hypotheses to particular plans for data collecting, analysis, and interpretation. According to Kankam (2020), these are the general methods that researchers put into practice to carry out their research projects. When it comes to selecting a suitable research approach, there are a number of considerations that need to be arrived at. In the process of choosing the research approach, it is important to take into account the characteristics of the study problem, the author's own experiences, and the people who will be participating in the research. Approaches that are qualitative and quantitative are the two most common types of research methods.

3.3.1 Quantitative Research

This is characterised by its reliance on numerical and quantifiable data. The quantitative approach is used to measure perception levels and institutional variables using numerical data. It facilitates statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

To conclude, the quantitative approach focuses on quantifying the variables that are relevant to the investigation. When it comes to finding answers to questions concerning “who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how,” this method is applied to find the data. For example, correlational studies, survey studies, causal studies, and experimental studies are the four different categories of quantitative research (Apuke, 2017).

3.3.2 Qualitative Research

This type of research focuses on exploring or investigating the quality of relationships, activities, events, or materials. The collection and examination of numerical data is typically not a part of qualitative research. This method of study, on the other hand, is based on documenting and analysing the perspectives of individuals (Frainkel, 2015). The qualitative approach is used to gather in-depth insights from inmates and senior officials regarding the functioning of prison libraries and their role in rehabilitation.

3.3.3 Mixed Research Approach

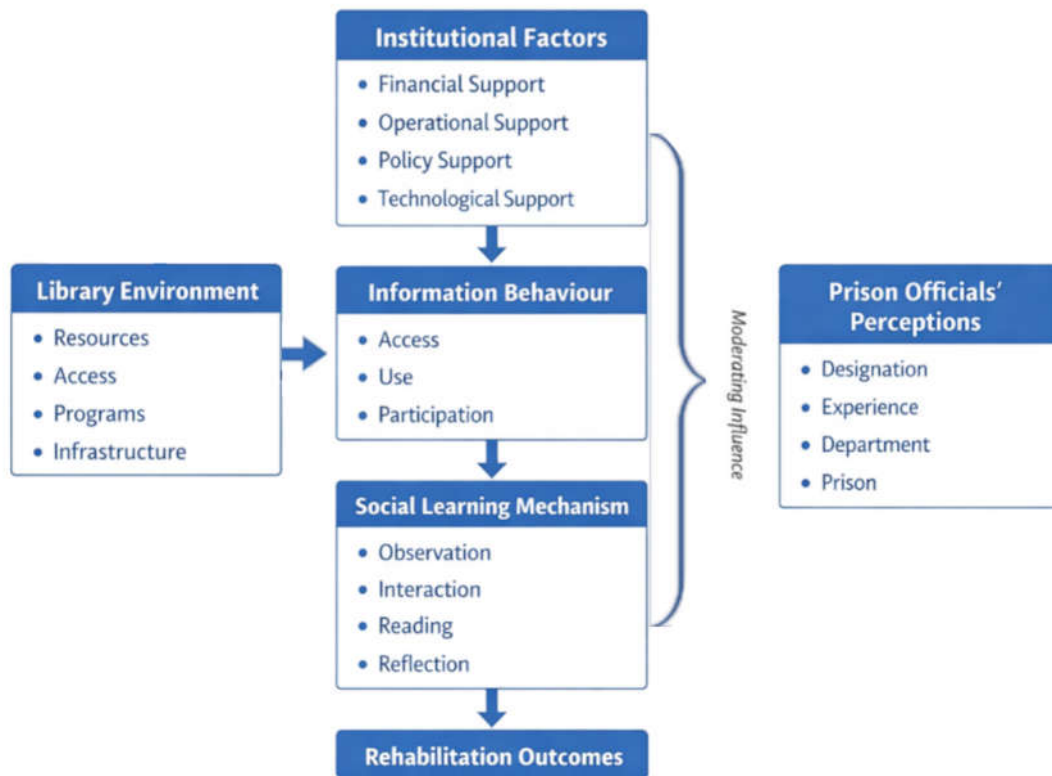
Irvine et al. (2020) indicate that the mixed-method research approach is among the most effective strategies associated with research operations. Sahin and Ozturk (2019) emphasise the significance of employing mixed methods in research to gather and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data within a single study. This facilitates an in-depth examination of the pertinent research issues. Fetters and Freshwater (2015) assert that the integration phenomenon is a crucial element of mixed methods research. It is essential for researchers employing mixed methods to effectively integrate the quantitative and qualitative elements of their work to provide significance and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of business research.

In order to provide answers to the research questions, the current study utilised a mixed research approach. A quantitative technique was used since the current study is concerned with assessing the perception of prison officials in Central Prisons of Kerala in relation to the prison libraries, and a qualitative research method was used to gather data from the prisoners closely related to prison libraries. Qualitative data were also collected from senior officials in the prison department. The results arrived at through both methods were triangulated to conclude.

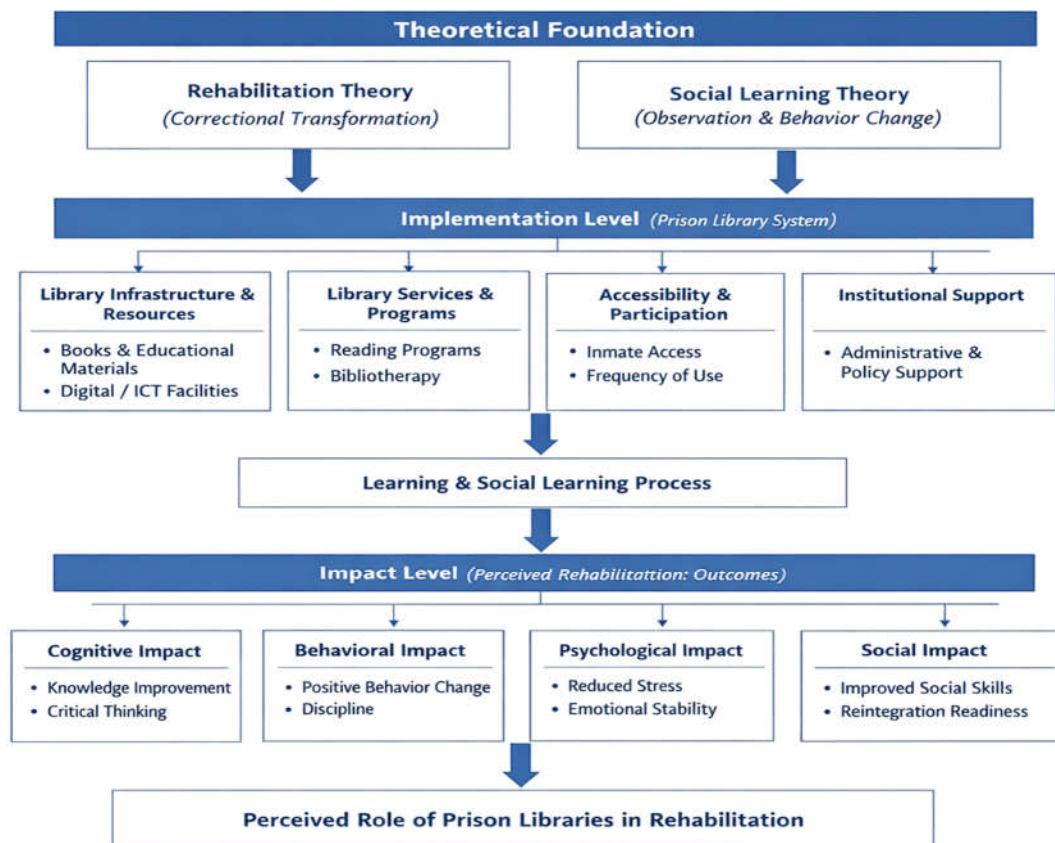
3.4 Research framework

3.4.1 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is grounded in rehabilitation theory, which provides the overarching foundation for understanding the change in offenders through structured interventions. Within this framework, institutional factors such as financial, operational, policy, and technological support influence the functioning of prison libraries. The library environment facilitates inmates' information behaviour, including access, use, and participation. These processes are further explained through social learning mechanisms, where inmates develop behavioural and cognitive changes through observation, interaction, reading, and reflection. The perceptions of prison officials act as moderating factors influencing the effectiveness of these relationships. Ultimately, these interconnected processes contribute to rehabilitation outcomes, including educational development, behavioural change, emotional well-being, and reintegration. The independent variables (prison, designation, department, and experience) influence the perceptions of prison officials, while dependent variables, infrastructure, institutional support, access, participation, and library utilisation collectively contribute to the perceived rehabilitative role of prison libraries.

Figure 6***Conceptual framework******3.4.2 Theoretical framework***

The present study is guided by an integrative theoretical perspective drawing upon rehabilitation theory, social learning theory, and institutional perspectives. Rehabilitation theory provides the overarching framework by conceptualising the transformation of offenders through educational, behavioural, and psychosocial development. Social learning theory explains the mechanisms through which inmates develop behavioural changes through observation, interaction, and engagement with reading materials and peer environments within the prison library context. The institutional perspectives explain the role of organisational support systems, including financial, operational, policy, and technological factors, in shaping the functioning and effectiveness of prison libraries.

Figure 7***Theoretical Framework (Integrated)***

These theoretical perspectives guide the selection of variables, development of research instruments, and interpretation of findings. While the quantitative analysis examines measurable aspects such as perception, institutional support, access, and participation, the qualitative analysis provides deeper insights into behavioural and cognitive processes, particularly through the lens of social learning and rehabilitation. A detailed theoretical integration is presented in the qualitative analysis and discussion sections.

3.5 Variables

The variables in the study have been classified into two categories, namely independent variables and dependent variables.

3.5.1 Independent variable

An independent variable is a factor that researchers observe to see if it affects the dependent variable. These are factors presumed to influence outcomes. The present study tries to understand the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation process of prisoners and the perception of prison officials about the prison libraries. Independent variables represent the background and demographic characteristics that may influence perceptions. These include

- Central prisons of Kerala
- Designation of prison officials
- Department (Administration, Welfare, Security)
- Experience of prison officials

These variables are used to examine differences in perception across groups.

3.5.1.1 Central Prisons of Kerala

Here, the researcher tried to find out the perception levels of prison officials in various central prisons in Kerala. At the beginning of the research, there existed only three central prisons and a new central prison was established at Tavanur, in 2022. The new central prison at Tavanur was excluded from the study. The central prisons of Poojappura, Viyyur and Kannur were selected for the study.

3.5.1.2 Designation of Prison Officials

Designation defines the work profiles and the hierarchy of the officials. Here, four levels of hierarchy are selected. The first category “Superintendents” in the study is arrived at by pooling the designations, Superintendent, Joint Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Gr.I. for the ease of categorisation.

The second category is “Welfare Officers”, where the Chief Welfare Officer, Welfare Officer Gr.I and Welfare Officer Gr.II are included for this study.

The third category of designation is “Assistant Superintendents”, which represents the Assistant Superintendents Gr.II in the Central Prisons of Kerala.

The fourth category for the study is “Prison Officers” where Prison Officers, Deputy Prison Officers and Assistant Prison Officers are included.

3.5.1.3 Experience of Prison Officials

Experience adds to one’s knowledge. The officials with different years of experience within the institutional set up may have different perceptions about the institution. Information is collected from the officials with three categories of experience. The study covers the experience of officials less than 5 years, 5 -10 years, and above 10 years.

3.5.1.4 Department of the Prison Officials

The departments the officials working in, were categorized as Administration Wing, Welfare Wing, and Security Wing. The library services were not operated or run by the officials but by the prisoners who were assigned the job by the Welfare Office. So, a qualitative method was adopted to gather information on the library services.

3.5.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variables for the study are, role and contribution of prison libraries to rehabilitation, access to prison libraries, participation level of prisoners in library programs and services, impact of prisoner participation, library programs in behaviour modification, literacy and vocational knowledge acquisition, reduction of stress and anxiety levels, and perceived usefulness of the library in personal development of prisoners.

3.5.2.1 Library Infrastructure, Services, and Resources

This variable defines the infrastructure of the prison libraries, the number of books available, the availability of newspapers and magazines, the presence of trained staff, funding levels, the level of modernisation activities such as digital library

facilities, and access to technology like computers and the internet. These variables influence accessibility and quality of prison libraries.

3.5.2.2 Perception of Prison Officials

This variable refers to the beliefs and attitudes of prison officials towards the importance and effectiveness of prison libraries in rehabilitation. Factors that might influence these perceptions include their designation, experience, department they work and their overall views on rehabilitation.

3.5.2.3 Opinion of the prison officials regarding functions of prison libraries

This variable captures how prison officials perceive, evaluate, and interpret the actual and potential functions of prison libraries. Since prison officials are key stakeholders in administration and rehabilitation, their opinions shape how libraries are managed, resourced, and integrated into correctional programmes. Their views act as an indirect indicator of the institutional value attached to prison libraries.

3.5.2.4 Utilization of Prison Library in Rehabilitation

Education and skill development, recreation and entertainment, mental health and emotional support, preparation for re-integration into society and constructive use of free time within prison are considered for study under this variable.

3.5.2.5 Institutional Support

Here the availability of financial support, operational support, staffing and training, (professional librarians, inmate librarians, and volunteers), policy and attitudinal support, and technological support is considered for the study.

3.5.1.6 Access to Prison Libraries, its Resources and Programs

Accessibility is the ease with which prisoners can physically and practically reach and use the library facilities. It includes factors such as designated time and hours, location, resource availability, and the absence of restrictive access controls.

3.5.1.7 Types of resources used by prisoners

These variable studies the types of resources in prison libraries based on the preferences of inmates.

3.5.1.8 Participation in library programs

Prison library programmes are important for fostering literacy, cognitive growth, and rehabilitation among inmates. They provide a structured and purposeful setting that encourages prisoners to engage with educational resources, enhance life skills, and nurture constructive reading and learning habits.

3.5.1.9 Challenges in participating in library programs

Here the challenges faced by the inmates in participating in the library programs are studied.

3.5.1.10 Challenges and Limitations

This variable explores the obstacles faced by prison libraries in delivering services, including limited funding, staff shortages, security issues restricting library access, and censorship policies.

These variables capture the perceived contribution of prison libraries to rehabilitation, rather than direct behavioural outcomes.

3.6 Data Collection

The objective of data collection is to gather and quantify information to produce valuable insights. The process entails the collection and organisation of data from various sources (Subbarayudu et al., 2024). The gathering of data possesses an objective quality and is amenable to analysis through statistical methodologies. The current study utilised a primary data source to present its findings, highlighting the significance of the data collection method employed. Gathering data presents challenges for numerous researchers because of the significant time and effort involved. Survey research is utilised to gather data from a substantial sample. This approach allows for the collection of data from extensive sources, thereby enhancing

statistical power and equipping the researcher with the capability to compile a substantial amount of data. Various validated models are available for the purpose of a questionnaire survey. To achieve the benefits of a questionnaire-based survey, it is essential to plan, which necessitates considerable patience (Jones et al., 2013).

3.6.1 Data Collection Tool

The current study utilised a questionnaire-based survey to collect primary data. The data has been gathered from prison officials in the central prisons of Kerala. The data pertaining to the variables established in alignment with the study's objective is quantified using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was created through a thorough analysis of various questionnaires utilised in comparable studies, with necessary adjustments made to meet the specific needs of the current research. This tool was designed to capture comprehensive data on their perceptions, observed outcomes, perceived institutional support systems, observed challenges, and suggestions related to prison libraries. The purpose behind using a questionnaire was to gather standardised, comparable data from a diverse group of prison officials across multiple central prisons. As frontline stakeholders in prison administration and inmate welfare, prison officials are uniquely positioned to observe the functioning of prison libraries and evaluate their effective impression on prisoner rehabilitation. Their perspectives offer valuable insights into institutional support mechanisms, policy implementation, program relevance, and behavioural outcomes among prisoners. The questionnaire was developed after a thorough review of literature on prison library services, rehabilitation theory, and relevant international guidelines (e.g., IFLA, UNODC, CPAI), and was validated through expert review and pre-testing.

3.6.2 Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into ten sections, each targeting a distinct dimension of the research objectives:

Sections	Focus Area	Purpose
I	Demographic Information	To capture background variables (age, role, department, experience) for profiling and comparison.
II	Present Status of Prison Libraries	Resources, Services, and Infrastructure of the three central prison libraries were collected.
III	Perception level of prison officials.	To assess the level of perception level of prison officials regarding the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation.
IV	Opinion about the functions of the prison library	To know the opinion of prison officials about the functions of prison libraries.
V	Institutional Support	To evaluate financial, operational, staffing, policy, and technological support available to prison libraries.
VI	Programs and Services	To identify the types of programs implemented through prison libraries and their perceived relevance.
VII	Access and Participation	To assess inmate access to library services and the level of participation in library-based programs.
IX	Challenges and Barriers	To explore constraints and limitations affecting the effectiveness of library services.
X	Collaboration and Integration	To understand the extent and potential for partnerships with external agencies.
XI	Future Development and Recommendations	To collect suggestions and expectations for improving the rehabilitative role of prison libraries.

Most sections employ Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) and (High = 3, Medium = 2, Low = 1) to measure attitudinal and perceptual variables, while others include ranking questions, dichotomous choices, and open-ended items to allow for detailed qualitative responses.

An interview schedule was also designed for collecting information from prisoners working in the library and who were closely related to the library and from higher officials in prison administration. The qualitative data collected through the

open-ended questions were also analysed and used for supporting the findings of quantitative data analysis.

3.7 Population and Sampling

In any quantitative study, sampling and population represent two of the most critical aspects of the research. The population refers to the complete set of individuals who meet the specified inclusion criteria for participation in the study. Consequently, obtaining responses from every member of the population is not feasible. For the research, a small segment of the population is utilised to gather responses, and this segment is referred to as a sample. The individuals from the population chosen for data collection, who meet the specified criteria, are known as the sample. When selecting a sample, it is essential to ensure that it accurately represents the entire population. The participants in the current study are the prison officials in the three central prisons of Kerala. The study utilised a sample size of 381 respondents. Gender was not considered as a variable, as the central prisons selected for study were for male prisoners, and the prison officials were also males.

The choice of sampling technique is determined by the study's objectives and the time and resources available to the researcher. The study adopts a convenience sampling method, which is a non-probability sampling technique. This method was selected due to institutional and administrative constraints associated with accessing prison officials. Although convenience sampling may limit generalisation, it is appropriate in controlled environments such as prisons where access is restricted. Rather than inviting every individual from a target population to take part in a study, researchers employ sampling methods to select participants at their discretion. This technique is more cost-effective and efficient, making it a favoured choice within the research community (Stratton, 2021).

3.7.1 Breakup of respondents

Table 3.7.1

Prison-wise distribution of respondents

Name of Prison	No. of Officials	Samples selected	Responses received	% of responses
Central Prison & Correctional Home, Poojappura.	243	158	158	100
Central Prison & Correctional Home, Viyyur.	145	106	100	94
Central Prison & Correctional Home, Kannur.	216	140	123	88
Total	604	404	391	94.3

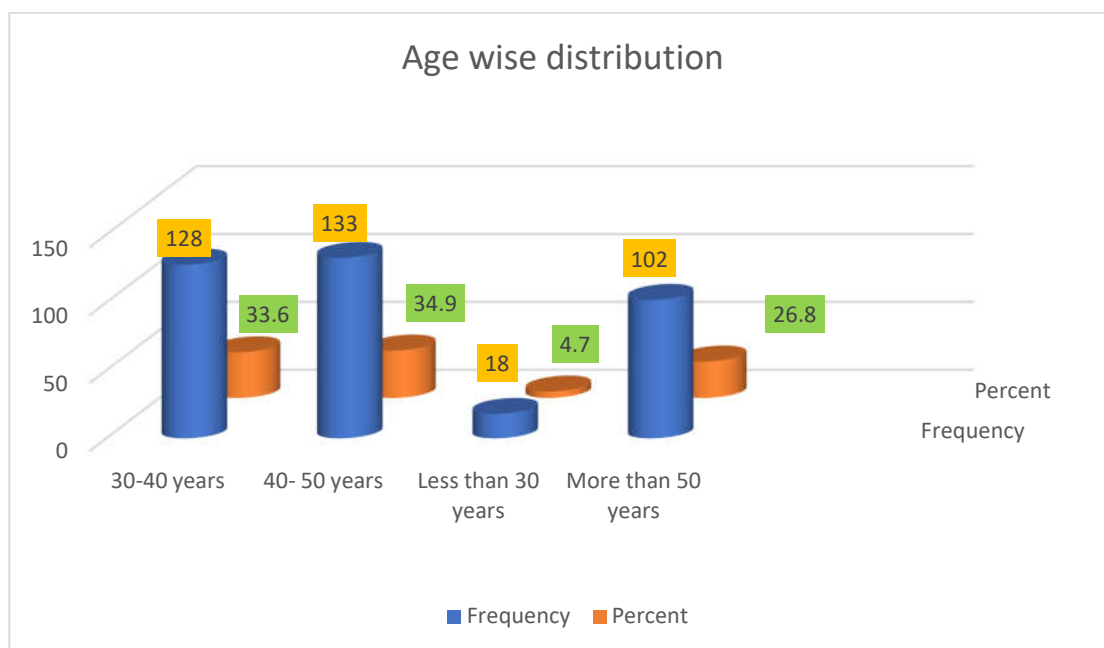
Respondents are distributed across three central prisons of Kerala: Central Prisons & Correctional Home, Poojappura has the highest representation (41.46%), followed by Central Prisons & Correctional Home, Kannur (32.30%), and Central Prisons & Correctional Home, Viyyur (26.24%). The cumulative percent shows that three-quarters of respondents are from Poojappura and Kannur combined. The sample collected depends on the size, capacity, and population of the prisons. The highest population is in Central prison, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram and then comes Central Prison, Kannur and then Central Prison, Viyyur.

3.7.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

3.7.2.1 Age wise distribution of respondents

Figure 8

Age wise distribution of respondents



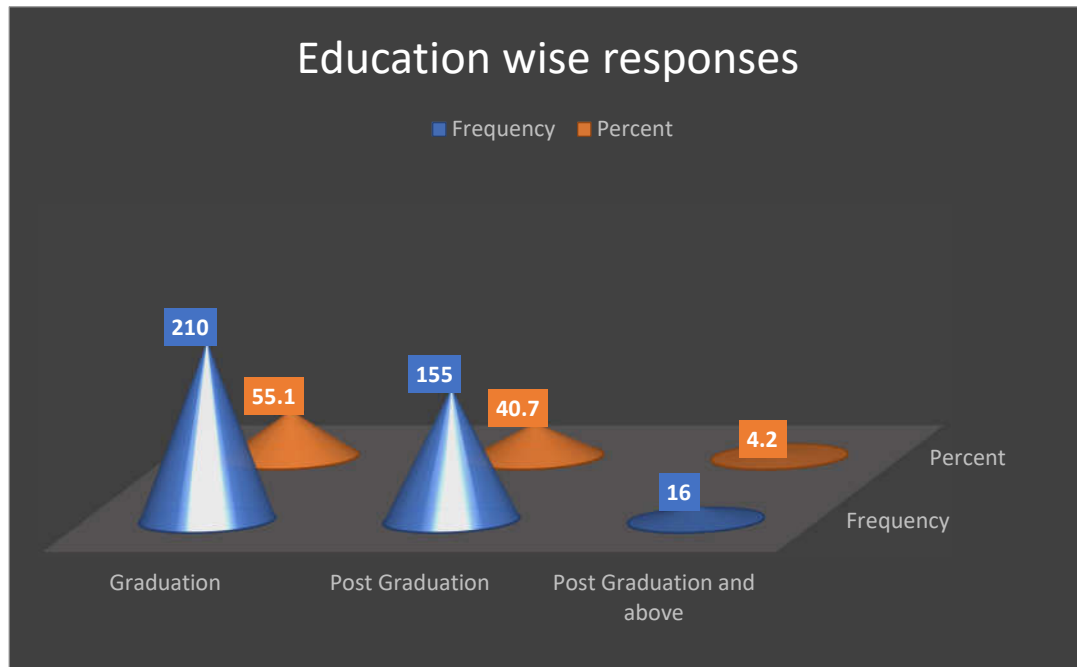
Most respondents fall within the 40-50 age range, with 34.9%, those within age 30-40 are 33.6%. A smaller percentage are younger than 30 (4.7%) or older than 50 (26.8%). The data suggests middle-aged individuals dominate the population surveyed.

3.7.2.2 Education-wise distribution of respondents.

A majority of respondents have a graduation (55.1%) or post-graduation (40.7%) degree, while only 4.2% possess qualifications beyond post-graduation. The high proportion of educated individuals may indicate a skilled workforce in the prison system.

Figure 9

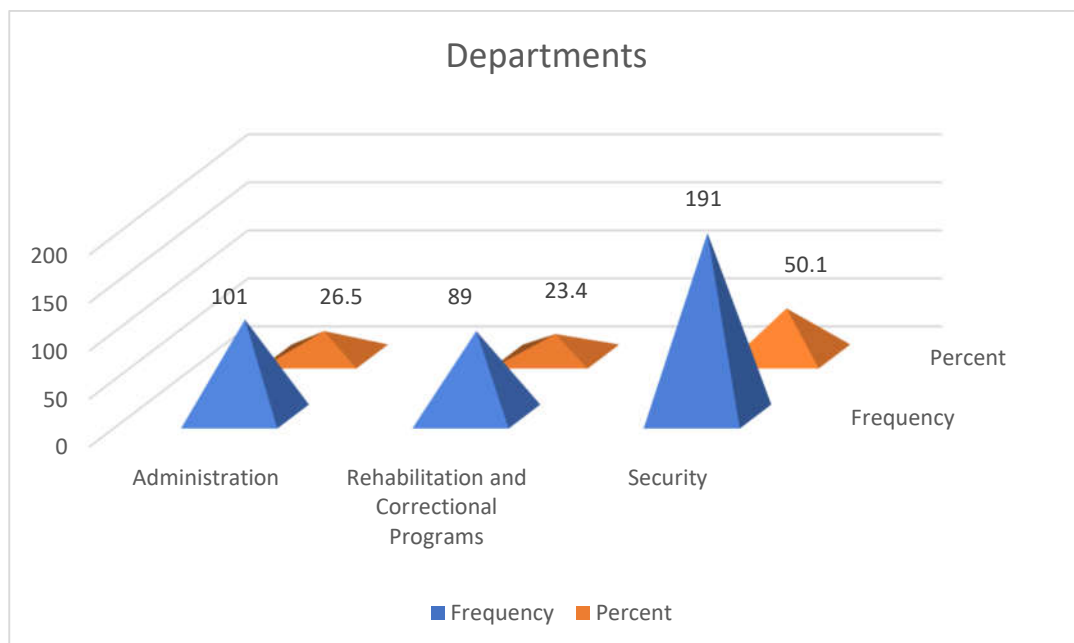
Education-wise distribution of respondents.



3.7.2.3 Department wise distribution of respondents

Figure 10

Department wise distribution of respondents

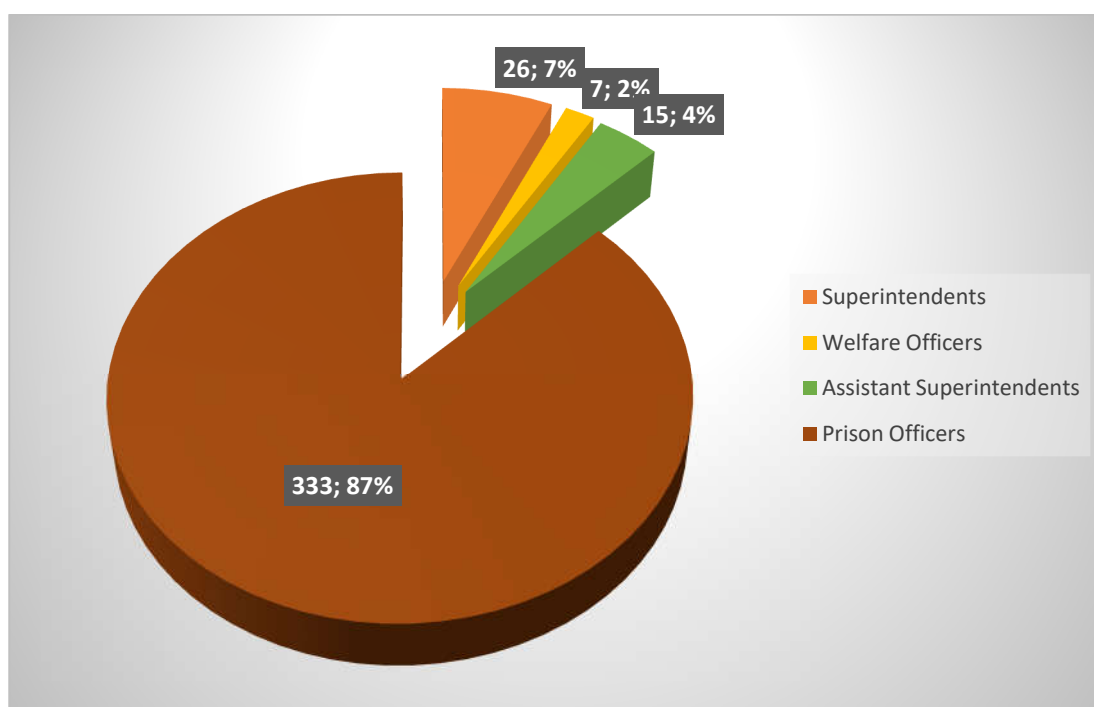


The security department has the highest representation (50.1%), followed by administration (26.5%) and rehabilitation and correctional programs (23.4%). This suggests that security personnel form the largest group involved in prison operations. The prison situation calls for more employees in the security wing. The security wing officials are closer to the cells and can understand the life and experiences of a prisoner. They can watch their activities and behaviours in a better way.

3.7.2.4 Designation-wise distribution of respondents

Figure 11

Designation-wise distribution of respondents

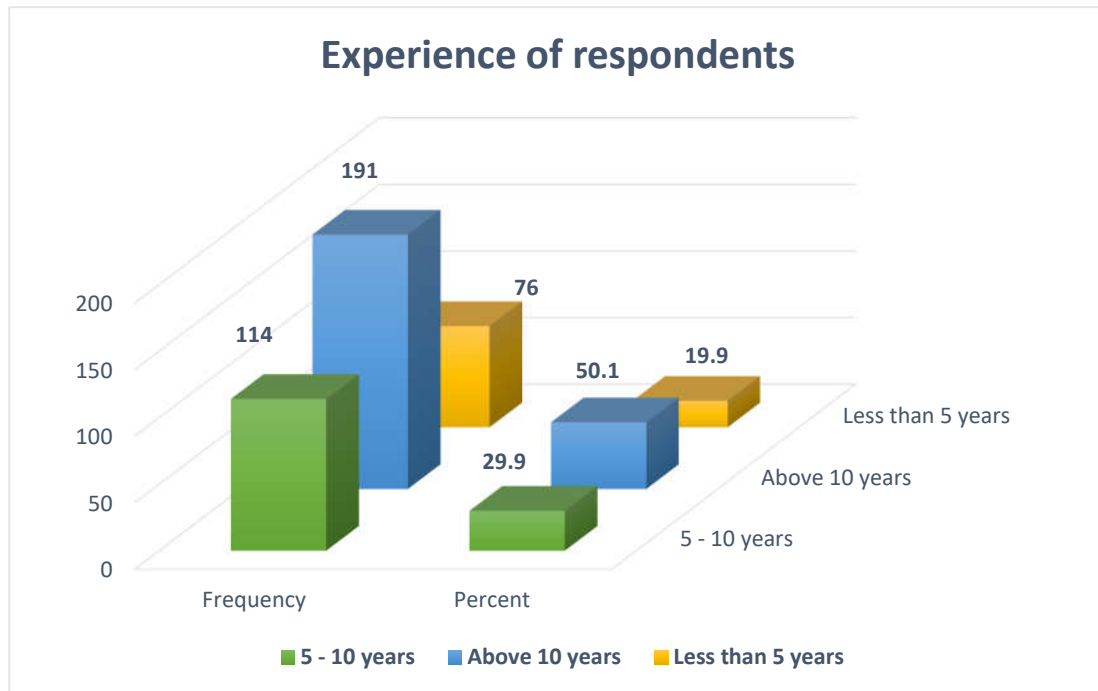


Most respondents are prison officers (87.4%), followed by superintendents (6.8%). Assistant superintendents (3.9%) and welfare officers (1.8%) collectively form a smaller proportion, highlighting the dominance of frontline roles in the sample.

3.7.2.5 Experience wise distribution of respondents

Figure 12

Experience wise distribution of respondents



Half of the respondents (50.1%) have over 10 years of experience, 29.9% have 5-10 years, and 19.9% have less than 5 years. This distribution indicates a workforce with substantial experience in the prison system.

3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Quantitative Analysis

The data collected through a survey-based questionnaire was analysed utilising IBM SPSS software. SPSS is frequently used for the analysis of quantitative data, as recommended by numerous authors, including Muijs (2022). SPSS is employed by numerous researchers worldwide. This software provides researchers with the capability to obtain accurate results promptly. Multiple tests can be performed concurrently, utilising SPSS. This study utilised the software to analyse demographic factors and perform various statistical tests to evaluate the research hypothesis.

Descriptive statistics were utilised for the current study. Descriptive statistics enable researchers to compute and summarise the data gathered through the survey questionnaire. The SPSS software effectively delivered both numerical and graphical representations of data. Appropriate statistical tools were employed to test the hypothesis.

3.8.1.1 Data Grading and Scoring

A five-point and three-point Likert scale were used to report data for some of the items of the questionnaire. The score 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 have been given for positive statements and reverse scores for negative statements.

3.8.1.2 Data Consolidation

The collected data were consolidated using MS Excel, and subsequent statistical analyses were performed with SPSS and MS Excel. The hypotheses were then tested based on the results derived from these analyses.

3.8.1.3 Data Analysis Techniques

1. Mean: It is the average values used to measure the level of variables.
2. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance): This inferential statistical test used to test the variation in one or more groups by comparing the mean values.
3. Tukey"s HSD Test: It is a statistical tool for testing the means of two or more sets of data to identify the significant difference between them.
4. Ranking method: It refers to placing things in order based on certain criteria. It could be either in ascending or descending order.
5. Weighted Mean: When certain data points in a data set are more representative or more significant, then weighted mean is used. It is calculated by multiplying the weight with a particular outcome.

6. Simple Percentage Analysis: It refers to a special kind of rate, percentage is used in making a comparison between two or more series of data. A percentage is used to determine the relationship between the series.

The study employs descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA as the primary analytical tools, as the research objective is exploratory and perception-oriented rather than predictive or causal.

3.8.2 Qualitative Analysis

The data collected through interviews from prisoners assigned duty of librarians and the higher officials of the Kerala Prisons and Correctional Department were transcribed, coded and put to thematic analysis. The findings of both quantitative and qualitative analysis were verified and triangulated for finer results and findings.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns should be highlighted as a set of standards and regulations that researchers must adhere to during the research process, especially in data collection, as this can result in numerous ethical violations (Saunders et al., 2019). Formal consent was obtained from the study participants. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and how the data collected from them will be utilised. Participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the data-gathering process until the data has been compiled and analysed. The researcher ensured that the identities of the respondents are protected and their anonymity is maintained. Additionally, it was guaranteed that the responses from them remain entirely confidential. The researcher utilised pseudonyms for confidentiality, and the collected data is stored electronically, with access limited to a select few individuals, including the supervisor.

3.10 Limitations of the study

The study has certain limitations as it uses non-probability sampling, limited direct access to prisoners, reliance on perceptions of prison officials and restriction to the

three central prisons in Kerala. However, these limitations are inherent in prison-based research and do not affect the overall validity of the study.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter presents a comprehensive account of the research methodology employed in the study. It outlines the overall research design, sampling strategy, details of the questionnaire, instruments and techniques used for data collection, and the statistical procedures applied for data analysis. The subsequent chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

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CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

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- 4.1 *Present Status of Central Prison Libraries of Kerala*
 - 4.2 *Perception of Prison Officials about Role of Prison Libraries*
 - 4.3 *Opinion of Prison Officials about Various Functional Components of Prison Libraries.*
 - 4.4 *Nature of Utilisation of Prison Libraries by Prisoners as Perceived by Prison Officials*
 - 4.5 *Institutional Support*
 - 4.6 *Access to prison libraries, its resources and programs*
 - 4.7 *Types of resources*
 - 4.8 *Participation in library programs*
 - 4.9 *Challenges in participating in library programs*
 - 4.10 *Impact of prison library on prisoner rehabilitation as perceived by prison officials of central prisons of Kerala. (Open end question).*
 - Conclusion*
 - References*
-

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from prison officials in the central prisons of Kerala regarding their perceptions of prison libraries. It focuses on the viewpoints of prison staff and incorporates insights into the experiences of inmates who are closely associated with the library operations in the absence of library staff. The chapter draws on quantitative data to provide statistical evidence on how prison officials perceive the role of libraries in facilitating rehabilitation. Key aspects examined include the present status of central prison libraries, role of prison libraries in rehabilitation of the prisoners, access to the library, its programs and services, resources and support from the authorities, types of resources, resources used, library programs, challenges faced by prison libraries, their collaborations and partnerships.

A few open-ended questions were also asked through questionnaires which were treated as qualitative data and analysed. Furthermore, qualitative data is examined to elucidate inmates' intricate experiences and reflections in prison library work and its utilisation. The narratives make clear the library's function in promoting personal development, emotional health and preparedness for societal reintegration. To have a comprehensive idea about the policies and practices regarding the prison system, an interview was conducted with the higher officials of central prisons, and officials at prison headquarters. The analysis intends to identify trends and patterns in the quantitative data using descriptive and inferential statistical methods with the help of MS Excel, for organising and coding data, and SPSS for the descriptive as well as inferential analysis. Thematic analysis was adopted to investigate thematic insights derived from qualitative data, highlighting the transformative effects of prison libraries as perceived by the officials as well as the prisoners playing the role of librarians. The analysis applies a mixed approach to connect the numerical data with human experiences. It brings out a better understanding of the potential and challenges of prison libraries as a rehabilitation tool as perceived by the prison officials.. The findings presented in this chapter reflect the perceptions of prison officials regarding the rehabilitative role of prison libraries, rather than direct measurement of

rehabilitation outcomes such as re-entry, behavioural change, or post-release integration. The study follows a convergent mixed-method approach, where quantitative findings are supported and interpreted using qualitative insights from interviews and open-ended responses. The IFLA Guidelines are used as a comparative framework rather than a prescriptive standard, considering their global recognition in prison library development. This chapter builds a foundation for interpreting the results and findings on the basis of which informed recommendations can be made.

4.2 Present Status of Central Prison Libraries of Kerala

Prison libraries are widely recognised as important support mechanisms for rehabilitation, as perceived by prison officials and supported in existing literature. The libraries support mental well-being through reading and library programs, improve literacy and social integration (Lehmann, 2011; IFLA, 2023). All three central prisons in Kerala work independently under a unified correctional framework. So, it is essential to do a prison-wise analysis. This will help to identify localised challenges and institutional disparities. A systematic evaluation of the infrastructure, resources, staffing and services of the prison libraries reveals that there are service gaps and minimal infrastructure across all the three central prison libraries. Furthermore, such a diagnostic framework enables alignment with globally accepted standards, particularly the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners. This underscore principles such as equity of access, professional management, and the integration of rehabilitative programming into library services (IFLA, 2023). Hence, the study aims to generate empirical evidence that can aid in policy interventions, guide equitable resource allocation, and support strategic improvement of prison library services in Kerala.

The present section analyses the status of library infrastructure and services in the three central prisons of Kerala using the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners (2023) as the benchmark. A comparative checklist (see Appendix I) was developed across key indicators derived from the IFLA standards, which include infrastructure, staffing, access to digital resources, user education, and programmatic services. The

analysis reveals that all the three prison libraries possess physical infrastructure, including reading rooms, circulation desks, and essential furniture. However, a notable and consistent shortcoming is the absence of professionally qualified librarians, a significant deviation from the IFLA Guidelines, which advocates for the appointment of qualified library professionals to ensure effective and equitable service delivery. Instead, library operations are managed by inmates lacking formal training, which may compromise both the quality and sustainability of library services.

Table 4.1

The Current Status of the Prison Libraries of the Central Prisons of Kerala

Sl. No.	Facilities	Poojappura	Viyyur	Kannur
1.	Accommodation & furniture			
	Reading rooms	✓	✓	✓
	Lighting/Fan	✓	✓	✓
	Reading Tables	✓	✓	✓
	Chairs	✓	✓	✓
	Shelves	✓	✓	✓
	Circulation desk	✓	✓	✓
2.	Human resources			
	Qualified librarians	No	No	No
	Welfare staff as library staff	No	No	No
	Staff with previous library experience	No	No	No
	Prisoners given duty of library	✓	✓	✓
3.	Library Collection			
	Books: Fiction, Non-fiction, Religious books, Text books	17545	17435	15884
	News Papers (In Malayalam, English, Tamil, Hindi and (Kannada at Kannur)	88	36	47
	Newspapers are bought in the ratio 15:1			
	Prisoners can buy personally too on payment.			

	Magazines (Mathrubhumi weekly, Travel magazines like Yathra, English magazines like The Week, frontline, Career magazines)	36	22	30
	Censoring of reading materials	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Average issue of books per day	103	110	80
4.	Digital Assistance			
	Gadgets like e-readers	No	No	No
	Internet access	No	No	No
	Television/Radio	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.	Services			
	Time allotted for reading (Between their working hours inmates can choose the time to visit library)	7:00am to 4:00pm	9:00am to 4:00pm	7:00am to 4:00pm
	Issue of materials to cell (Lending Service)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Educational assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Psychological assistance (books on	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Recreational reading	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Reference Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
	On demand literature services	Yes	Yes	Yes
	User education	No	No	No
	Extension/Outreach services (Book Talks, Vayanadinam, Library week celebrations, exhibitions)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Digital inclusion emerges as a critical area of deficiency across all the three prison libraries remain a critical shortfall. None of the prison libraries reported access to digital tools such as e-readers, internet access, or electronic cataloguing systems. According to IFLA standards, digital access is vital to ensure the modernity, relevance, and inclusiveness of library services within correctional settings. User education programs are also absent across all three prisons, contrary to IFLA recommendations which stress the importance of building information literacy and independent learning among inmates. This lapse weakens the rehabilitative potential

of these libraries, as many prisoners are not trained in managing library and its resources effectively (Lehmann, 2011).

Encouragingly, all three central prisons provide basic rehabilitative library services, including educational support, recreational reading, reference assistance, and psychological well-being. In addition, cultural and outreach initiatives such as Vayanadinam (Reading Day) celebrations and book exhibitions are conducted, reflecting a deliberate and proactive use of library spaces to foster inmate engagement and personal development. However, a critical gap lies in the absence of formal collaborations with external institutions, such as public libraries, non-governmental organisations, and universities. Such partnerships, strongly advocated by IFLA (2023), are considered best practices for enhancing the quality and diversity of services, facilitating reintegration planning, and mitigating the sense of isolation experienced by incarcerated individuals.

4.2.1 Present Status of Prison Libraries (Prison wise)

As shown in Table 4.1 all three central prisons provide basic library infrastructure and services such as lending, reading rooms, and library week celebrations. However, a consistent lack of professional staffing and digital tools was reported across all institutions. Qualitative feedback from officials revealed a strong reliance on inmate volunteers, which practically limits service sustainability and professional development. These findings indicate partial compliance with the IFLA standards. The library volunteers mentioned that there are inmates who regularly take books to their cells as they find it easy to cope with their trauma by reading books. In the words of an official, “One [inmate] has read almost all the books in the library during his period of sentence, and used to buy books with his earnings in prison”. The Chief Welfare Officer mentioned that, “there has to be a mechanism to make the library more beneficial and if any volunteering from universities or institutions to automate the library operations, they are welcomed. The outside world criticises the spending on prisoners but there is justification that these people have to be given opportunity to reform themselves and for that some account of struggle has to be taken from the part of administration”.

Officials across all three prisons consistently emphasized that efforts are made to improve library services, regardless of institutional differences. For instance, a Superintendent from Poojappura noted that “library activities are not carried out in line with any guidelines but we ensure the minimum possible services to inmates who are given access without discrimination”, while a Welfare Officer from Viyyur observed that “the same practices are followed in every central prison; there is no deviation from the basic norms”. Similarly, officials in Kannur reiterated that inclusivity and accessibility remain priorities, ensuring that the minimum services are provided. These convergent perspectives demonstrate a shared approach to implementing library services, thereby showing no prison-wise variation in the adherence to the IFLA recommendations. Although no significant prison-wise variation is observed, overall compliance with IFLA guidelines remains partial and limited across all institutions. It is understood from the observation and analysis of qualitative data that all the three prison libraries have limited infrastructure, collection and services. The digital contents and infrastructure are totally absent in all the three prison libraries. Respondent from Viyyur central prison said, “We are trying to make collaborations with NGOs and other Government organisations and educational institutes to contribute to library collections. Once in a while we arrange talks of writers, book reviews etc.,”.

4.2.2 Present Status of Prison Libraries (Department wise)

The functioning of prison libraries in Kerala is influenced by the administrative structure of each central prison, particularly the Administration, Welfare, and Security departments. Each department plays a distinct role in either enabling or restricting access to information, education, and rehabilitation through the library. Qualitative insights gathered from prison officials during the field study offer a deeper understanding of how these departments affect library operations on the ground.

Role of the Administration department

The administrative department of the prison is responsible for structural decisions related to budgeting, staffing, infrastructure enhancement, and overall

policy development. Across all three central prisons, a consistent challenge reported was the lack of qualified librarians. In Poojappura, officials noted that proposals for digital infrastructure such as e-readers and computer terminals had been pending for several years, with no clear administrative roadmap for implementation. Similarly, in Viyyur, while library usage was reportedly high, administrative support was limited to basic resource procurement.

"We have the will to improve the library, but without administrative sanction for a librarian or even minimal digital equipment, it is hard to make progress." Senior Officer, Viyyur

In Kannur, administrative involvement was described as passive. Officers indicated that while the administration was open to proposals, little proactive effort had been made to strengthen library services or initiate collaborations with public institutions.

Role of the Welfare Department

The welfare department is an active contributor to library services in all the three prisons. In all institutions, the welfare staff coordinates with inmate volunteers to manage day-to-day library activities, organize events, and select new reading materials. The welfare officers take on the de facto role of library coordinators, compensating for the absence of trained librarians to some extent, but their competing responsibilities limit consistent attention to the library. In Poojappura, the welfare department supports basic library operations and facilitates inmate access, but officials admitted that limited time and competing welfare duties prevent them from giving the library sustained attention. Viyyur prison, in contrast, has a more proactive welfare department that conducts regular reading sessions, organizes competitions, and ensures regular updates to the book collection within the limited funds. Welfare Officer, Viyyur opined that, *"We try to bring life to the library through weekly reading hours and book reviews among inmates. They appreciate this space."* Kannur Prison's welfare department stood out for its commitment to cultural and religious inclusivity in its collection and programming. Special efforts were made to source Kannada-language materials for the diverse inmate population, and festivals like *Vayanadinam* and *Library Week* were celebrated with inmate participation. In the words of the

Welfare Officer of Viyyur Prison *"Books are not just for leisure reading here. For many, it is the only way they keep their mind calm. We try to keep the library relevant to their faith, language, and needs."*

"As this prison is near to prison headquarters and always comes under the direct supervision of the Superior Officers, it is very strict here in the maintenance of discipline. Still, we have a good collection of books and reading space allows the inmates to make use of it from within the limitations of a punitive environment" - response from Poojappura Welfare department.

These testimonies underline the dedication of welfare officers but also expose the limitations of assigning professional library duties to non-specialist staff. Without training in librarianship or the time to devote fully to library work, the welfare department cannot entirely fulfil the roles expected of a librarian. This inadequacy contributes to uneven library performance across prisons, leaving significant gaps in access, collection development, and systematic rehabilitation programming through books. The IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners (4th ed., 2024) explicitly recommend that *"every prison library should be administered by a trained librarian, supported where necessary by auxiliary staff or inmate assistants"*. They further emphasise the need for professional expertise in collection development, information literacy, rehabilitation-oriented programming, and evaluation of library impact. By contrast, the current reliance on the welfare department in Kerala prisons represents a place where well-intentioned officers step into roles outside their professional training. The day-to-day work of the welfare department is loaded with the scheduling of interviews with the visitors of prisoners, their parole, grievances, medical issues, admission and release of prisoners. A remark from Poojappura central prison says, *"From morning till the end of our duty we are almost engaged with the office work and sometimes not even able to have food"*. The prisons are overcrowded which also makes them work hard.

Role of the Security department

The security department determines the physical access inmates have to the library, enforces material censorship, and ensures order within library spaces. Across

all the three prisons, security staff generally cooperated with welfare officers to facilitate inmate visits, while maintaining strict monitoring and censoring of reading materials and maintaining discipline in the premises. In Poojappura, security officers reported that while inmates were allowed to visit the library from 7 AM to 4 PM, all materials, especially magazines and new books were thoroughly screened for content deemed inappropriate or sensitive.

"We allow freedom to read, but within limits. Some books, especially political or provocative ones, are not suitable here." Security Officer, Poojappura

In Viyyur prison, the security department had developed a more adaptive approach, including the distribution of books to inmates in their cells, especially for those unable to visit due to health or disciplinary constraints. This flexibility helped ensure inclusive access even within the prison's operational restrictions. Kannur prison's security staff demonstrated greater collaboration, allowing the welfare department to conduct book exhibitions and group reading sessions in the recreation area under supervision. The success of such cooperation highlights the importance of trust and joint responsibility between departments. The department-wise analysis reveals that library performance is shaped not just by physical resources, but by inter-departmental collaboration. While the welfare department actively support inmate engagement, administrative bottlenecks and policy inertia significantly constrain development. The security department, when cooperative and reform-minded, can enable broader and safer access to information.

These findings highlight the importance of a coordinated policy approach, wherein all three departments work together to uphold the IFLA principles of equitable access, professional library management, and rehabilitative support through reading. The principle of equitable access is primarily affected by the Security department, whose responsibility in controlling inmate movement, enforcing safety, and regulating access directly determines whether library resources reach all prisoners including those in high-security or disciplinary blocks. Some officers supported this principle by allowing flexible access. In contrast, others who enforced strict rules or stuck to rigid routines create unfair differences in access.

The responsibility for managing prison libraries in a professional way lies with the administrative department. This department has the power to approve staff positions, allocate funds, and support library improvement plans. However, the lack of trained librarians, poor digital infrastructure, and limited interest from the administration reported by several Superintendents go against this goal. To fix this, policy changes are needed to treat libraries as an essential part of correctional services, not just as add-on facilities. The idea of supporting rehabilitation through reading is best shown in the work of the Welfare department. These officers organise reading activities, choose books that reflect different languages and cultures, and keep prisoners involved through book fairs and events. Even without formal training in library science, their active involvement shows how prison libraries can make a real difference when guided by strong values of rehabilitation.

To follow IFLA standards, Kerala's prison library system needs support from all departments. The administration should provide the necessary approval and funding. Welfare staff must stay involved and encourage reading activities. Security staff should help make sure all prisoners can safely access the library. Only by working together can prison libraries become active spaces for rehabilitation. This way, they can protect the rights of prisoners to information, education, and dignity.

4.2.3 Present Status of Prison Libraries (Designation wise)

In the prison environment, the functioning and effectiveness of library services are influenced not only by infrastructural and material resources but also by the perceptions, roles, and decision-making capacities of different categories of prison staff. Understanding these perspectives is essential for revealing institutional strengths, identifying operational challenges, and assessing the overall quality of library service delivery. This section presents a designation-wise qualitative analysis derived from responses of Superintendents, Welfare Officers, Assistant Superintendents, and Prison Officers working in the central prisons of Kerala.

Superintendents

Superintendents, as the highest-ranking administrators, view prison libraries as valuable yet under-prioritized components of the correctional system. Their narratives emphasized the symbolic and reformative potential of libraries in facilitating inmate rehabilitation, while also acknowledging persistent structural challenges. The Superintendents highlighted the lack of sanctioned librarian posts, inadequate digital infrastructure, and limited funding as primary obstacles. While supportive of library expansion, they pointed to the absence of a clear state-level policy mandating professional staffing and resource allocation.

The Superintendent from Viyyur Central Prison described a noteworthy literary initiative that emerged within the institution. Through a specially arranged writing workshop, selected inmates received guidance and training to express their creativity through words. The effort culminated in a modest 40-page publication titled *Chuvarkalum Samsarikkum (The Walls Too Speak)* a work small in volume but rich in meaning. Uniquely, this book was not offered for sale; instead, it was exchanged for books donated by leading publishers and prominent figures from Kerala's literary community. The Superintendent explained that the project was conceived as a form of bibliotherapy, designed to help inmates discover their voices and nurture their literary potential. He expressed hope that the experience would motivate participants to continue writing after their release, allowing creative expression to serve as a pathway toward personal growth and rehabilitation.

"We consider libraries important, but in the absence of staff and proper policy directives, we can only sustain minimal services." Superintendent, Poojappura Central Prison.

Their focus remained primarily at the macro-administrative level, calling for interdepartmental coordination, government support, and integration of library development into broader prison reform agendas.

Welfare Officers

Welfare Officers are the most actively engaged personnel in the management of prison libraries and in fostering inmate participation. Their narrations revealed a

highly interactive and organized approach to conducting reading programmes, maintaining collections, and promoting cultural and educational involvement among prisoners. Although they generally lacked formal training in library science, Welfare Officers displayed notable dedication by organizing initiatives such as Vayanadinam celebrations, book exhibitions, and weekly reading sessions. They often tried to collect books through local donations. Their responses reflected a rehabilitation-oriented outlook and a firm conviction in the transformative potential of reading. At the same time, they expressed the need for qualified librarian, regular updates to library holdings, and greater administrative acknowledgment of their contributions.

"The library is a peaceful place for inmates. We guide them to use it meaningfully, even if we lack professional training." Welfare Officer, Kannur Central Prison

Assistant Superintendents

Assistant Superintendents occupy a mediatory role between policy and practice. Their involvement in library services is typically limited to logistical support, staff allocation, and scheduling inmate access. Their responses were pragmatic, often reflecting concerns over staff shortages, security protocol compliance, and time constraints. While acknowledging the library's utility, they emphasized that it must be balanced against the demands of prison routine, security, and manpower availability. Their attitude toward the library was often functional, viewing it as a useful resource, but not a priority in the hierarchy of daily operations. They suggested that greater clarity in guidelines and dedicated staff support could enable them to manage library services more efficiently.

"We ensure access within allowed hours, but when staff is limited, the library takes a back seat." Assistant Superintendent, Viyyur Central Prison

Prison Officers

Prison Officers, who oversee daily discipline and inmate movement within the prison blocks, play a decisive role in regulating access to the library. Their observations centred on supervision, screening of reading materials, and ensuring that library visits align with work schedules and institutional discipline. Several officers

acknowledged the positive behavioural changes associated with regular library use, noting that inmates who read frequently tended to display improved attitudes and greater self-control. At the same time, they voiced concerns regarding possible misuse of the facility, unsupervised access, and the circulation of sensitive or inappropriate materials. According to the Prison Officer from Poojappura Central Prison *"Some inmates use library time wisely, others don't. We allow access but always with monitoring."*

Their observations highlight the need to align library services with the security framework of the institution and to establish clear operational guidelines that enable their effective implementation. The designation-wise analysis indicates that staff perceptions and levels of involvement in library activities are closely linked to their respective institutional responsibilities. Superintendents tend to focus on policy-related and systemic constraints, while Welfare Officers take an active role in the day-to-day functioning of the library, guided by a rehabilitative perspective. Assistant Superintendents and Prison Officers, on the other hand, contribute by regulating access and upholding institutional order. Strengthening prison library services in Kerala therefore calls for a coordinated, multi-tiered approach that acknowledges the unique contributions of each staff category and supports them through targeted training, interdepartmental collaboration, and policy-level reinforcement.

4.2.4 Present Status of Prison Libraries (Experience wise)

The view of prison officials on the status and functioning of prison libraries are significantly influenced by their length of service. This section presents a qualitative analysis of responses grouped into three experience categories: less than 5 years, 5 to 10 years, and above 10 years. The narratives reveal how exposure over time shapes understanding, expectations, and critical reflections on the role and impact of prison libraries.

Officials with Less than 5 Years of Experience

Officials in this group, often newly appointed or early in their career tend to view prison libraries functionally and in relation to their assigned duties, rather than

as rehabilitative institutions. Their perceptions focus primarily on routine processes, such as book circulation, inmate visits, and operational schedules. A prison officer with less than three years of experience in service notes that *“The library is open during day hours. Inmates come mostly to read newspapers or spend time. Some get books in their cells”*. These officials often rely on instruction from superiors or welfare officers and may not fully recognize the library’s rehabilitative or educational potential. Their understanding is typically limited to what is visible and assigned rather than derived from long-term outcomes or policy knowledge.

Officials with 5 to 10 Years of Experience: Evolving Understanding and Moderate Engagement

This group of mid-level experienced officials demonstrated increased awareness of the challenges and possibilities associated with prison libraries. Their responses reflect a transition from observation to engagement, especially in assisting welfare activities or managing inmate schedules. According to the Assistant Superintendent with seven years of service, *“There is interest among inmates, but we need newer books. Some officers try to organize events, but not all inmates are actively involved in library activities.”* These officials acknowledged uneven support across prisons, the absence of professional staff, and the need for structured programming. Many recognized that while the physical infrastructure existed, systemic gaps in staffing, digital tools, and funding prevented optimal functioning. A Welfare Officer with 9 years of service mentioned that *“I’ve worked in two prisons. One had a better library with reading programs. In others, it’s just a room with books.”*

Officials with Above 10 Years of Experience

Highly experienced officials (above 10 years) demonstrated deep reflections on the evolution, neglect, and potential of prison libraries. Their responses carried a tone of critique blended with optimism, highlighting decades-long stagnation in staffing, resource updates, and policy integration.

“I have seen the library remain the same for years. There is interest from inmates, but no structured system to make it impactful.” Superintendent, 22 years of service

This group recognized the disconnect between policy rhetoric and operational reality, especially the absence of professional librarians, training for welfare staff, and digital access. They advocated for centralized policy reforms, external partnerships, and the integration of rehabilitative programs into library planning.

“The welfare staff do a good job, but they need support and training. The government must recognize the library as a reform tool, not a formality.” Senior Welfare Officer, 18 years of service.

The qualitative analysis reveals that the length of service directly influences how prison officials perceive and engage with library services. While less experienced staff focus on procedural aspects, mid-level officials begin to identify gaps and engage with programs. In contrast, highly experienced officials reflect more deeply on the structural limitations and advocate for policy-level transformation. In the words of a senior official, “... years back we were not having a library in prisons, but inmates were allowed to read what their family brought, only after censoring the contents. They were also allowed to buy books from their earnings at prison”. Another Superintendent says. “I have been working in prisons for over 25 years. I have seen the conditions are developing year by year and the identification of libraries as a rehabilitation tool is gaining importance”. These findings underscore the need for training, orientation, and sensitization across all experience levels, enabling staff to recognize and support the role of prison libraries in inmate rehabilitation more effectively.

4.3 Perception of Prison Officials about Role of Prison Libraries

In early decades, prison libraries have been closely associated with the rehabilitative function (Fyfe, 1992 as cited in Stevenson, 1995).

Every prison shall have a library for the use of all categories of prisoners. The library should have a sufficient number of books including educational, recreational and moral books, newspapers and magazines, in the language understood by the majority of prisoners. – (Model Prison Manual 2016, Chapter XIV: Education of Prisoners, Library: 14.22 p.163)

The provision for a library within every prison establishment is statutory now. In this section of the analysis the perception of prison officials about the prison library is studied. Many prison officials recognise the prison library as a space for intellectual and emotional growth and thus aiding inmates for their reintegration into society. Effective prison library services not only depend on the availability of resources but largely on the institutional attitude towards prisoner education and rehabilitation. A positive perception among officials can strongly contribute to the success of the library services in the correctional settings. Mfum-Mensah and Friedson-Ridenour (2014) emphasize that the attitudes of prison staff reflect broader institutional cultures and policies, which can either hinder or enhance the potential of prison libraries.

Table 4.2

Perception of prison officials about role of prison libraries

Statements	N	Mean	SD	Rank
Prison libraries positively impact prisoners' mental well-being	381	4.44	0.50	1
The collection has to be strengthened	381	4.43	0.50	2
Prison library plays a crucial role in the rehabilitation of prisoners	381	4.39	0.49	3
Provides an opportunity to engage in constructive activities	381	4.37	0.52	4
Prisoners' literacy levels are improving due to library resources and programs	381	4.36	0.52	5
Prison library programs and services help in behaviour modification	381	4.17	0.54	6
Access to educational resources in the library helps inmates to develop skills and knowledge.	381	4.17	0.62	7
The Prison library contributes to the personal development of prisoners	381	4.01	0.40	8
Increased funding for the prison library would enhance its effectiveness in rehabilitating inmates	381	3.92	0.52	9
Library staff supports prisoners' rehabilitation	381	2.77	0.62	10
Over all perception	381	4.10	0.18	

Table 4.2 shows that the prison officials reveal a positive attitude toward the rehabilitative role of prison libraries. The overall mean score of 4.10 (SD = 0.18) indicates a high level of agreement with statements affirming the psychological, educational, and behavioural benefits of library services within the correctional institutions. These findings suggest that prison libraries are widely perceived as important instruments within the rehabilitative framework of Kerala's prisons as perceived by prison officials.

According to LeDonne (1977), prison staff who value education and information access tend to support library services, viewing them as essential for inmate development. The qualitative inferences also shows that the higher officials and the prisoners assigned the duty in library have strong agreement towards the prison library and its role in rehabilitation. The officers identified the bibliotherapy as a tool for rehabilitation process. Prisoners on duty in libraries considered prison reading as a form of self-directed therapy. The higher officials also acknowledged that the existing collections is not sufficient to meet the diverse informational and educational needs of inmates. The responses from the prisoners as well as officials confirm that they are lacking the guidance of a qualified librarian.

1. **Hypothesis H1** stated, "there is a significantly positive perception among the prison officials regarding the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners".

Table 4.3

Perception of the prison officials - (One sample t-test)

	N	Mean	SD	Test value	t-value	p-value
Perception	381	4.10	1.79	3	119.49	.000

One sample t-test was applied to know the significance level of the perception level of prison officials. The test shows that the overall perception level (4.10) is higher than the test value (Assumed Mean) (3). The calculated p-value is < .001, hence there exists a significant difference between the calculated mean score and assumed

mean score. Hence the **Hypothesis H1** stating ‘There is a significantly positive perception among the prison officials regarding the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners’ is accepted.

The high t-value reflects strong deviation from the test value, supported by large sample size and low variability.

Figure 13

Perception of Prison Officials

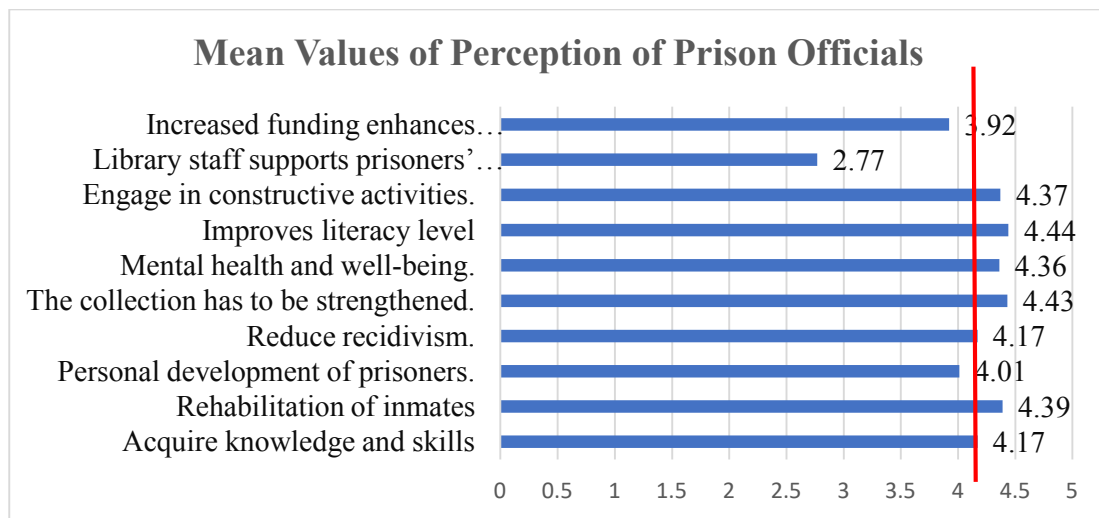


Table 4.4

Perception of Officials (Prison wise)

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur Central Prison	123	4.05	0.17		
Poojappura Central Prison	158	4.13	0.18	9.052	.000
Viyyur Central Prison	100	4.12	0.17		
Total	381	4.10	0.18		

Table 4.4 shows that the average score of the perception level about prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on central prisons are Kannur Central Prison 4.05, Poojappura Central Prison 4.13 and Viyyur Central Prison 4.12. The result is statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). Hence **Hypothesis H2**

stating, there is no significant difference in the perception of the prison officials regarding the role of prison libraries across the selected central prisons. is rejected. Although the differences are statistically significant, the small mean differences indicate limited practical significance. As per the study by Finlay and Bates (2018) the perception of prison officials on the prison library has a great role in providing library services to prisoners. The inference drawn from the analysis is that officials from different prisons have significantly different perceptions about the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation. Poojappura Central Prison Officials hold the most positive perception, while Kannur Central Prison Officials the least perception. Viyyur Central Prison officials have a moderately positive perception. The SD values (0.17 – 0.18) present low variation within each prison, and they generally hold similar views. The p-value <0.001 confirms that these differences are significant. Pair wise comparison on perception level of prison officials about the role of prison libraries is done using Tuckey's HSD test.

Table 4.5

Perception of Officials – Prison wise -Tukey's HSD

Prison	Prison	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Kannur	Poojappura	-0.08*	0.02	0.001
Kannur	Viyyur	-0.07*	0.02	0.004
Poojappura	Viyyur	0.01	0.02	0.921

From table 4.5, the result of Tukey's test it can be concluded that a variation is found between the perception level of prison officials from Kannur and Poojappura Central Prisons and Kannur and Viyyur Central Prisons at five percent level as p-value is 0.001 and 0.004 which is < 0.05. However, both Poojappura and Viyyur officials share similar levels of perception about the role of prison libraries.

Table 4.6*Perception of prison officials (Department wise)*

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration	101	4.05	0.21	5.630	.004
Welfare Department	89	4.11	0.17		
Security Department	191	4.12	0.16		
Total	381	4.10	0.18		

As per the table 4.6 the average score of the perception level about prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on the departments of the officials are, Administration (4.05), Welfare department (4.11) and Security department (4.12). Analysis of variance explains the result that there is a significant difference in the perception level about prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on the departments of the officials of the central prisons, since the p-value (p-value = 0.004) is less than 0.05. The result shows that the perception level of the role of prison libraries in inmate rehabilitation differs significantly across all the three departments. The security and welfare departments show a higher perception of the role of prison libraries. The administration departments show slightly lower mean scores indicating less favourable perception level. The Security and Welfare Departments acknowledge the prison library's role in rehabilitation more strongly than the Administration Department. This suggests a need for awareness programs or targeted interventions to improve the Administration Department's perception level of prison libraries. The inferences derived from the qualitative data also support the above findings. The welfare and security departments are directly involved in the rehabilitation of prisoners and thus they have more perception level.

Table 4.7*Perception of prison officials (Department wise) Tukey's HSD*

Department	Department	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Administration	Welfare	-0.06*	0.022
Administration	Security	-0.07*	0.006
Welfare	Security	-0.01	0.834

From table 4.7, the result of Tukey's test it can be concluded that a variation is found between the perception level of prison officials from Administration and Welfare departments at five percent level as p-value is 0.022 and 0.006 which is less than 0.05. However, both Welfare and Security Wings share similar levels of perception about the role of prison libraries as the (p-value=0.834) is greater than 0.05.

Table 4.8*Perception of prison officials (Designation wise)*

Position	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendents	26	4.07	0.19		
Welfare Officers	7	4.20	0.16		
Assistant Superintendents	15	4.13	0.19	1.136	0.334
Prison Officers	333	4.10	0.18		
Total	381	4.10	0.17		

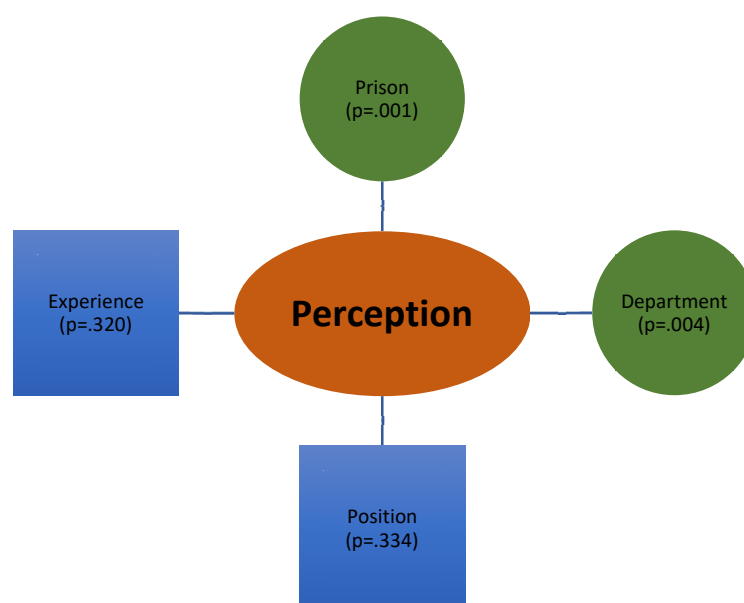
Table 4.8 shows the average score of the perception level about prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on designation of prison officials of central prisons of Kerala. Analysis of variance explains the result that there is no significant difference in the perception about prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on the designation of officials in central prisons, since the p-value (p-value = 0.334) is greater than 0.05.

Table 4.9*Perception of prison officials (Experience wise)*

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	4.10	0.17	1.142	0.320
5 to 10	191	4.11	0.18		
Above 10	76	4.07	0.20		
Total	381	4.10	0.18		

Table 4.9 discloses that the average score of the perception level about prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on experience less than 5 years shows a mean score of 4.10, officials with experience 5 to 10 years scores a mean of 4.11 and the officials with experience above 10 years holds a mean score 4.07. Analysis of variance explains the result that there is no significant difference in the perception level about prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on the years of experience, since the p-value (0.320) is greater than 0.05.

Pictorial representation of the significant difference in the perception of prison officials based on prison, department, position and experience is given in Figure 4.2.

Figure 14*Perception of Prison Officials (p-value)*

The prison wise p-value $<.001$ and department wise (p-value = $.004$) comparison of perceptions of prison officials shows a significant difference with p-value less than 0.05. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of prison officials based on experience and designation.

4.4 Opinion of Prison Officials about Various Functional Components of Prison Libraries.

The functional components of prison libraries are important as they directly determine whether the library can truly serve as a tool for rehabilitation and personal growth. Physical infrastructure ensures that inmates have a safe, accessible, and conducive space to read and learn, while the library collection provides them with meaningful resources in their own languages that support education, legal awareness, and recreation. Effective library services such as circulation, guidance, and reading programmes transform these resources into actual opportunities for skill-building and positive engagement. At the same time, human resources are essential, since trained and motivated staff guide inmates, encourage participation, and maintain the system. A clear library policy ensures fairness, consistency, and transparency in access and use, protecting the rights of all categories of prisoners. Finally, library operations, including hours, record-keeping, and procedures, guarantee the continuity and reliability of services. In real use, prison officials in Kerala observe that these components are often interdependent: a strong collection without trained staff, or good infrastructure without clear policies, limits the actual impact. Together, when these elements function smoothly, prison libraries become more than book repositories; they become active agents in rehabilitation, moral reform, and the holistic well-being of inmates. The table 4.10 discloses the opinion of prison officials regarding various functional components of prison library systems that were measured using three-point Likert's Scale and applied one sample t-test.

Table 4.10*Opinion of Prison Officials about Functional Components of Prison Library*

Components	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Physical Infrastructure	381	2.07	0.76	1.813	.071
Library Collection	381	2.07	0.76	1.830	.068
Library Services	381	1.86	0.63	-4.398	.001
Human Resources	381	1.98	0.64	-.477	.634
Library Policy	381	2.01	0.65	.314	.754
Library operations	381	1.85	0.64	-4.551	.000
Total	381	1.97	0.30	-1.684	.093

Table 4.10 shows that the mean scores across functional components ranged from 1.85 to 2.07. This indicates that overall opinions are low to moderate, with some components falling significantly below average. In the physical infrastructure component, Officials gave slightly positive ratings ($M = 2.07$, $p = 0.071$), but the result is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that while infrastructure is considered important, the available facilities are not consistently strong enough to generate a significantly high opinion. Library Services ($M = 1.86$, $p = 0.001$) show significantly low. Library Collection ($M = 2.07$, $p = 0.068$) is not significant, indicating neutral opinions. Human Resources ($M = 1.98$, $p = 0.634$) are slightly positive but insignificant, reflecting shortage of professional staff. Library Policy ($M = 2.01$, $p = .754$) remains unclear. Library Operations ($M = 1.85$, $p = .000$) are significantly weak, citing irregular hours and poor management. Overall ($M = 1.97$, $p = 0.093$), officials' opinions on library functioning are generally low and not statistically significant.

Table 4.11

Opinion of Prison Officials about Functional Components of Prison Library (One sample t-test)

	N	Mean	SD	Test value	t-value	p-value
Opinion	381	1.9739	.30233	2	1.684	.093

One sample t-test was applied to know the significance level of the opinion of prison officials regarding the function of prison libraries. The results indicate that the opinions of prison officials regarding the functional components of prison libraries are mixed. While infrastructure and library collection received moderately positive ratings, they were not statistically significant. The test shows that the overall opinion score (1.97), the calculated t-value is ($t=1.684$, $p=.093$) and p-value is 0.093, which is higher than 0.05, there is no significant difference in the opinion of prison officials. The findings demonstrate that prison officials do not hold a significantly high opinion of the functional components of prison libraries. Instead, their views highlight persistent gaps in services, operations, and collections, which limit the ability of prison libraries to fully contribute to rehabilitation and hence ***Hypothesis H3: The opinion of the prison officials regarding the functions of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners is significantly positive is rejected.***

The qualitative responses indicate that while prison libraries are functional, several limitations affect their effectiveness. This reflects the principles of Social Learning Theory where, structured environments and guided access to information influence behavioural outcome. Respondents pointed out that infrastructure, availability of updated materials, and organised library services require further improvement. Some officials also noted that library activities are not fully integrated into rehabilitation programmes, which limits their impact. Overall, these observations support the quantitative finding that the functional components of prison libraries are perceived as only moderately satisfactory rather than strongly positive.

Further, a prison wise analysis of opinions is made and presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Opinion of Prison Officials about Functional Components of Prison Library (Prison wise)

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur Central Prison	123	1.96	0.32	0.066	0.936
Poojappura Central Prison	158	1.97	0.29		
Viyur Central Prison	100	1.98	0.29		
Total	381	1.97	0.30		

Table 4.12 shows that the average score of the prison wise opinion of the officials about the functional units of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners are almost the same. Analysis of variance shows that there is no significant difference in the opinion of prison officials about functional components of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on the central prisons, since the p-value (p-value = 0.936) is $>.05$.

Hence the **Hypothesis H4** "There is no significant difference in the opinion of the prison officials regarding the functions of prison libraries" is accepted.

Table 4.13

Opinion of Prison Officials about Functional Components of Prison Library (Department wise)

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration	101	1.96	0.34	0.086	0.918
Welfare Department	89	1.97	0.31		
Security Department	191	1.98	0.27		
Total	381	1.97	0.30		

As per the table 4.13 the average score of the opinion on functional areas of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners based on the departments of the officials such as Administration, Welfare and Security departments are 1.96, 1.97 and

1.98 respectively. Analysis shows that there is no significant difference in the opinions of prison officials regarding functional units of prison libraries based on the departments of the officials of the central prisons, since the p-value is higher than 0.05.

Table 4.14

Opinion of Prison Officials about Functional Components of Prison Library (Designation wise)

Position	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendents	26	1.96	0.39	0.019	0.996
Welfare Officers	7	1.97	0.11		
Assistant Superintendents	15	1.96	0.31		
Prison Officers	333	1.97	0.29		
Total	381	1.97	0.30		

Table 4.14 shows the average score of the opinion of prison officials regarding the functional components of prison libraries based on the designations of prison officials. The Mean score for Superintendents is 1.96, for Welfare Officers is 1.97, for Assistant Superintendents is 1.96 and for Prison officers 1.97, respectively. Analysis of variance shows that there is no significant difference in the opinion of the prison officials regarding functional units of prison libraries based on the designations of officials, since the p-value (p-value = 0.996) is greater than the significance level 0.05.

Table 4.15

Opinion of Prison Officials about Functional Components of Prison Library (Experience wise)

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	1.96	0.29	0.422	0.656
5 to 10	191	1.98	0.29		
Above 10	76	1.95	0.33		
Total	381	1.97	0.30		

Table 4.15 shows that the average score of the opinion of prison officials regarding the functional components of prison libraries based on experience. The result shows that there is no significant difference in the opinions of the prison officials regarding the functions of prison libraries based on the years of experience, since the p-value (p-value= 0.656) is greater than 0.05, the significance level.

4.5 Nature of Utilisation of Prison Libraries by Prisoners as Perceived by Prison Officials

The availability of self-help books, fiction, and motivational literature has been found to provide inmates with emotional stability and coping mechanisms (Johnson & Prendergast, 2015). The reading serves as an escape from the harsh realities of incarceration, allowing prisoners to engage in self-reflection and personal growth (Wilson & Anderson, 2019). Lehmann (2011) argues that prison libraries have the potential to support cognitive transformation and reduce re-entry by fostering critical thinking and empathy through reading. Furthermore, the library environment often mirrors the outside world, offering a sense of normalcy and autonomy both crucial in preparing inmates for reintegration (Clark & MacCreaigh, 2006). According to Conley and McCarthy (2007), prison libraries serve as gateways to knowledge and information, helping inmates acquire skills that are essential for post-release success. They also provide a safe and constructive environment where inmates can engage in positive behaviours and reduce idleness.

Table 4.16

Utilisation of Prison Libraries by Prisoners

Statements	N	Mean	SD
Prison libraries are used for education and skill development	381	3.93	0.76
Prison libraries are used for mental wellness and emotional support	381	4.02	0.64
Prison libraries are used for recreation and entertainment	381	3.70	1.31
Prison libraries are used for preparation for reintegration into society	381	2.09	0.81
Prison libraries offer constructive use of free time	381	3.67	1.04
Total	381	3.48	0.18

It is evident from table 4.16 with a mean score of 4.02, the library is considered an important medium for maintaining mental wellness and emotional support. The mean score of 3.93 indicates that prison libraries contribute to educational and skill-building activities, (Vacca, 2004) has mentioned in his study the literacy and vocational programs in prison libraries play a vital role in enhancing rehabilitation. As an agent of recreation and entertainment, the mean score is 3.70 which is supported by the findings from (Johnson, 2019), who suggests that recreational reading reduces stress and promotes mental well-being among prisoners. An average score of 3.48 suggests that the perceived role of library in rehabilitation of prisoners is quite positive. It was also evident from the interviews with higher prison officials who acknowledged the role of prison libraries as most useful in prisoner engagement. Prisoners who were assigned duty in library also says they enjoy working in library and it gives some value to their life. They read books themselves and motivate others. One inmate has mentioned about reading biographies have given him insights to change his life for a better future. In writing workshops conducted at least a few has published stories, poems and articles. Qualitative inputs indicate that prison libraries are actively used for education, emotional support, and constructive engagement. Officials reported that regular library users appear to demonstrate improved behaviour and reduced idleness. Inmates working in libraries reported a sense of purpose and actively promoted reading among peers. Reading materials, especially biographies and motivational books, were reported by respondents to positively influence inmates' attitudes. However, the use of libraries for reintegration-related preparation appears to be limited, indicating an area for further development. A prison wise comparison is made in the Table 4.17 below.

Table 4.17

Utilisation of Prison Libraries by Prisoners (Prison Wise)

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur CP	123	3.47	0.17	1.135	0.323
Poojappura CP	158	3.49	0.17		
Viyyur CP	100	3.46	0.19		
Total	381	3.48	0.18		

The table 4.17 shows the results of ANOVA test conducted to check whether there is any significant difference in the mean score among the three prisons. As the p-value (0.323) is greater than the table value 0.05 there is no significant difference of opinion about ‘the nature of utilisation of prison libraries by prisoners’ among officials in three central prisons.

Hence, the **Hypothesis H5** stating, *there is no prison wise difference in the utilisation of prison libraries by prisoners as perceived by prison officials, is accepted.*

Viyyur and Poojappura have slightly higher scores than Kannur central prison. As the scores are uniform the administration can have standardised interventions for all prisons without location specific changes. Being the institutions run under the State Government and the rules and regulations are uniform for the prisons the responses are similar. It is clearer from the studies conducted by (Clark & MacCreaigh, 2006; Lehmann, 2011) where institutional policies and access to resources significantly impact the role of libraries.

Table 4.18

Utilisation of Prison Libraries by Prisoners (Department Wise)

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration	101	3.48	0.18	0.299	0.742
Welfare	89	3.49	0.16		
Security Wing	191	3.47	0.18		
Total	381	3.48	0.18		

The table 4.18 shows that the perception of officials is having a p-value greater than 0.05 (0.742) which is not statistically significant. Officials in Administration, Welfare, and Security departments share similar views on the role of prison libraries and rehabilitation.

Table 4.19*Utilisation of Prison Libraries by Prisoners (Designation Wise)*

Designation	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendent	26	3.49	0.18	0.112	0.953
Welfare Officers	7	3.53	0.16		
Assistant Superintendents	15	3.46	0.21		
Prison Officers	333	3.48	0.17		
Total	381	3.48	0.18		

Table 4.19 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA comparing the mean scores of different designations of officials. The Welfare Officers have the highest mean score (3.53), Superintendents with mean score of 3.49 comes next, Assistant Superintendents have the mean score (3.46), and Prison Officers (3.48). indicating variation in perceptions among different positions. The p-value = 0.953, since p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference in the mean scores across positions.

Table 4.20*Utilisation of Prison Libraries by Prisoners (Experience wise)*

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	3.47	0.17	0.104	0.902
5 to 10	191	3.48	0.18		
Above 10	76	3.49	0.19		
Total	381	3.48	0.18		

The table 4.20 shows, officials with less than 5 years of experience have a mean score of 3.47. Those with 5 to 10 years of experience have a slightly higher mean of 3.48. Officials with more than 10 years of experience have a mean of 3.49. The overall mean across all groups is 3.48. Since the p-value (0.902) is greater than

0.05, the results are not statistically significant. The p-value shows, there exists no relationship between perceived role and experience of the officials.

4.6 Institutional Support

In this section various supports to prison libraries are studied. The financial support, operational support, staffing and training, policy and attitudinal and technological supports to the prison libraries of central prisons of Kerala were studied.

4.6.1 Financial Support to Prison Libraries

Financial support is a critical determinant of the effectiveness and sustainability of prison library services. Adequate funding influences the availability of books, digital resources, infrastructure, qualified library staff, and organising literacy initiatives and educational workshops. However, prison libraries often operate under constrained budgets, with funding frequently being redirected toward security and surveillance rather than educational and rehabilitative services (Lehmann, 2000).

Table 4.21

Financial Support to Prison Libraries

Statements	N	Mean	SD
Adequate funds are allocated regularly for new books, equipment, and maintenance	381	2.76	0.43
Some funds are provided, by State Govt. and State Library Council	381	4.00	0.00
Very Little /insufficient funds	381	4.00	0.00
Library mostly depends on donations and volunteers	381	4.00	0.00
Financial support (Total)	381	2.31	0.11

The table 4.21 shows a Mean score of 2.31 for the statement adequate funds are not allocated regularly for prison libraries, which suggest that the respondents mostly disagree and the responses show low variability. Other statements are negative

and the respondents agree with the statements, “Some funds are provided by State Govt. and State Library Council” (4.00), “Very Little /insufficient funds” (4.00) and, “Library mostly depends on donations and volunteers” (4.00). Reverse scoring was done to calculate the overall financial support.

H6: *Financial support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala in the rehabilitation of inmates are significantly high.*

Table 4.22

Level of Financial Support for Central Prison Libraries in Kerala (One sample t-test)

	N	Mean	SD	Test value	t-value	p-value
Financial support	381	2.31	.10633	3	126.839	.000

The one-sample t-test was conducted to examine whether the mean financial support score differs significantly from the neutral midpoint of the scale. The results indicate that the mean score (**M = 2.31**) is lower than the midpoint value, suggesting a negative perception of financial support. The difference is statistically significant as p-value is < 0.001 , indicating that prison officials perceive financial support for prison libraries as inadequate.

*Therefore, the hypothesis **H6** stating that financial support systems are significantly high is not supported.*

The qualitative inputs from respondents further support the quantitative findings. Several officials indicated that although some financial provisions exist, they are often limited and irregular. It was observed that prison libraries frequently depend on external contributions such as donations, voluntary support, and occasional institutional assistance, rather than on a stable and dedicated budget. This reflects a structural limitation in the financial planning of prison library services.

Senior prison officials noted that financial allocation for prison libraries is not always treated as a priority area when compared to security, infrastructure, and administrative requirements. As a result, library development often receives limited budgetary attention, affecting the acquisition of updated resources and maintenance of facilities. Prisoners engaged in library work also indicated that the availability of new books and materials is limited, and that library collections are often supplemented through donations rather than systematic procurement. This reinforces the perception that financial support is insufficient for sustaining library services effectively. Overall, the qualitative evidence corroborates the quantitative finding that financial support for prison libraries is perceived as inadequate. This underscores the need for structured financial planning and dedicated budget allocation to strengthen the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation.

It is stated that an effective prison library requires long-term budget allocations rather than reliance on sporadic government support (Vogel, 2009). The funds provided by the state government and state library council with a mean value of 4.00 shows a unanimous agreement. (Janse van Rensburg, 2017) indicates that government funding for prison libraries is often inconsistent and inadequate, leading to poor access to educational materials. The officials also agree with the statement that the availability of funds is very low and insufficient and the library mostly depends on donations and volunteers with a mean score 4.00. In his study (Conrad, 2012) says volunteer-run libraries often lack trained librarians and structured programs, which diminishes their effectiveness in supporting inmate rehabilitation. (Kaur & Kaur, 2014) says countries like India, prison libraries often depend on ad hoc donations, NGO support, or limited state funding, which affects their consistency and quality.

Table 4.23*Financial Support to Prison Libraries (Prison wise)*

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur Central Prison	123	2.69	0.43	0.166	0.847
Poojappura Central Prison	158	2.70	0.42		
Viyyur Central Prison	100	2.68	0.44		
Total	381	2.69	0.43		

A comparative analysis of financial support for central prisons of Kerala is presented here. The mean values of all three central prisons are identical which shows a uniform allocation of funds is done. The p-value (0.847) suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in financial support among the three central prison libraries.

Table 4.24*Financial support to prison libraries- Department wise*

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration	101	2.70	0.42	0.031	0.969
Welfare department	89	2.68	0.43		
Security Wing	191	2.68	0.43		
Total	381	2.69	0.43		

A comparison of financial support among various prison departments are done. The mean values across the three departments are identical, implying that officials from Administration, Welfare, and Security departments perceive financial support for prison libraries in a similar manner. The higher p-value 0.969 suggests the differences observed are not significant.

Table 4.25*Financial Support to Prison Libraries (Designation wise)*

Designation	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendents	26	2.69	0.43	0.159	0.924
Welfare Officers	7	2.71	0.38		
Assistant Superintendents	15	2.70	0.41		
Prison Officers	333	2.69	0.43		
Total	381	2.69	0.43		

As shown in table 4.25 the financial support to prison libraries among various designations of prison officials are compared. The mean values of the different positions of officials are similar, implying that officials perceive financial support for prison libraries identically. The higher p-value >0.05 suggests the marginal differences observed are not statistically significant.

Table 4.26*Financial Support to Prison Libraries (Experience wise)*

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	2.70	0.40	1.123	0.326
5 to 10	191	2.68	0.44		
Above 10	76	2.69	0.42		
Total	381	2.69	0.43		

As shown in table 4.26 an experience wise comparison of the financial support to prison libraries has been done. The mean values of the different experience levels of officials are similar, implying that officials perceive financial support for prison libraries identically irrespective of their experience levels. The higher p-value 0.326 shows the marginal differences observed are not significant.

4.6.2 Operational Support to Prison Libraries

Operational support comprises staffing, administrative assistance, and infrastructure necessary for prison libraries to run their day-to-day affairs effectively. Without proper operational backing, even a well-funded prison library cannot meet the needs of its users. Hence the operational support to prison libraries in central prisons of Kerala was measured.

Table 4.27

Operational Support to Prison Libraries

Statements	N	Mean	SD
Dedicated Professional staff to support the library operations	381	1.88	0.32
Library is run with minimal operational support (resources, facilities, integration of rehabilitative programs)	380	4.01	0.52
Operational support is sometimes limited by prison policies	381	3.63	0.48
Total	381	2.08	0.26

The table 4.27 shows the analysis of operational support for prison libraries. Operational challenges are evident from the responses of prison officials. Respondents mostly agree that only a minimal operational support is available to the library (Mean = 4.01) which is underlined by Knight (2010) who highlights that prison libraries in countries with well-structured correctional systems receive institutional support that ensures regular access to updated resources, collaboration with educators, and involvement in rehabilitation planning. In contrast, many prison libraries in developing countries like India suffer from operational neglect. The prison policies sometimes limit operational effectiveness (Mean = 3.63). The result indicates a lack of professional staff in the prison libraries (Mean = 1.88).

H7: Operational support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala in the rehabilitation of inmates are significantly high.

Table 4.28

Operational Support Prison Libraries (One sample t-test)

	N	Mean	SD	Test value	t-value	p-value
Operational support	381	2.0835	.26262	3	68.119	.000

The average score of the operational support system (2.08) is lower than the test value (3) and the p-value ($t=68.119$, $p<0.001$). Hence it can be concluded that the operational support is significantly lower than the test value. Hence **Hypothesis H 7 is rejected**.

Respondents consistently highlighted the absence of dedicated professional library staff, noting that library responsibilities are often assigned as an additional duty to prison personnel who may not have formal training in library management. This affects the organisation of collections, user guidance, and overall service delivery. Officials also indicated that prison libraries function with limited infrastructural and administrative support. In all the instances, libraries were reported to operate without proper cataloguing systems, updated collections, or structured service schedules. The integration of library services with educational and rehabilitative programmes was also found to be minimal, limiting their potential contribution to inmate development. Institutional policies and security considerations were identified as additional constraints affecting operational efficiency. Respondents noted that restrictions on prisoner movement, time allocation, and supervised access often limit the effective use of library facilities.

Furthermore, it was observed that the absence of systematic planning and coordination reduces the overall effectiveness of prison libraries as functional service units. While some level of operational support exists, it is largely insufficient to

sustain structured and consistent library services. The responses strongly support the quantitative inferences.

It is evident from previous studies (Lehmann, 2011), that prison libraries require trained professionals to provide proper guidance and ensure effective utilization of resources. A key element of operational support is the presence of qualified library staff. Lehmann (2000) stresses that trained librarians are essential not only for managing collections and services but also for supporting educational and rehabilitative programs tailored to inmates. However, in many correctional systems, prison libraries are often operated by untrained personnel or inmate volunteers due to a lack of professional staffing (Clark & MacCreaigh, 2006). The lack of trained professionals may be the reason for low quality services in the library. A major finding of the present study is the need to employ qualified staff in the prison libraries of Kerala.

Table 4.29

Operational Support to Prison Libraries (Prison wise)

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur CP	123	2.12	0.76	1.824	0.163
Poojappura CP	158	2.06	0.79		
Viyyur CP	100	2.08	0.82		
Total	381	2.08	0.79		

A prison wise comparison on operational support is done in the table 4.29 and it is found that the mean values derived are nearer to each other and there is very low variance in opinions. Since the p-value (0.163) is greater than 0.05, it indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores among the three prisons.

Table 4.30*Operational Support to Prison Libraries (Department wise)*

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration	101	2.09	0.76	1.011	0.365
Welfare department	89	2.12	0.81		
Security wing	191	2.07	0.80		
Total	381	2.08	0.79		

The table 4.30 presents a comparative analysis of the perceptions of prison officials from different departments on operational support to prison libraries. The analysis is based on the mean scores, and the results of a one-way ANOVA test, which examines whether there are significant differences among the three departmental groups. The Welfare department exhibits the highest mean score (Mean=2.12). In contrast, the Security Wing has the lowest mean score (Mean = 2.07). ANOVA test result shows a more uniform response within the group. Being the p-value (0.365) is higher than the significance level the perceptions are almost similar.

Table 4.31*Operational Support to Prison Libraries (Designation wise)*

Designation	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendents	26	2.05	0.67	0.895	0.444
Welfare Officers	7	2.19	0.53		
Assistant Superintendents	15	2.15	0.92		
Prison Officers	333	2.16	0.80		
Total	381	2.08	0.79		

The table 4.31 shows that the mean value varies between 2.05 to 2.16. The aggregate mean obtained is 2.08 with standard deviation 0.79. As the p-value = 0.444, being greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference among the groups. This means that the designation of the officials does not significantly affect

their opinion about operational support. The result of the interviews, the senior officials pointed out that there is no professional staff, proper facilities and the rules of the system call for minimal operational support.

Furthermore, an experience wise analysis of operational support to prison libraries is also carried out and the result is shown in table 4.32

Table 4.32

Operational Support to Prison Libraries (Experience wise)

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	2.09	0.83	0.723	0.486
5 to 10	191	2.06	0.75		
Above 10	76	2.10	0.84		
Total	381	2.08	0.79		

The table presents the experience wise comparison of prison officials' responses on operational support provided to the prison libraries in central prisons of Kerala. The results show a p-value of 0.486 which is greater than 0.05. Hence, the level of experience of officials does not significantly influence the perceptions of officials on the operational support to prison libraries in central prisons of Kerala.

4.6.3 Staffing and Training

To reap the maximum potential of a library it has to be headed and run by a professional librarian. Professional librarians are trained for the job and they can contribute in a better way to the rehabilitative role of the libraries. In the present study, an attempt is made to find out how the prison libraries are managed. This was also mentioned in the previous table 4.25 in operational support, where there was stress for the need of a professional librarian. Furthermore, in this table 4.31 the kind of staffing and how they work are analysed.

Table 4.33*Staffing and Training Support to Prison Libraries*

Statements	N	Mean	SD
Trained librarians are available to assist prisoners	381	1.65	0.48
Prisoners are assigned library duties and no training is given	381	4.00	0.00
No training is given and library runs without professional oversight	380	4.36	0.52
Staffing support	381	1.76	0.70

An examination of staffing and training support for prison libraries as presented in table 4.33. The availability of trained librarians appears to be limited. The mean response for the item *‘Trained librarians is available to assist prisoners’* is 1.65, suggesting that most prison libraries are not staffed by professionally qualified librarians. This observation is in line with previous literature that emphasizes the lack of professional librarianship in prison settings globally (Lehmann, 2003; Knight, 2011). Furthermore, the statement *‘Prisoners are assigned library duties and no training is given’* received a unanimous response, with a mean score of 4.00 indicating complete agreement among respondents. This uniform response raises serious concerns about the reliance on untrained inmate labour to manage and operate library services, a practice criticized in earlier studies for undermining the rehabilitative potential of prison libraries (Bouchard & Kunzel, 2021). According to Lehmann (2003), prison libraries require professionally trained librarians who understand both library science and the unique correctional environment in which they work. The role of a prison librarian extends beyond traditional library duties; it includes facilitating inmate education, managing security-sensitive environments, and promoting information literacy among incarcerated individuals.

Closely related is the item *‘No training is given and the library runs without professional oversight’*, which had a mean score of 4.36. The high score signifies widespread agreement that prison libraries often operate without formal supervision, further confirming the structural weaknesses in the administration of library services

in correctional settings. The lack of structured training and oversight diminishes the role of the library as an educational and rehabilitative tool, as highlighted in research by Clark and MacCreaigh (2006). Lehmann (2011) emphasizes that ongoing professional development and correction-specific training for librarians can enhance the effectiveness of library programs, improve communication with prison staff, and ensure security compliance.

Table 4.34

Staffing and Training Support to Prison Libraries (One sample t-test)

	N	Mean	SD	Test value	t-value	p-value
Staff support	381	1.7640	.23468	3	102.804	.000

The overall values for staff support and training were evaluated on a Likert's scale (ranging from 1 to 5), yielding a mean of 1.76. One sample t-test shows that a mean score (1.76) is lower than the test value (3) and the p-value <.001. Hence it can be concluded that the staff support is significantly lower than the test value. This suggests a relatively low perception of general staffing support and indicates the need for a professional library personnel or structured training programs.

Table 4.35

Staffing and Training Support to Prison Libraries (Prison wise)

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur CP	123	1.76	0.68	0.354	0.702
Poojappura CP	158	1.77	0.75		
Viyyur CP	100	1.75	0.66		
Total	381	1.75	0.70		

Table 4.35 presents the analysis of variance conducted to check whether there is a significant difference in perception of staffing and training support over the three central prisons of Kerala. The mean scores for staffing support were Kannur (Mean =

1.76), Poojappura (Mean = 1.77), Viyyur (Mean = 1.75). The overall mean score is 1.75 (SD = 0.70), indicating that the respondents agree with the limited staffing and training across all three central prison libraries. The professional librarians are not employed at prison libraries.

Table 4.36

Staffing and Training Support to Prison Libraries (Department wise)

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration	101	1.76	0.61	0.233	0.792
Welfare Department	89	1.75	0.70		
Security Wing	191	1.77	0.76		
Total	381	1.76	0.70		

Table 4.36 presents a comparative analysis of the perceptions of prison officials from different departments on staffing and training support to prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners. The lower p-value (0.792) shows that there is no significant difference in the responses of the prison officials based on the departments.

Table 4.37

Staffing and Training Support to Prison Libraries (Designation wise)

Position	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendents	26	1.71	0.59	1.018	0.384
Welfare Officers	7	1.67	0.58		
Assistant Superintendents	15	1.76	0.80		
Prison Officers	333	1.77	0.71		
Total	381	1.76	0.70		

The table 4.37 presents a comparative analysis of the staffing and training support to prison libraries based on the designations of prison officials. The higher p-value (0.384) shows that there is no significant difference in the staffing and training support to prison libraries based on their positions.

Table 4.38*Staffing and Training Support to Prison Libraries (Experience wise)*

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	1.74	0.69	0.780	0.459
5 to 10	191	1.77	0.69		
Above 10	76	1.79	0.76		
Total	381	1.76	0.70		

The table 4.38 shows the comparative analysis of the staffing and training support to prison libraries based on the experience levels of prison officials. The higher p-value (0.459) shows that there is no significant difference in the responses based on their experience.

4.6.4 Policy and Attitudinal Support

The Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services Act 2010 make it mandatory to provide the facility of a library for the use of prisoners. The Act emphasises the prisoner welfare and reformation. The censorship of reading materials, video and audio materials are also a part of the prison policy.

Table 4.39*Policy and Attitudinal Support to Prison Libraries*

Statements	N	Mean	SD
The prison administration actively promotes the use of libraries as part of rehabilitation.	381	4.23	0.42
There is no written library policy other than general prison policy.	381	3.59	0.62
The administration supports libraries but doesn't actively promote their use.	381	2.33	0.47
Policy support	381	2.99	0.88

The table 4.39 deals with the prison policies relating to prison libraries. With the highest mean score (Mean=4.23) administration actively promotes the prison

library as a part of rehabilitation of prisoners. It shows that there is no policy or guideline for the library to follow in its day-to-day operations (Mean=3.59). The lowest mean score (Mean=2.33) suggests that most officials disagree with the statement that the administration does not promote the use of prison libraries. Table presents the perceptions of prison officials regarding policy and administrative support for prison libraries. The results indicate variation across different dimensions, such as administrative attitude, existence of formal policy, and promotional efforts. While certain aspects, such as administrative attitude, show relatively positive responses, other aspects, particularly the existence of formal written policy and active promotion, reflect comparatively lower mean scores. The variations in mean scores across these dimensions do not indicate contradiction, but rather highlight differences in the nature and extent of support provided at different levels.

Table 4.40

Policy and Attitudinal Support to Prison Libraries (One sample t-test)

	N	Mean	SD	Test value	t-value	p-value
Policy support	381	2.9904	.29552	3	-.636	.525

The overall (Mean = 2.99) indicates a limited level of institutional or general policy backing for the use of libraries in rehabilitation efforts. This multidimensional interpretation provides a more nuanced understanding of institutional support, revealing that while attitudinal support may exist, it is not always supported by formal policy or structured promotional mechanisms. Kaur and Kaur (2014) note that many Indian prisons lack written library policies, which results in inconsistent services and reliance on external donations or voluntary efforts. (LeDonne (1977; Lehmann, 2011) have emphasised the attitude and perception of the prison officials may directly affect the quality services rendered.

Qualitative inputs indicate that while prison officials hold a positive attitude toward prison libraries, formal policy support is limited. The absence of a dedicated library policy results in inconsistent implementation and reliance on individual

initiative. Although libraries are encouraged, they are not systematically integrated into rehabilitation programmes, limiting their effectiveness.

Table 4.41

Policy and Attitudinal support to prison libraries (Prison wise)

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur	123	3.01	0.95	0.917	0.400
Poojappura	158	2.97	0.79		
Viyyur	100	3.00	0.95		
Total	381	2.99	0.89		

The results as per table 4.41 showed no significant difference in the mean scores between the prisons. The Mean scores were quite similar across the three prisons Kannur (Mean = 3.01), Poojappura (Mean = 2.97), and Viyyur (Mean = 3.00). The total mean score across all prisons was 2.99. The results show that there is no difference in opinions across central prisons in Kerala and the prison officials from the three central prisons share a relatively uniform opinion of the policy and attitudinal support to prison libraries.

Table 4.42

Policy and Attitudinal Support to Prison Libraries (Department wise)

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration	101	2.98	0.88	0.075	0.928
Welfare	89	3.00	0.87		
Security	191	2.99	0.91		
Total	381	2.99	0.89		

The results of the table 4.42 revealed no statistically significant difference among the groups since p-value = 0.928 which is greater than the 0.05. The mean scores were almost identical: Administration Wing (Mean = 2.98), Welfare Department (Mean = 3.00), and Security Wing (Mean = 2.99). The overall mean score

across all departments was 2.99. These results indicate that officials from different functional areas within the prison system share a largely similar view of the policy and attitudinal support to prison libraries. This consistency may reflect shared experiences or a common institutional culture that influences how prison libraries are perceived, regardless of departmental roles (Lehmann, 2011; Knight, 2010).

Table 4.43

Policy and Attitudinal Support to Prison Libraries (Designation wise)

Designation	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendents	26	3.01	0.92	0.496	0.685
Welfare Officers	7	3.04	1.57		
Assistant Superintendents	15	2.91	0.80		
Prison Officers	333	2.99	0.87		
Total	381	2.99	0.87		

The results of table 4.43 shows that there is no statistically significant difference among the officials in different designations as p-value = 0.685. The mean scores were almost identical. The overall mean score across all respondents is 2.99. The results indicate that officials with different designations within the prison system share a similar view on the policy and attitudinal support of prison libraries.

Table 4.44

Policy and Attitudinal Support to Prison Libraries (Experience wise)

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	2.98	0.84	0.485	0.616
5 to 10	191	3.01	0.94		
Above 10	76	2.97	0.83		
Total	381	2.99	0.89		

The results of table 4.44 shows that there is no statistically significant difference in views among the officials with different experience levels since the p-

value (0.616) is greater than 0.05. The overall mean score across all respondents is 2.99. The results indicate that officials from different experience levels within the prison system share a similar view on the policy and attitudinal support for the prison libraries.

4.6.5 Technological support

Lehmann (2003) stresses that digital literacy is now a fundamental skill, and prison libraries can play a key role in bridging the digital divide for incarcerated populations. Technological support is important for implementing modern prison library services. As the world becomes more digitally interconnected, access to Information Technology (IT) is essential not only for general literacy but also for reintegration into a tech-driven society. Generally, in correctional institutions, technological support for libraries is often limited due to security concerns, budget constraints, and lack of policy direction.

Table 4.45

Technological Support for Prison Libraries.

Statements	N	Mean	SD
Access to digital resources (e-books, computers) is provided.	381	2.07	0.87
Limited access to digital tools.	381	4.00	0.00
No digital resources are available.	381	4.40	0.49
Technological support	381	1.89	1.01

The table 4.45 is meant to show the technology applications in prison libraries like digital resources and tools. The analysis shows digital resources are significantly lacking as the Mean Score is highest (Mean=4.40) for the statement ‘No digital resources are available’. While limited access to digital tools exists (Mean = 4.00), which are negative statements and the reverse scoring is applied while calculating overall access to digital resources. The overall mean score is M=1.89 which is below average and hence the technological support to prison libraries is very poor.

Table 4.46*Technological Support Systems for Prison Libraries (One sample t-test)*

	N	Mean	SD	Test value	t-value	p-value
Technological support	381	1.89	1.01	3	52.31	0.000

The overall technological support, considering a mean of approximately 1.89 suggests low availability of technological support. The relatively low variability indicates that this low support is consistently observed across the surveyed prisons.

Table 4.47*Technological Support to Prison Libraries (Prison wise)*

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur CP	123	1.89	1.03	0.006	0.994
Poojappura CP	158	1.89	1.01		
Viyur CP	100	1.89	1.01		
Total	381	1.89	1.01		

As per the table 4.47 all the three prisons have similar mean scores which shows there is similarity in technological support provided. The p-value (0.994), significantly higher which indicates there is no statistically significant difference among these prisons in terms of technological support.

Table 4.48*Technological Support to Prison Libraries (Department wise)*

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration	101	1.88	1.01	0.042	0.959
Welfare department	89	1.89	1.05		
Security Wing	191	1.89	1.01		
Total	381	1.90	1.01		

The results as per the table 4.48 indicates that prison officials across all departments consider technological support in a nearly identical manner as the mean scores are identical. The p-value (0.959), which is greater than 0.05 indicates there is no significant difference in the perceptions of prison officials.

Table 4.49

Technological Support to Prison Libraries (Designation wise)

Designation	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendents	26	1.86	0.99	1.041	0.374
Welfare Officers	7	1.71	0.38		
Assistant Superintendent	15	1.97	1.16		
Prison Officers	333	1.89	1.02		
Total	381	1.89	1.01		

The table 4.49 describes the designation wise response on technological support to prison libraries. It is found that the mean scores are almost nearer figures and the p-value (0.374) is greater than 0.05 and hence there is no significant difference in opinions among all categories of prison officials.

Table 4.50

Technological Support to Prison Libraries (Experience wise)

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	1.87	1.02	0.301	0.740
5 to 10	191	1.90	1.03		
Above 10	76	1.88	0.98		
Total	381	1.89	1.01		

The table 4.50 depicts the experience wise responses on technological support. It shows that the mean scores are identical figures and the agreement of the statements is more or less same for officials with different levels of experience. There is no

significant difference in opinions as the p-value is 0.740, higher than the significance level 0.05.

Taken together, the qualitative findings indicate that technological support for prison libraries in Kerala's central prisons is not only insufficient but also uniformly lacking across institutions, departments, designations, and experience levels. This reflects a systemic gap in integrating technology into prison library services, which limits their effectiveness in supporting modern educational and rehabilitative needs.

4.6.6 Overall Support System

An effective prison library system should have a robust support system which integrates financial, operational, staffing, training, policy and attitudinal and technological resources. There has to be a meaningful contribution from all these elements. Lehmann (2000) emphasizes that limited financial support can restrict library services to the point of ineffectiveness, thereby weakening their rehabilitative value. (Clark & MacCreaigh, 2006). Without the operational support, even a well-stocked library may remain underutilized. Lehmann (2003) notes that inadequate staffing and lack of training result in inconsistent services. For technological support, countries like Norway and Canada have demonstrated that with the right policies, secure access to technology can be integrated into prison libraries (Knight, 2010). These components are most effective when supported by institutional policies that recognize the library as a rehabilitative tool rather than a mere amenity.

Table 4.51

Overall Support to Prison Libraries

Statements	N	Mean	SD
Financial support	381	2.31	0.43
Operational support	381	2.08	0.79
Staffing & training	381	1.76	0.70
Policy & attitudinal support	381	2.99	0.88
Technological support	381	1.89	1.01
Total	381	2.21	1.68

The table 4.51 presents various types of support available to the prison libraries of central prisons of Kerala. The overall mean score of 2.21 indicates that the level of support extended to prison libraries by the prison administration is below moderate. This reflects gaps in multiple areas essential for library functioning and development. The highest mean (2.99) is for policy and attitudinal support. This suggests that prison officials acknowledge the importance of prison libraries in rehabilitation and have a positive attitude, even though practical support may be lacking. The lowest mean (1.76) is for staffing and training. This points to a serious deficiency in trained manpower, with most libraries being run by inmates or untrained personnel, not professional librarians. This lack of human resource capacity weakens library operations and rehabilitation programmes. Financial support (2.31) and operational support (2.08) are low, indicating that the funds are inadequate for purchasing resources, upgrading facilities, or running structured programmes. Day-to-day operational systems are weak, possibly with irregular opening hours and poor maintenance. Technological support (1.89) is also very low. This shows that most prison libraries lack digital resources, internet connectivity, and ICT tools, making them isolated from modern library services. This suggests that the prison officials value the concept of prison libraries. The practical and structural support systems, especially staffing, technology, and funding are inadequate. This imbalance limits the libraries' potential role in rehabilitation, literacy improvement, and skills development of inmates.

H8 *Support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala in the rehabilitation of inmates are significantly high.*

Table 4.52

Overall Support for Prison Libraries (One sample t-test)

	N	Mean	SD	Test value	t-value	p-value
Support system	381	2.21	0.115	3	134.37	0.000

The average score of the Overall support system (2.21) is lower than the test value (3) and the p-value $< .001$). Hence it can be concluded that the overall support is significantly low.

Hence **Hypothesis H8** stating that ‘*Support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala in the rehabilitation of inmates is significantly high*’ is rejected.

Table 4.53

Overall Support to Prison Libraries (Prison wise)

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur	123	2.22	0.111	1.009	0.365
Poojappura	158	2.19	0.116		
Viyyur	100	2.21	0.117		
Total	381	2.21	0.115		

As per the table 4.53 all the three prisons have similar mean scores which shows there is similarity in their perceptions on overall support. The results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) show that the p-value ($p = 0.365$) is greater than the significance level of 0.05, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in overall support among the three prisons.

Therefore, the null hypothesis (H9), which states that “*there is no prison-wise difference in the support systems for central prison libraries in Kerala in the rehabilitation of inmates,*” is accepted. This implies that the level of support for prison libraries is perceived to be consistent across all three central prisons.

Table 4.54

Overall support to prison libraries – Department wise

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration Wing	101	2.20	0.119	0.208	0.812
Welfare Department	89	2.21	0.106		
Security Wing	191	2.21	0.117		
Total	381	2.21	0.115		

The results as per the table 4.54 indicates that prison officials across all departments identify overall support in a nearly similar way as the mean scores are uniform. Since the p-value (0.812) is higher than 0.05, there does not exist a significant difference in the conceptions of officials on overall support systems.

Table 4.55

Overall Support to Prison Libraries (Designation wise)

Designation	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendent	26	2.18	0.116	0.458	0.712
Welfare Officers	7	2.18	0.149		
Assistant Superintendent	15	2.22	0.124		
Prison Officers	333	2.21	0.114		
Total	381	2.21	0.115		

The results as per the table 4.55 indicates that prison officials with different positions perceive overall support with identical mean scores. Since the p-value (0.712) is higher than 0.05, there does not exist a significant difference in the perceptions of officials.

Table 4.56

Overall Support to Prison Libraries (Experience wise)

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	2.19	0.124	0.549	0.578
5 to 10	191	2.21	0.111		
Above 10	76	2.21	0.110		
Total	381	2.21	0.115		

The results as per the table 4.56 indicates that prison officials with different experience levels perceive overall support with identical mean scores. Since the p-value (0.578) is greater than 0.05, there does not exist a significant difference in the perceptions of officials.

4.7 Access to prison libraries, its resources and programs

In this section the accessibility to prison libraries and the level of participation is studied. The physical access to libraries, the designated time and hours, availability and accessibility to resources, whether there is any access control in the number of persons using the library. In the context of prison libraries of central prisons of Kerala access for prisoners is free. The service is a part of rehabilitative measures.

Table 4.57

Accessibility to Prison Libraries, its Resources and Programs

Statements	N	Mean	SD
Physical Access	381	2.87	0.44
Open hours & Timing	381	1.99	0.30
Resource Availability & Accessibility	381	1.96	0.20
Access control (No. of users at a time)	381	1.40	0.49
Access	381	2.06	0.84

The table 4.57 is regarding the access to the library. Prison officials were asked about the working hours and other physical accessibility of the library. The results show that physical access having the highest mean value (2.87) and regarding Open hours and resource availability mean scores are 1.99 and 1.96 respectively. Access control has the least mean value of 1.40 which means the library is open without restriction and no control is imposed. The narrations of prison administration also underlines that there are no undue restrictions to use library in the designated hours (New Indian Express, 2011, November, 20). Access control has the least mean value, where the officials disagree with the access control. The qualitative approach to this question also identifies that, “prisoners have open access to the library and its resources”. One of the officials said, “.... libraries and books are repositories of knowledge, which can assist in bringing about changes in behaviour and help inmates fruitfully spend their time”.

Table 4.58*Accessibility to Prison Libraries, its Resources and Programs (Prison wise)*

Prison	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Kannur	123	2.06	0.90	0.014	0.987
Poojappura	158	2.05	0.80		
Viyyur	100	2.06	0.84		
Total	381	2.05	0.84		

Prison wise comparison on accessibility is done in table 4.58 and it is found that the mean values derived are nearer to each other and there is very low variance in opinions. Since the p-value (0.987) is greater than 0.05, it indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the views on access to prison libraries among the officials of the three prisons.

Table 4.59*Accessibility to Prison Libraries, its Resources and Programs (Department wise)*

Department	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Administration Wing	101	2.05	0.96	0.143	0.867
Welfare Department	89	2.06	0.80		
Security Wing	191	2.06	0.80		
Total	381	2.05	0.84		

The table 4.59 presents a comparative analysis of the responses of prison officials from different departments on accessibility to prison libraries, its resources and programs. The analysis is based on the mean scores, and the results of a one-way ANOVA test, which examines whether there are significant differences among the three departmental groups. Being the p-value (0.867) higher than the significance level (0.05) the responses are almost similar.

Table 4.60*Accessibility to prison libraries, its resources and programs (Designation wise)*

Designation	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Superintendent	26	2.02	1.06	0.746	0.525
Welfare Officers	7	2.14	.53		
Assistant Superintendent	15	2.08	.49		
Prison Officers	333	2.06	.84		
Total	381	2.05	.84		

It is shown in table 4.60 a comparison of the responses on accessibility to prison libraries, its resources and programs of prison officials with different designations. The mean values of the different positions of officials are similar, implying that officials perceive access for prison libraries identically. The higher p-value (0.525) suggests the marginal differences observed are not significant.

Table 4.61*Accessibility to Prison Libraries, its Resources and Programs (Experience wise)*

Experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Less than 5	114	2.06	0.89	0.352	0.704
5 to 10	191	2.05	0.85		
Above 10	76	2.05	0.75		
Total	381	2.06	0.84		

The table 4.61 shows a comparison of the responses on accessibility to prison libraries, its resources and programs of prison officials with different experience levels. The mean values of the different positions of officials are similar, implying that officials perceive access for prison libraries identically. The higher p-value 0.704 suggests the marginal differences observed are not significant.

4.8 Types of resources

The table 4.62 presents the ranking of different types of resources in prison libraries based on their preference among inmates. The rankings are determined using a weighted score calculated from the frequency of different rankings assigned to each resource.

Table 4.62

Resources Used by the Prisoners

Type of Resource	Weighted score	Rank
Educational books & materials	1740	1
Self-help books	1689	2
Religious texts	708	5
Magazines & News papers	981	3
Fiction	812	4

The table shows that educational books and materials are the most preferred indicating a strong demand for educational resources marking their importance in skill development and rehabilitation. Self-help books were ranked second which shows that the prisoners find self-improvement and personal growth literature highly beneficial. Religious texts hold a moderate level of importance for prisoners, from which they find peace and solace. Magazines and newspapers were mostly ranked fourth showing that these are valued but not as highly as books. Fictional materials were ranked primarily in the lower categories. The relatively low weighted score suggests that inmates prioritize educational and self-help materials and religious texts over recreational reading.

4.9 Participation in library programs

Library programmes in prisons serve as essential platforms for promoting literacy, cognitive development, and rehabilitation among inmates. They offer a structured and purposeful environment where prisoners can engage with educational resources, develop life skills, and cultivate positive habits (Lehmann, 2000).

Table 4.63*Participation in library programs*

Participation	Respondents	Percent
A large proportion of inmates regularly participate in library programs.	233	61.15
Some inmates participate, but it's not widespread	132	34.65
Very few inmates use the library or participate in programs.	16	4.20
Total	381	100

Table 4.61 shows the responses of prison officials regarding the participation of prisoners in the library programs. Majority of the officials (61.15 percent) responded that a large proportion of the prisoners participate in the programs. It is also noted that 34.65 percent of the officials say some inmates participate in library programs and 4.20 percent think only very few prisoners participate in library programs.

The qualitative insights from prison officials indicate that participation in library programmes is generally encouraging, with a majority of inmates engaging in such activities. Officials observed that library programmes provide a structured and meaningful avenue for inmates to utilise their time constructively, which contributes to improved discipline and reduced idleness within the prison environment.

Respondents also noted that inmates who participate in library programmes tend to show greater interest in reading, learning, and self-improvement. Such participation was perceived to enhance cognitive engagement and foster positive behavioural changes among inmates.

However, officials pointed out that participation is not uniform across all prisoners. In some cases, limited awareness, lack of motivation, or restricted access to library facilities were identified as factors influencing lower participation levels among certain groups. It was further observed that the absence of structured and regular library programmes in some prisons affects the consistency of participation.

Where organised activities such as reading sessions, writing programmes, or educational initiatives are conducted, participation levels tend to be higher.

These qualitative observations suggest that while library programmes are actively utilised by a significant proportion of prisoners, there remains scope for expanding participation through improved access, structured programming, and institutional encouragement.

4.10 Challenges in participating in library programs

Despite the recognized rehabilitative potential of prison libraries, inmates often face significant barriers to meaningful participation in library programmes. One of the primary challenges is lack of awareness or motivation, where inmates may not fully understand the purpose or benefits of such programmes, particularly in prisons where reading culture is weak or undervalued (Lehmann, 2003). Limited accessibility due to restricted library hours, bureaucratic gatekeeping, or inflexible prison routines also prevents consistent engagement (Clark & MacCreaigh, 2006).

Table 4.64

Challenges in participating in library programs

Challenges	Weighted score	Rank
Lack of knowledge about the utility of libraries	978	1
Lack of interest due to indifference.	823	2
Lack of time due to work	541	3

The challenges in participating in the prison library programs are presented in table 4.62. The analysis of the responses shows that insufficient knowledge about the utility of libraries and its programs is the most ranked challenge. Lack of interest is the second ranked challenge and the lack of time is ranked third. The results highlight the knowledge gaps as the primary challenge for which awareness campaigns or training programs are conducted to solve the issue. Lack of interest calls for a prisoner engagement strategy to be strengthened. Time constraint does exist, but not the prime reason for not participating in library programs.

The qualitative findings suggest that the key barrier to participation is not merely access, but a combination of limited awareness, low motivation, and insufficient programme engagement strategies, which together reduce the effective utilisation of prison library programmes.

4.11 Impact of prison library on prisoner rehabilitation as perceived by prison officials of central prisons of Kerala. (Open end question).

Access to books and educational resources within prison libraries foster self-directed learning, literacy improvement, and a sense of autonomy, all of which are vital to personal transformation (Lehmann, 2003). Studies show that inmates who actively engage with library services exhibit improved critical thinking, reduced aggression, and better coping mechanisms while serving their sentences (Clark & MacCreaigh, 2006). Moreover, the opportunity to read, write, and access legal information through libraries contributes to inmates' preparedness for life after release, enhancing their reintegration prospects (Bouchard & Kunz, 2018). In some countries, structured library programs, such as book clubs and reading groups, have been associated with increased empathy and emotional intelligence among participants (Wilhelmus, 2015). (Biju & Johnson, 2018) in their study finds that most of the prisoners have educational qualifications of below matriculation and they make use of prison libraries in their literacy development and higher studies. These outcomes clearly demonstrate that prison libraries are not merely support services but active instruments in the rehabilitative process.

The qualitative responses from prison officials indicate that prison libraries are perceived as meaningful supportive spaces within the rehabilitation process. Officials consistently observed that inmates who regularly use library facilities tend to demonstrate improved behavioural patterns, including increased discipline, reduced involvement in conflicts, and more constructive engagement in daily activities. Respondents highlighted that access to reading materials contributes to cognitive engagement and self-reflection, enabling inmates to think more critically about their actions and future prospects. In particular, books related to motivation, biographies, and general knowledge were reported to have a noticeable influence on inmates'

attitudes and outlook toward life. Prison officials also noted that library usage supports emotional stability and psychological well-being. Inmates who engage in reading were observed to better cope with stress, anxiety, and the monotony of prison life. The library environment was described as relatively calm and structured, providing a positive space for mental engagement.

It was further indicated that prison libraries contribute to educational development, especially for inmates enrolled in formal or informal learning programmes. Access to study materials and reading resources was seen as beneficial in improving literacy levels and supporting academic pursuits. Some officials also observed that inmates involved in library-related activities, such as managing collections or assisting other users, develop a sense of responsibility, confidence, and self-worth, which are important components of rehabilitation.

However, respondents also pointed out that the rehabilitative impact of prison libraries is constrained by limitations in infrastructure, operational support, and access. While the potential of libraries is widely recognised, their effectiveness is not fully realised due to these institutional challenges.

The qualitative findings suggest that prison libraries are perceived as contributing positively to rehabilitation, particularly in terms of behavioural improvement, emotional well-being, and educational engagement. At the same time, their impact remains supportive rather than transformative, as it is influenced by the level of institutional support available.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive analysis of the status, functioning, and rehabilitative potential of prison libraries in the central prisons of Kerala, drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative data from prison officials. The findings clearly establish that prison libraries are widely perceived as valuable instruments for promoting inmates' mental well-being, personal development, and constructive engagement. The statistically significant positive perception among officials reinforces the recognition of libraries as an integral component of the correctional rehabilitation framework. However, this positive perception stands in

contrast to the operational realities revealed in the analysis of data. The analysis highlights persistent structural deficiencies, including the absence of professionally qualified librarians, inadequate financial and operational support, lack of digital infrastructure, and limited integration of library services into formal rehabilitation programmes. The reliance on untrained inmate volunteers and overburdened welfare staff further constrains the effectiveness and sustainability of library services. These gaps indicate that while the philosophical and attitudinal support for prison libraries is strong, institutional and policy-level backing remains insufficient.

The study also underscores the role of interdepartmental dynamics in shaping library services. While welfare and security departments demonstrate relatively higher engagement and appreciation of the library's rehabilitative role, administrative limitations in policy direction, staffing, and resource allocation significantly hinder progress. The absence of significant differences in perceptions across designation and experience levels suggests a shared understanding of both the potential and limitations of prison libraries across the system.

Importantly, the utilisation patterns indicate that prison libraries are actively used for emotional support, education, and constructive use of time, contributing to behavioural improvements among prisoners. However, their role in facilitating reintegration into society remains underdeveloped, pointing to the need for more structured, goal-oriented library programmes aligned with re-entry preparation.

The chapter reveals a critical gap between recognition and realisation. While prison libraries in Kerala possess strong rehabilitative potential and institutional goodwill, their current impact is constrained by systemic inadequacies. Bridging this gap requires a coordinated policy approach that prioritises professional staffing, sustainable funding, digital inclusion, and structured programming. Strengthening these areas will enable prison libraries to evolve from passive repositories of books into dynamic centres of reform, learning, and reintegration. This analysis thus lays a robust empirical foundation for the subsequent chapter, where targeted recommendations and policy interventions will be proposed to enhance the effectiveness of prison libraries as transformative tools in the correctional system.

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CHAPTER 5

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1. *Introduction*

5.2 *Schematic representation of the qualitative research outline*

5.3 *Theoretical Framework for Qualitative Analysis*

5.4 *Sample selected for the study*

5.5 *Themes and Insights (from prisoners assigned duty in the library).*

5.6 *Thematic Categories*

5.7 *Themes and Insights (from Prison Officials).*

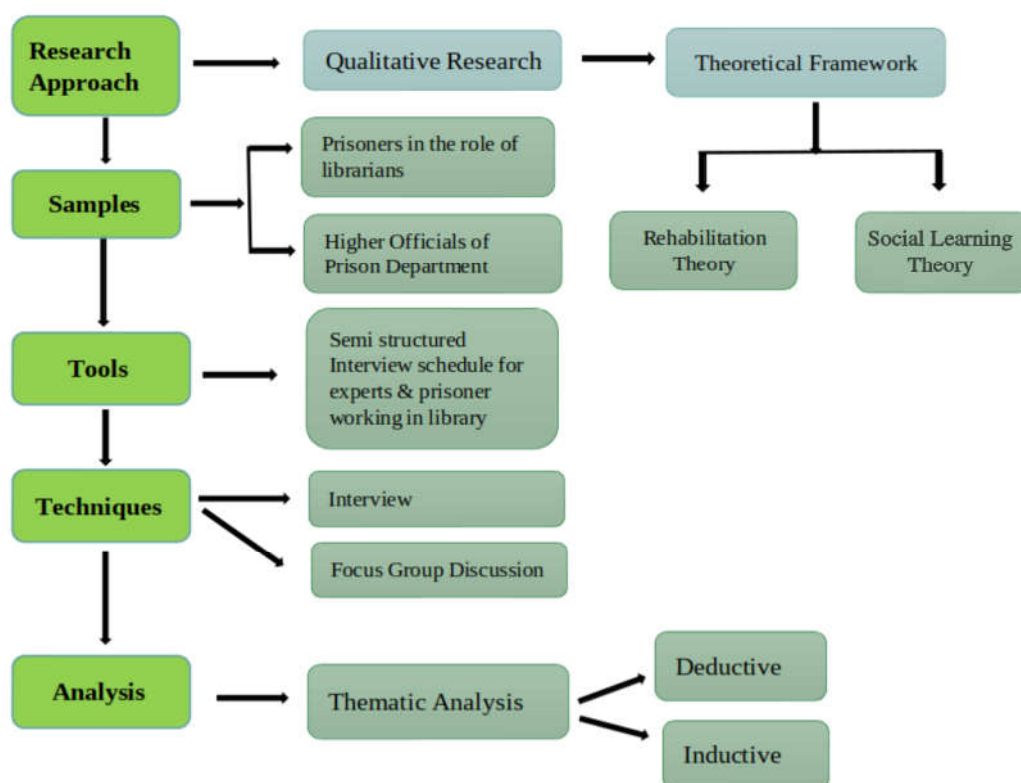
5.1. Introduction

This qualitative analysis, informed by thematic insights from interviews, discusses the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of inmates. The study discusses how libraries facilitate personal development, social interactions, and behavioural change in a challenging environment characterized by a lack of resources and training. It offers recommendations for improving the transformative potential of libraries within rehabilitation processes.

5.2 Schematic representation of the qualitative research outline

Figure 15

Schematic representation of the qualitative research outline



5.3 Theoretical Framework for Qualitative Analysis

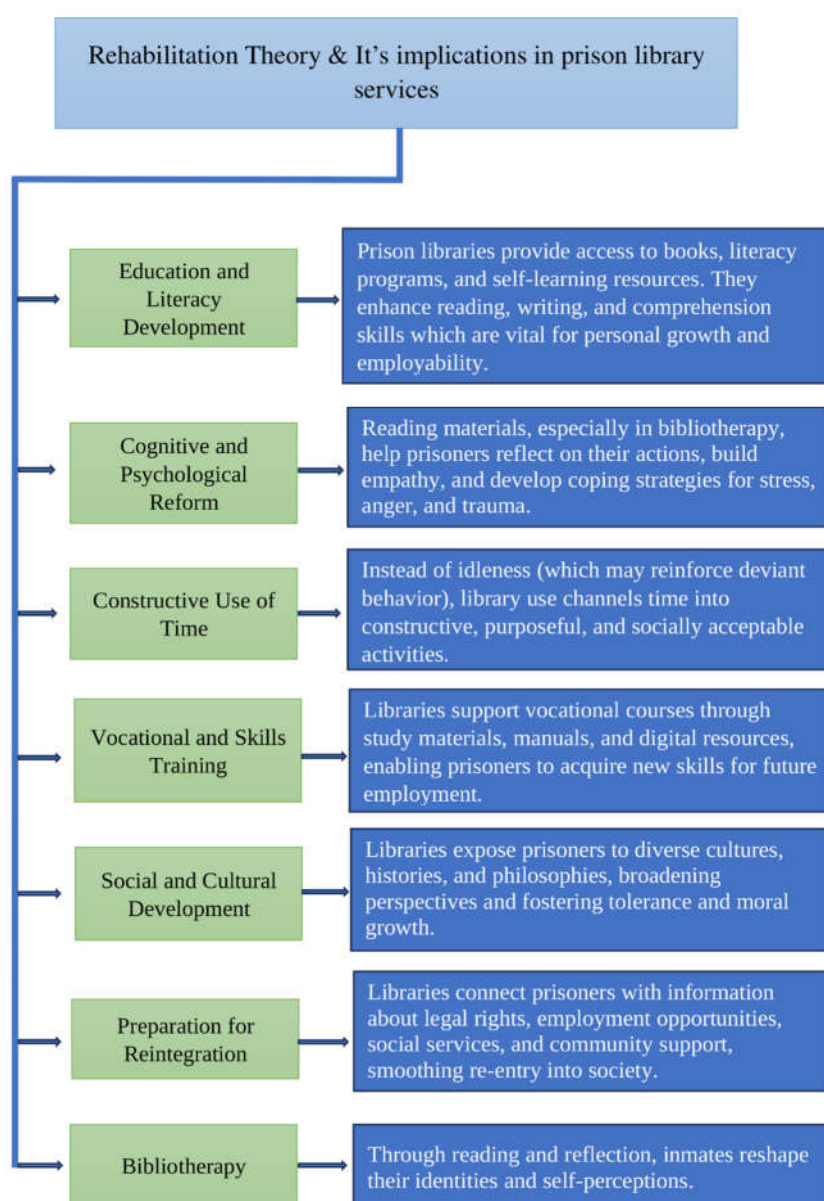
The theoretical framework of this qualitative study is based on two theories namely, Rehabilitation Theory and Social Learning Theory to explore the role of

prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners. These theories provide a robust foundation for understanding how access to educational resources, literacy programs, and structured learning environments within prison libraries can contribute to the personal and social transformation of incarcerated individuals.

5.3.1 Rehabilitation Theory

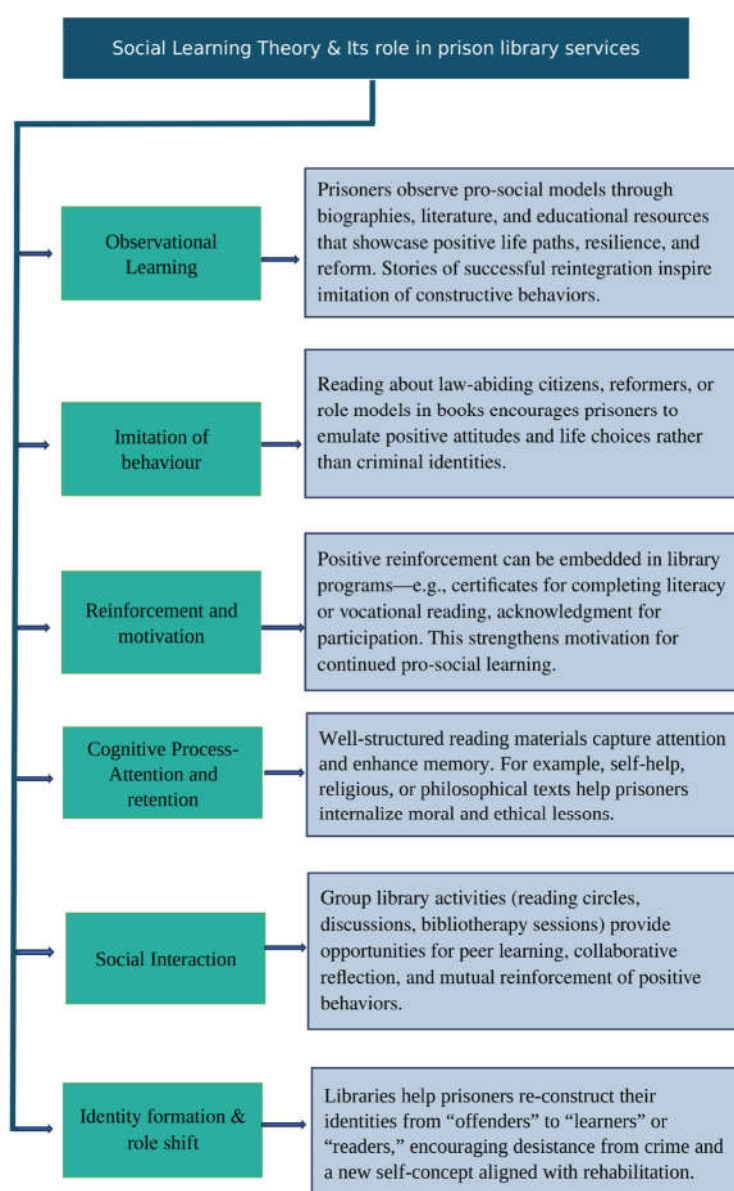
Rehabilitation theory is the base in the field of criminal justice, emphasizing the transformation of offenders into law-abiding citizens through various interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour. The theory is grounded in the belief that criminal behaviour is not inherent but rather a product of social, psychological, and environmental factors that can be mitigated through targeted programs (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000). Rehabilitation Theory posits that criminal behaviour is not an inherent trait but rather a result of social, psychological, and environmental factors that can be addressed through targeted interventions (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000). The primary goal of rehabilitation is to equip prisoners with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for successful reintegration into society. Prison libraries play a critical role in this process by providing access to educational materials, vocational training resources, and self-help literature that can address the root causes of criminal behaviour, such as illiteracy, lack of education, and limited opportunities for personal growth (Clark & MacCreaigh, 2006). By fostering intellectual development and self-reflection, prison libraries serve as a catalyst for rehabilitation, enabling prisoners to develop pro-social identities and reduce their likelihood of reoffending (Maruna, 2001).

Figure 16

Rehabilitation Theory and Prison Library Operations**Rehabilitation Theory and Prison Library Operations****5.3.2 Social Learning Theory**

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura (1977), emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and modelling in the acquisition of new behaviours. In the context of prison libraries, this theory suggests that prisoners can learn positive

behaviours and attitudes through exposure to educational programs, peer interactions, and mentorship opportunities facilitated by library staff. For example, literacy programs and book clubs within prison libraries create environments where prisoners can observe and emulate pro-social behaviours, such as cooperation, empathy, and critical thinking. Additionally, the library setting itself can serve as a model for a structured, respectful, and intellectually stimulating environment, which contrasts with the often chaotic and punitive nature of prison life (Bandyopadhyay, 2016). Through these experiences, prisoners can internalize new norms and values that support their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.



5.3.3 Integration of Theories in the Context of Prison Libraries

The integration of Rehabilitation Theory and Social Learning Theory provides a comprehensive lens for understanding the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation process. Rehabilitation Theory highlights the importance of addressing the underlying causes of criminal behaviour, while Social Learning Theory underscores the mechanisms through which prisoners can acquire new pro-social behaviours. Together, these theories suggest that prison libraries are not merely repositories of books but dynamic spaces for learning, personal growth, and behavioural change. By providing access to educational resources, fostering a culture of learning, and creating opportunities for positive social interactions, prison libraries can empower prisoners to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for successful reintegration into society.

5.4 Sample selected for the study

The sample selected for the study was 11 prisoners who were assigned the job in the library. All the prisoners working in the library from three central prisons were considered for the study. As matters on prisons and prisoners were too sensitive the demographic details and personal details were not allowed to collect from prisons. Only the questions relevant to the study were asked and respondents were anonymised. The research questions to be addressed were,

What were their roles and responsibilities?

Experience and impact of their role?

Their perception about the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation of prisoners.

The rehabilitation journey of prisoners, challenges and support.

Apart from this, an in-depth interview of 6 higher officials of the Prison department were also done. Tools used for the study were semi-structured interview schedules and observation of the participants within the institution.

5.5 Themes and Insights (from prisoners assigned duty in the library).

Themes	Key elements	Insights
Roles & Responsibilities	Staff coordination, newspaper handling, record maintenance, book circulation, library management, prisoner assistance.	Overseeing book issuance/returns, organizing materials, and communicating with prisoners and welfare officers. Inculcate responsibility and discipline.
Assignment & Training	Welfare department coordination, interest in reading, briefing and guidance, lack of formal training	Assigned based on interest in reading; briefed by senior prisoners/prison officers; no formal training provided.
Library Resource Management	Literacy programs, resource organization, newspaper subscriptions, book circulation	Systematic book arrangement; maintaining registers; literacy programs supported with children's literature.
Personal Development	Responsibility, stress relief through reading, positive outlook, social interaction	Library work promotes mental peace, friendships, responsibility, and optimism; fosters personal growth and reduces loneliness. Behaviour modification.
Skill Development	Responsibility, stress relief through reading, positive outlook, social interaction	Managing anger, improving interpersonal skills, understanding others, fostering helping attitudes. Self-help, self-improvement. Knowledge acquisition,
Relationships	Supportive prison staff, community and belonging, mutual respect	Healthy relationships with prisoners and staff; sharing ideas and sorrows fosters camaraderie. Social integration
Impact on Mental Health	Stress management, personal well-being, sense of purpose, escape	Library as a refuge; books as a mental escape; fostering responsibility and reducing stress.
Library's Role in Rehabilitation	Mental stimulation, educational hub, cultural growth, community	Literacy programs, motivational initiatives, and educational materials improve inmates' skills and behaviours.

	unity, Healthy re-integration.	
Behavioural Impact	Hope, consolation, learning and growth, stress relief	Reduced mental trauma, calmer demeanour, interest in learning, and creativity fostered through reading and engagement.
Programs & Materials	Educational programs, skill training, cultural and motivational support, interactive learning resources.	Emphasis on literacy, self-help, and skill-building programs; need for diverse materials like audiovisual aids.
Challenges	Limited training, inadequate experience,	Inmates lack professional training, leading to restricted functionality and inability to provide expert support.
Resources Limitations	Inadequate space, insufficient materials, lack of automation	Limited seating, books, and catalogue systems; absence of a professional librarian.
Administrative Support	Guidance and resources, staff engagement, event organization	Suggest full-time staff, more diverse materials, expanded seating, automated systems, and interactive programs to enhance the library's role in rehabilitation.
Perception about library's role in rehabilitation	Knowledge expansion, community and unity, educational hub, mental stimulation, cultural and motivational growth.	Prisoners are in need of library services, considered as a comfort zone to kill their free time, learning materials
Recommendations	Expanded resources, improved facilities, professional staffing	Suggest full-time staff, more diverse materials, expanded seating, automated systems, and interactive programs to enhance the library's role in rehabilitation.

5.6 Thematic Categories

5.6.1 Responsibilities and Role of the Prison Librarian

The work that is typically carried out by the prison librarians includes running the day-to-day library operations which includes the lending of books, shelving, and keeping of records. Often, the responsibilities would also involve bringing order, receiving newspapers, and granting access to prisoners to resources. Since such work is normally delegated to inmates by welfare officers, these are not done in a professional way, which calls for formal training. An inmate responded, “It’s a feeling that something is there when you wake up. The duties in the library have made me more responsible and I started reading after the conviction”.

5.6.2 Impact of the Libraries on Rehabilitation

Prisons libraries are of great help for rehabilitation; they provide educational, recreational, and emotional support for the inmates. Respondent 1 says, “I am interested in reading philosophical books and it's well understood that life is a miracle and it is not known when it will take you where”. Reading can minimize mental trauma by serving as an escape from life inside and a connection to the outside world. Respondent 4 [inmate] have mentioned that,” a prisoner at an age of 70 now who has been in prison for 15 years finds peace at the library and reading books. He has changed a lot and has good relations with other inmates”. The regular users tend to show improvement in their behaviour and stress management, while quite a good deal of cognitive growth can be seen. Such skills development and self-improvement are further enhanced with literacy initiatives and book clubs. Apart from all that, libraries also play their role in being cultural hotspots, motivating activities, and educating people towards attitudinal changes.

5.6.3 Challenges and Barriers

Despite the potential, many prison libraries are plagued by a host of challenges, including underfunding, space inadequacy, and collection shortcomings. The lack of professional librarians and the inadequate training of inmate librarians further limit the effectiveness of the library to serve users. The lack of automation of

book circulation and cataloguing increases the inefficiency of operations. Overcrowding in limited library spaces and a shortage of seating further exacerbate accessibility. Respondents say the collection is outdated and the space is also limited, and needs more furniture and almirahs for the prison library.

5.6.4 Social and Interpersonal Impact

Social connections are achieved by prison libraries, creating a sense of community among consigned people and staff, the shared experiences from readings and participation in book clubs make relationships closer and increase the mutual respect between them. At times, prisoners develop friendships and garner comfort within the support that such libraries will provide. This environment is surely positively enhanced by interactions also with staff members in the prison system who guide and put up encouragement to the inmates themselves. Such cultural programs and interactional activities through the library help unite people and create a feeling of cooperation. These social contacts reduce feelings of loneliness, bringing about a sense of belonging and reformation.

5.6.5 Contribution to Inmates' Personal Development

Working in the library and being able to avail its services allow personal growth and self-improvement of the prisoners. Responsibility, empathetic consciousness, and sense of discipline are achieved by the librarian jobs they had while building up cognitive and emotional competencies with books regularly in their eyes and between their hands. All inmates have obtained good soft skills from interaction and enactment activities in the interaction role of communicating, organizing, and problem-solving skills. Now, the literature which falls into philosophy and education allows perspectives that allow a positive behaviour change; hence, the hope could be fostered.

5.6.6 Perception of the library's role in rehabilitation of prisoners

From the prisoners' perspective, the library serves as a space of freedom within confinement, a place where they can momentarily escape the monotony and emotional strain of prison life. Inmates in Kerala's central prisons perceive the library

as a source of comfort, learning, and hope for a better future. Access to books and reading materials enables them to enhance their literacy, gain new knowledge, and reflect on their lives, fostering a sense of personal growth and rehabilitation. For several inmates, reading becomes a therapeutic and transformative experience, helping them cope with isolation, anxiety, and regret while nurturing a renewed sense of identity and purpose beyond imprisonment.

5.7 Themes and Insights (from Prison Officials).

Thematic Analysis of Prison Officials' Responses

Theme	Subtheme	Supporting Statement/Insight	Implication
Administrative & Institutional Support	Financial Support	Libraries rely on donations and limited state allocations; funds insufficient for program expansion.	Chronic underfunding restricts resource acquisition and growth.
	Operational Support	Restrictive policies and limited administrative encouragement undermine effectiveness.	Lack of operational autonomy reduces library impact on rehabilitation.
	Staffing & Training	Libraries are run by untrained inmates; absence of professional staff.	Professionalization is urgently needed to improve the quality of services.
	Policy & Attitudinal Support	Mixed administrative attitudes; limited active promotion of libraries for rehabilitation.	Attitudinal gaps weaken institutional recognition of libraries' rehabilitative role.
	Technological Support	Minimal access to digital resources; modernization absent.	Digital divide limits accessibility and relevance of services.

Programs & Services	Existing Programs	Book clubs and educational activities are present but irregular.	Current initiatives have potential but lack sustainability.
	Moderate level of Participation	Inmate involvement is limited due to lack of awareness and restrictive schedules.	More structured and inclusive programs are needed.
	Multi-disciplinary Needs	Officers suggest educational, recreational, and emotional programs.	Programs should address holistic prisoner development for reintegration.
Access & Participation	Accessibility	Limited hours, inadequate collections, absence of digital tools.	Barriers in access prevent equitable utilization.
	Participation Challenges	Rigid rules, insufficient funding, lack of awareness.	Inmates' engagement is hampered, reducing rehabilitative benefits.
	Suggestions for Improvement	Extend hours, enhance digital/print resources, awareness campaigns.	Improvements could significantly increase inmate participation.
Impact on Rehabilitation	Literacy & Mental Wellness	Libraries improve literacy, mental health, and prisoner engagement. Curated collection development to be done with the help of an expert.	Libraries are key instruments of rehabilitation. Inmate engagement. Stress release. Education & Literacy
	Valuable Resources	Philosophical books, Biographies, Fiction and newspapers/magazines are present. But a curated collection is required.	Recreational and informational resources support education and emotional stability.

Challenges & Barriers	Persistent Problems	Funding shortage, lack of staff, inadequate technology. Convincing the administrators about the need of a good library.	Barriers are systemic and persistent across institutions. Punitive environment and attitude of higher officials.
	Attitudinal Gaps	Administrators are often indifferent.	Need for cultural and policy shift toward valuing libraries.
Collaboration & Partnership	External Partnerships	NGOs, universities, and government agencies can fill gaps.	Collaboration can provide training, resources, and technological upgrades.
Future Development	Modernization Goals	Emphasis on digital tools, professional staffing, extended hours.	Libraries must adapt to modern needs for effective rehabilitation.
	Policy Reforms	Libraries should be formally recognized as rehabilitative tools.	Policy-level recognition can secure sustained funding and support.
	Publicity & Awareness	Awareness campaigns recommended to boost usage.	Increased visibility will normalize inmate participation and library use.

The themes were coded from the responses for the open-ended questions and the narratives of officials at interviews.

Administrative and Institutional Support

The administrative and institutional support were measured through quantitative data collected from prison officials. To add to the findings from quantitative analysis the following themes were identified. Prison officials highlight

that administrative backing is uneven, with both operational and attitudinal gaps limiting the full potential of libraries. Libraries depend heavily on meagre state allocations and occasional donations, restricting collection development and expansion of services. The Operational problems are also there. Restrictive prison policies and insufficient institutional encouragement weaken library functionality. Officials perceive a lack of proactive administrative promotion of libraries for rehabilitation purposes. A shortage of professional staff is evident, with libraries often run by untrained inmates, limiting their professional effectiveness. The ICT infrastructure hinders modernization and equitable access to resources. Libraries are undervalued administratively, with chronic underfunding, limited operational freedom, and insufficient professional support forming a barrier from the side of the system.

Programs and Services

Existing Programs like book clubs, literacy programs, writing workshops and educational activities exist, but are irregular and resource-strained. Inmates' involvement is limited due to lack of awareness, restrictive schedules, and insufficient resources and for some lack of interest.

Access and Participation

Libraries face limited opening hours, inadequate collections, and absence of digital access. The prison rules restrict the timing of library operations. Operational barriers, rigid prison rules, and lack of awareness reduce inmate engagement. Sometimes prisoners are assigned duty as part of their incarceration and have to engage in their assigned work. Officials recommend extending hours, expanding resources (print + digital), and running awareness campaigns to boost usage. Accessibility gaps undermine the rehabilitative mission and so, improved operational flexibility and awareness are essential.

Impact on Rehabilitation

Officials strongly perceive prison libraries as improving literacy, mental well-being, constructive engagement, and reducing re-occurrence of crimes. Some are

gaining degrees and certificates by learning from prisons and are able to get some kind of jobs. Resources like educational, philosophical, and biographies are seen as most impactful for inmates' Fiction and periodicals (magazines/newspapers), are seen as recreational, and religious and other psychological contents are also on demand. Prison officials said that there has to be a curated collection to give bibliotherapy as a rehabilitation tool. Tihar jail programs by Kiran Bedi as per Hindustan Times 14, May 2023, The news read like,

“During the 1990s, Kiran Bedi’s tenure as Inspector General of Prisons at Tihar Jail marked a turning point in prison reform in India. She initiated transformative measures that emphasized rehabilitation, education, and humane treatment of inmates. Her reforms included the introduction of vocational and educational programmes, the promotion of discipline and self-reflection through meditation and yoga, and efforts to curb corruption through transparency and accountability. Under her leadership, Tihar evolved from a punitive correctional facility into an “ashram-like” institution devoted to personal transformation, compassion, and the holistic development of prisoners”.

Challenges and Barriers

Insufficient funding, absence of professional staff, policy rigidity, and minimal technology hinder growth. Some administrators remain indifferent or fail to recognize libraries as a core rehabilitative tool. Limited collections and lack of digital access weaken effectiveness. Barriers are deeply tied to prison culture and governance rather than merely operational issues.

Collaboration and Partnership

External Partnerships like NGOs, universities, and government agencies are seen as potential allies in funding, training, and resource-sharing. Partnerships can ensure continuity of programs, technological upgrades, and professionalization. Collaboration is perceived as a practical pathway to overcoming funding and expertise deficits.

Future Development

Expansion of digital resources, hiring professional staff, and extending hours are seen as priorities. Officials emphasize that structured policies should recognize libraries as integral to rehabilitation. Awareness campaigns could encourage greater inmate engagement and normalize library use. Future growth requires strategic investment in digital, human, and policy infrastructure to transform prison libraries into comprehensive rehabilitation centers.

Prison officials perceive libraries as highly valuable for rehabilitation but limited by administrative barriers primarily financial insufficiency, lack of trained staff, administrative indifference, and technological backwardness. Despite these obstacles, the positive impact on literacy, mental well-being, and inmate engagement, education, and skill development is strongly acknowledged. The way forward is seen in strengthening institutional support, modernizing through digital integration, professional staffing, structured programs, and fostering external collaborations to position prison libraries as essential pillars of rehabilitation.

The study involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative findings in the development of an overall understanding of the role that prison libraries can play in the rehabilitation of inmates. It validates data, highlights patterns, and bridge gaps between statistical analysis and thematic insights. The qualitative themes also corroborate these results and further present the library as a cultural hub of contact, offering educational resources and the alleviation of stress by reading and engagement.

Qualitative responses, in turn, provide context to personal experiences and complement quantitative data. For instance, interviews with inmates describe the influence of libraries on behavioural changes, responsibility, and social contacts. These challenges, identified quantitatively, are elaborated through qualitative insights, especially in terms of the unavailability of professional librarians and digital tools. This approach strengthens the conclusions of this study through a combination of numerical rigor and narrative depth, making sure that any rehabilitative potential of libraries is holistically understood. Such integration not only confirms findings but

also informs actionable recommendations, such as enhancing resources, expanding programs, and addressing administrative barriers, for more effective prison library systems. The opinion of prisoners assigned the duty at the library regarding the availability of the resources corroborates with that of prison officials.

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CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Major findings

6.2 Discussion

6.3 Suggestions

6.5 Conclusion

6.6 Limitations

6.7 Recommendations for Further Research

This chapter presents an integrated analysis of quantitative and qualitative findings on the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation. The research questions followed throughout the study were the perception of prison officials, opinion of prison officials about the prison libraries, nature of utilisation of prison libraries, institutional support, programs and services, access and participation and challenges. This chapter aims to present findings related to the role of prison libraries in prisoner rehabilitation within the central prisons of Kerala. After both quantitative and qualitative analysis, the findings are summarised for each research question with suggestions and recommendations for the betterment of prison library services and aiding prisoner rehabilitation. The hypotheses drawn were also tested and conclusions given. Recommendations for further studies are also laid down.

6.1 Major Findings

The study presents a comprehensive understanding of the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners in Kerala as perceived by the prison officials by integrating quantitative analysis with qualitative insights. The findings reveal a complex interaction between perception, utilisation, and institutional support, highlighting both the potential and limitations of prison libraries.

6.1.1 Present Status of Prison Libraries

The findings show that prison libraries have a basic presence but weak structure. There is lack of space, staff, and resources. Digital facilities are absent. Policy implementation is also weak. From the perspective of Rehabilitation Theory, such limitations reduce the ability of libraries to support behavioural change and personal reform. Rehabilitation requires structured support systems, which are not fully available here. From Social Learning Theory, learning happens through environment and interaction. Poor infrastructure limits exposure to positive learning experiences. This weakens the role of libraries as learning spaces.

6.1.2 Perception of Prison Officials

The research finds that prison officials hold a significantly positive perception regarding the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation (Mean=4.10, $p<0.001$).

Officials widely acknowledge that prison libraries contribute to mental well-being, behavioural improvement, educational development and constructive engagement of prisoners. However, while statistically significant differences exist across prisons and departments, the mean variations are marginal, indicating limited practical difference in perception. There is a strong ideological acceptance of prison libraries as rehabilitative tools within the correctional system.

6.1.3 Perception and implementation gap

Despite the highly positive perception, the findings clearly indicate that the functional components of prison libraries are not significantly strong (Mean ≈ 1.97 , $p > 0.05$). Critical weaknesses identified were ineffective library services and operations, lack of structured programming, inadequate human resources and absence of clear policy implementation. This reveals a critical perception and implementation gap, where favourable attitudes are not supported by functional effectiveness.

6.1.4 Inadequate institutional support systems

The study establishes that all major forms of institutional support are significantly inadequate, *viz.*,

Financial Support: Low and inconsistent (Mean = 2.31, $p < 0.001$)

Operational Support: Weak and unstructured (Mean = 2.08, $p < 0.001$)

Staffing and Training: Critically insufficient (Mean = 1.76, $p < 0.001$)

The major shortcomings were absence of professionally qualified librarians, heavy reliance on inmate volunteers, lack of digital infrastructure and modern tools, and limited administrative support. Institutional support remains the primary structural constraint affecting the effectiveness of prison libraries.

6.1.5 Active utilisation but limited rehabilitation depth

Prison libraries are actively utilised by inmates, particularly for Mental wellness (Mean = 4.02), Education and skill development (Mean = 3.93), Recreation and constructive engagement (4.37), However, utilisation for Reintegration

preparation (Mean = 2.09) remains significantly low. Libraries function effectively as coping and engagement tools, but not yet as structured rehabilitative mechanism.

6.1.6 Systemic Uniformity Across Prisons

Most variables (functional components, utilisation, support systems) show no significant differences across prisons, departments, designation, or experience levels. The issues identified are systemic and structural, not institution-specific, requiring policy-level interventions rather than localised solutions.

6.1.7 Qualitative insights strengthening quantitative findings

Qualitative data strongly supports statistical results by revealing reading as a form of bibliotherapy and emotional regulation, libraries as open and meaningful spaces within prisons, commitment of welfare staff despite lack of training in library field, and marked the administrative and policy-level constraints. The qualitative narratives confirm that prison libraries have transformative potential, but operate within institutional limitations.

6.2 Implications of the study

6.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings validate the relevance of Rehabilitation Theory in the context of prison libraries. The positive perception of prison officials and the active use of library resources show that libraries support behavioural reform, personal development, and readiness for social reintegration. Prisoners engage in constructive reading and learning activities, which aligns with the core idea of rehabilitation through reformative measures. However, the findings also reveal that the lack of institutional support, such as inadequate funding, absence of trained staff, and weak policy implementation, limits the full realisation of rehabilitative outcomes. This shows that while the theoretical foundation is strong, its practical execution remains incomplete.

The study also supports Social Learning Theory by demonstrating that structured environments like prison libraries influence inmate behaviour. Access to books and reading spaces encourages learning and positive engagement. Peer learning

is visible through inmates who manage library activities, which promotes interaction and shared learning. Observational learning also occurs as prisoners develop attitudes and behaviours through reading and interaction with others. However, the absence of professional guidance and structured interventions reduces the effectiveness of this learning process. This indicates that social learning is taking place, but it is not fully guided or optimized.

6.2.2 Practical Implications

At the policy level, prison libraries need to be formally integrated into correctional and rehabilitation frameworks. There is a need to develop a state-level prison library policy aligned with international standards such as IFLA guidelines. Libraries should be recognised as core rehabilitative infrastructure rather than optional or supplementary services. At the administrative level, there is a clear need to create sanctioned posts for professional librarians and ensure consistent funding support. Better coordination between administration, welfare, and security departments is also required to improve the functioning of libraries.

At the operational level, the study highlights the need for modernisation of prison libraries. This includes the introduction of library automation systems, digital resources, and controlled internet access. Structured library programs focusing on education, literacy, and reintegration should be developed. There is also a need to reduce over-dependence on untrained inmate workers by ensuring professional supervision. At the programmatic level, libraries should incorporate bibliotherapy-based interventions and be integrated with educational, skill development, and pre-release training programs.

From a professional perspective, the findings expand the scope of library science into correctional and rehabilitative settings. They highlight the need for specialised training in prison librarianship and reinforce the importance of access to information as a basic human right, even within custodial environments. This positions prison libraries as important agents of social change and rehabilitation.

6.3 Discussion

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a clear structural contradiction within the prison library system in Kerala. On one hand, prison officials demonstrate a strong positive perception regarding the rehabilitative role of prison libraries (Mean = 4.10), indicating alignment with rehabilitation theory and social learning principles. This is further supported by qualitative narratives where officials and inmate-library workers describe reading as a tool for mental well-being, behavioural change, and personal transformation. However, this positive perception is not matched by the functional reality of prison libraries. The analysis of functional components (Mean $\approx$ 1.97, $p > 0.05$) indicates that libraries are only moderately functional, with significant deficiencies in services, operations, and human resources. This disconnect highlights a critical gap between attitude and implementation, suggesting that institutional belief alone is insufficient without structural support.

The findings further establish that institutional support systems are significantly weak, particularly in terms of financial (Mean = 2.31), operational (Mean = 2.08), and staffing support (Mean = 1.76), all statistically lower than the expected standard. The absence of qualified librarians, reliance on untrained inmate workers, and lack of digital infrastructure collectively undermine the effectiveness of prison libraries as rehabilitative tools. This aligns with qualitative evidence indicating administrative inertia, policy gaps, and competing institutional priorities such as security and routine management.

Despite these limitations, the utilisation patterns of prison libraries remain encouraging. Libraries are actively used for mental wellness (Mean = 4.02) and education (Mean = 3.93), demonstrating that even minimal services can produce meaningful rehabilitative outcomes. However, their role in reintegration preparation remains weak (Mean = 2.09), indicating a lack of structured, outcome-oriented programming. Another important insight is the uniformity across prisons, departments, and experience levels. Except for minor statistical differences in perception, most variables show no significant variation, suggesting that the

challenges are systemic rather than localised. This strengthens the argument that reform must occur at the policy and institutional level, not at individual prison levels.

Overall, the integrated findings confirm that prison libraries in Kerala function as potential rehabilitative spaces constrained by structural inadequacies. While the ideological foundation for rehabilitation through libraries is strong, its practical realisation is hindered by insufficient institutional commitment, lack of professionalisation, and absence of strategic integration into correctional policy. Bridging this gap requires policy-driven interventions, professional staffing, and systematic integration of library services into rehabilitation frameworks.

6.4 Suggestions

Based on the analysis, findings and the literature reviewed, the researcher has put forward the following suggestions and recommendations which will help to improve the prison library system of Kerala in accordance with the international best practices.

1. The success of the library services lies with the librarian. He is the person who is trained to educate users and meet their varied library services. To develop a curated collection in order to enable the rehabilitative role of prison library a professional librarian or library officer is required. Therefore, a qualified librarian has to be appointed (full- or part-time) per prison, supported by trained prison volunteers. It is also necessary to provide regular in-service training in cataloguing, reference services, user education, and digital resource management to the librarians.
2. A comprehensive Kerala Prison Library Policy should be framed in alignment with the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners (2023). It must define standards for staffing, collection development, service delivery, evaluation, and collaboration. The policy will be a guideline for the working of the prison libraries.
3. The Department of Prisons and Correctional Services should officially include libraries within the Correctional Education and Rehabilitation Division, ensuring regular funding and monitoring.

4. Create a Prison Library Advisory Board comprising representatives from the libraries, universities, NGOs, and prison administration to oversee quality, programs, and outcomes. This will help to implement programs and plan for the improvement of the library.
5. Infrastructure and resource development is the most important requirement of the prison libraries. Provide adequate space, seating, lighting, and ventilation to make libraries inviting and conducive to learning. A balanced collection covering general reading, vocational education, mental health, legal rights, and self-help literature has to be ensured. Collections should include materials in Malayalam, English, Hindi, Tamil, and Kannada; also include easy-read books, large-print editions, and resources for the differently abled. An annual acquisition plan with inmate feedback and weeding policy has to be developed to maintain relevance and freshness.
6. Introduce bibliotherapy, reading circles, conduct guided reading, story-sharing and reflective writing sessions aimed at stress reduction, empathy building and behavioural improvement. Bibliotherapy based interventions may help to strengthen the rehabilitative and psychological impact of reading activities.
7. Introduce secure e-readers or tablet systems preloaded with approved educational, legal and recreational resources to facilitate safe and structured digital reading within prisons. Establish offline library catalogues or localized digital databases containing curated materials reviewed jointly by library and security personnel. Additionally, explore the feasibility of supervised computer kiosks or restricted intranet access, equipped with monitoring and audit mechanisms to ensure compliance with institutional security protocols.
8. Develop and institutionalize structured reading and outreach initiatives such as book discussions, reading clubs, and creative writing workshops, actively engaging inmates and encouraging peer-led participation. Furthermore, integrate library use into existing educational and vocational training programs, ensuring that reading becomes an essential and continuous component of prisoners' learning and personal development.

9. Develop a comprehensive feedback system to regularly assess inmate needs and preferences through tools such as structured surveys, suggestion boxes, and guided interviews. Systematically document and analyse usage statistics including circulation records, attendance patterns, and repeat-user trends and present periodic reports to relevant administrative authorities. Additionally, undertake longitudinal assessments to evaluate the long-term impact of library engagement, focusing on indicators such as changes in reading habits, learning outcomes.
10. Organize evidence-based orientation and sensitization sessions to strengthen administrative commitment and support for prison library initiatives. Emphasize the direct relationship between effective library services, institutional order, and positive rehabilitation outcomes, thereby fostering a shared understanding of the library's strategic role within the correctional environment.
11. Establish a dedicated budget line for library development within the prison administration to ensure stable and transparent financial support. Implement systematic monitoring of library usage and impact metrics to provide evidence for sustained and enhanced funding. The administration should prioritize long-term, sustainable funding models including government allocations, institutional support, etc to ensure continuous growth and innovation in library services. Increased governmental commitment and structured financial planning can significantly enhance the reach, quality, and effectiveness of prison library initiatives.

6.5 Conclusion

The study set out to explore how information access and reading practices contribute to the moral, psychological, and social rehabilitation of prisoners. It examined the perceptions of prison officials and the existing status of prison libraries across three central prisons of Kerala Poojappura, Viyyur, and Kannur. Grounded in theories of rehabilitation, and social learning, the study illuminated how a prison library functions not merely as a storehouse of books but as a transformative agent of change within a correctional environment.

The study ultimately establishes that prison libraries in Kerala exist as high-potential rehabilitative spaces constrained by systemic deficiencies as perceived by the prison officials. While prison officials strongly believe in their value and inmates actively utilise them, the absence of professionalisation, policy integration, and institutional support prevents these libraries from functioning as fully effective instruments of rehabilitation. The study identifies a critical perception implementation gap and demonstrates that strengthening institutional support systems is essential to transform prison libraries from passive resource centres into active agents of rehabilitation.

6.6 Limitations

While comprehensive, the study was limited to officials in three central prisons in Kerala where only male inmates are kept. The strict prison policies and access constraints restricted the depth of follow-up studies, bibliotherapy program implementation, or comparative analyses with other states in India.

6.7 Recommendations for Further Research

1. Conduct similar studies to female and juvenile correctional facilities.
2. Conduct longitudinal research to measure the post-release impact of library usage on re-entry and employment.
3. The impact of education received by inmates from the prisons in achieving jobs post release.
4. Changes in the behaviour of persons before and after their sentence period in special reference to the rehabilitation programs conducted by the libraries in the prisons.
5. A comparison of rehabilitation outcomes across various prisons in Indian states to identify best practices.
6. A study among other stakeholders like NGOs and other agencies involved in the prison activities and their role in the rehabilitation of inmates.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Comparative Checklist as per IFLA Guidelines

Sl.No	Facilities	Potapova	Viyyur	Kannur
1.	Accommodation & furniture Reading rooms Lighting/Fan Reading Tables Chairs Shelves Circulation desk			
2.	Human resources Qualified librarians Welfare staff as library staff Staff with previous library experience Prisoners given duty of library			
3.	Library Collection Books: Fiction, Non-fiction, Religious books, Text books News Papers (In Malayalam, English, Tamil, Hindi and (Kannada at Kannur) Newspapers are bought in the ratio 15:1 Prisoners can buy personally too on payment. Magazines (Mathrubhumi weekly, Travel magazines like Yathra, English magazines like The Week, frontline, Career magazines Censoring of reading materials Average issue of books per day			

4.	Digital Assistance			
	Gadgets like e-readers			
	Internet access			
	Television/Radio			
5.	Services			
	Time allotted for reading			
	(Between their working			
	hours inmates can choose			
	the time to visit library)			
	Issue of materials to cell			
	(Lending Service)			
	Educational assistance			
	Psychological assistance			
	(books on			
	Recreational reading			
	Reference Services			
	On demand literature			
	services			
	User education			
	Extension/Outreach	Yes	Yes	Yes
	services (Book Talks,			
	Vayanadinam, Library			
	week celebrations,			
	exhibitions)			

Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam

Your assistance in completing this survey would be greatly appreciated as your views can help me to complete my research work more appropriately. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to email them to cue4002@uoc.ac.in

Please express the degree to which you feel the following emotions using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1-5, where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Moderately Agree (MA), 4= Agree (A), and 5=Strongly Agree (SA).

We would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only.

Demographic Information

Which Prison are you working in?

- a) Central Prisons-Poojappura ☐
- b) Central Prisons- Viyyur ☐
- c) Central Prisons – Kannur ☐

In which department do you work?

- a) Administration ☐
- b) Welfare Wing ☐
- c) Security Wing ☐

What is your current role or position in the prison?

- a) Superintendent ☐
- b) Welfare Officers ☐
- c) Assistant Superintendents ☐
- d) Prison Officers ☐

Years of Experience

- a) Less than 5 years ☐
- b) 5 - 10 years ☐
- c) Above 10 years ☐

1. Present Infrastructure & Status of Prison Library

Sl.No.	Facilities	Poojappura	Viyyur	Kannur
1.	Accommodation & furniture			
	Reading rooms			
	Lighting/Fan			

	Reading Tables			
	Chairs			
	Shelves			
	Circulation desk			
2.	Human resources			
	Qualified librarians			
	Welfare staff as library staff			
	Staff with previous library experience			
	Prisoners assigned the duty of the library			
3.	Library Collection			
	Books: Fiction, Non-fiction, Religious books, Textbooks			
	News Papers (In Malayalam, English, Tamil, Hindi and Kannada at Kannur). Newspapers are bought in the ratio 15:1 Prisoners can also buy items personally on payment.			
	Magazines (Mathrubhumi weekly, Travel magazines like Yathra, English magazines like The Week, Frontline, Career magazines)			
	Censoring of reading materials			
	Average books issued per day			
4.	Digital Assistance			
	Gadgets like e-readers			
	Internet access			
	Television/Radio			
5.	Services			
	Time allotted for reading (Between their working hours, inmates can choose the time to visit the library)			
	Issue of materials to the cell (Lending Service)			
	Educational assistance			
	Psychological assistance			
	Recreational assistance			

	Reference Services			
	On-demand literature services			
	Training sessions			
	User education			
	Extension/Outreach services (Book Talks, Vayanadinam, Library week celebrations, exhibitions)			

2. What is your perception of the role of prison libraries in the rehabilitation process of prisoners?

Sr. No.	Perception about prison libraries in the rehabilitation of prisoners	S D	D	M A	A	S A
1.	Access to educational resources in the library helps inmates to develop skills & knowledge					
2.	Prison library plays a crucial role in the rehabilitation of prisoners					
3.	The prison library contributes to the personal development of prisoners.					
4.	Prison library programs and services helps in behaviour modification					
5.	The collection of the library has to be strengthened					
6.	Prison libraries positively impact prisoners' mental health and well-being.					
7.	Prisoners' literacy levels are improving due to library programs and using its resources.					
8.	Prison library provides an opportunity to engage in constructive activities					
9.	Library staff support prisoners' rehabilitation					
10.	Increased funding for the prison library would enhance its effectiveness in rehabilitating inmates.					

3. Your Opinion about various functional components of prison library.

Sr. No.	Functional Components	Low	Moderate	High
1.	Physical Infrastructure			
2.	Library Collection			
3	Library Services			
4	Human Resources			
5	Library Policy			
6	Library operations			

4. Nature of Utilisation of Prison Libraries by Prisoners as Perceived by Prison Officials

Statements	S D	D	M A	A	S A
Prison libraries are used for education and skill development					
Prison libraries are used for mental wellness and emotional support					
Prison libraries are used for recreation and entertainment					
Prison libraries are used for preparation for reintegration into society					
Prison libraries offer constructive use of free time					

Institutional Support

5. What level of support do prison libraries receive from the government /administration?

a) Financial support

Sr. No.	Financial Support	SD	D	MA	A	SA
1.	Adequate funds are allocated regularly for new books, equipment and maintenance					
2.	Some funds are provided by the State Government and the State Library Council					
3.	Very little/ insufficient funds					
4.	Library mostly depends on donations and volunteers					

b) Operational support

Sr. No.	Operational support	SD	D	M A	A	SA
1.	Dedicated professional staff to support the library operations is there.					
2.	The library is run with minimal operational support (resources, facilities, integration of rehabilitative programs)					
3.	Operational support is sometimes limited by prison policies					

c) Staffing and Training

Sr. No.	Staffing & training	SD	D	M A	A	SA
1.	Trained librarians are available to assist prisoners.					
2.	Prisoners are assigned library duties, and no training is given.					
3.	No training is given, and the library runs without professional oversight.					

d) Policy and Attitudinal Support

Sr. No.	Policy and attitudinal support	SD	D	M A	A	SA
1.	The prison administration actively promotes the use of libraries as part of rehabilitation					
2.	The administration supports libraries but doesn't actively promote their use.					
3.	The administration shows little interest in the development or use of the library.					

e) Technological Support

Sr. No.	Technological support	SD	D	M A	A	SA
1.	Access to digital resources (e-books, computers) is provided.					
2.	Limited access to digital tools.					
3.	No digital resources and devices are available.					

6. Access and Participation

How accessible are prison library resources and programs to prisoners?

(Mark any one of the columns)

Sl. No.	Access to the library	High	Moderate	None
1	Physical access			
2	Open hours & timing			

3	Resource availability & accessibility			
4	Restrictions or limitations to access (limits in number of users)			

7. Which type of resources do you think prisoners find most beneficial for their rehabilitation? Give your choice from highest from 1 to 5

Sl. No.	Resources	1	2	3	4	5
1	Educational books and materials					
2	Self-help books					
3	Fiction and novels					
4	Religious texts					
5	Magazines and newspapers					

8. Participation in library programs

a). A large proportion of inmates regularly participate in library programs.

☐

b). Some inmates participate, but it's not widespread

☐

c). Very few inmates use the library or participate in programs.

☐

6.3. Challenges in participating in library programs

Rank preferences from 1 (highest) to (lowest) 3

Sl. No.	Challenges in participating in library programs	1	2	3
1	Lack of knowledge			
2	Lack of interest			
3	Lack of time			

Open end questions:

1. What improvements would you suggest to increase inmate participation in library programs?

Impact and outcomes on prisoner rehabilitation

2. In your experience, do you think the use of prison libraries has a positive impact on prisoners' behaviour and attitudes?
3. In your opinion, do library programs (e.g., book clubs, reading challenges, educational programs) help in the rehabilitation of prisoners?
4. Have you observed any changes in prisoners who regularly use the library? If yes, please explain.
5. What are your primary challenges in maintaining or improving the prison library?
6. What resources or support do you think are necessary to enhance the role of prison libraries in rehabilitation?
7. How do you plan to address these challenges and overcome barriers to library effectiveness?
8. Should there be more collaboration between prison libraries and external organisations (e.g., universities, NGOs) to enhance prisoner rehabilitation? If yes, how?
9. In your opinion, how can prison libraries be better integrated into the overall rehabilitation framework of the prison system?

10. Future Development:

What are your plans or goals for the future development of prison libraries in supporting prisoner rehabilitation?

Recommendations:

I sincerely appreciate your time and cooperation. Thank you so much for your contribution.

Sreelatha K.

Appendix III

Interview Schedule for Prisoners on Library Duty

1. Which prison are you in?

- a). Central Prison – Poojappura
- b). Central Prison – Viyyur
- c). Central Prison – Kannur

2. Role and Responsibilities

- 2.1. What are your primary responsibilities as acting prison librarian?
- 2.2. How were you assigned the role, and what kind of training, If any , did you receive for this role?
- 2.3. How do you manage the library's resources, such as books, magazines or other materials?

3. Experience and impact on rehabilitation

- 3.1. How has working as a librarian affected your personal development or perspective on rehabilitation?
- 3.2. Do you feel that the role as a librarian helped you to learn new skills? If so, what kind of skills?
- 3.3. How has this role influenced the relationships with other prisoners or prison staff?
- 3.4. Has working in the library impacted your mental health or stress levels? If so, in what ways?

4. Perception of the library's role in rehabilitation

- 4.1. In your opinion, how does the library contribute to the rehabilitation of prisoners?
- 4.2. Do you notice any changes in the behaviour or mindset of prisoners who regularly use the library?
- 4.3. What kind of materials or programs do you think are most beneficial for prisoner rehabilitation?

5. Challenges and Support

- 5.1. What challenges do you face in your role as a prison librarian?
- 5.2. Are there specific resources you feel are lacking in the library?
- 5.3. How do prison staff or administration support you in your role? Are there any areas where more support is required?

6. Engagement with Library resources and programs

- 6.1. How frequently do inmates use the library? Which types of materials are popular?
- 6.2. Are there any programs, such as book clubs or skill-building workshops, that you help organize? How do inmates respond to these?
- 6.3. 7.3 What resources or activities would you like to see added to improve the library experience for inmates?

7. Personal Rehabilitation Journey

- 7.1. Do you feel that working as a librarian has helped you in your rehabilitation? If so, how?
- 7.2. Has this role changed your perspective on education, literacy, or self-improvement?
- 7.3. How do you think this experience will impact you after release?

8. Recommendations for Improvement

- 8.1. What improvements would you suggest to make the library more beneficial for the rehabilitation of inmates?
- 8.2. Are there any additional training or resources that would help you perform your role better?