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TCS takes up literacy campaign in Lucknow Jail

Priyanka Singhl TNN | Oct 28, 2013, 09:48 PM IST



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LUCKNOW: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and UP Prisons joined hands to take up the cause of literacy amongst inmates in prisons of UP. A pilot batch was conducted in Lucknow district jail wherein 15 inmates were trained as Preraks (motivators) who helped to drive this initiative along with TCS volunteers and jail staff.

It was a life-transforming experience for 157 illiterate prisoners in Lucknow district jail on Monday as they became fully literate in Hindi using TCS' Computer Based Functional Literacy (CBFL) programme. CBFL is a software developed by TCS by which an illiterate can become functionally literate in 40-50 hours, whereas conventional method takes more than 200 hours.

Two batches have successfully completed the training in three months, 157 illiterate prisoners have become fully literate in Hindi with the help of TCS CBFL so far who can read and write in Hindi now.

To scale up this programme, another 35 master trainers from Central Jails of Varanasi, Fatehgarh, Bareilly, Agra, Naini (Allahabad) and Lucknow Model Jail have also been trained on this tool. In addition, the third batch of CBFL training has also started recently.

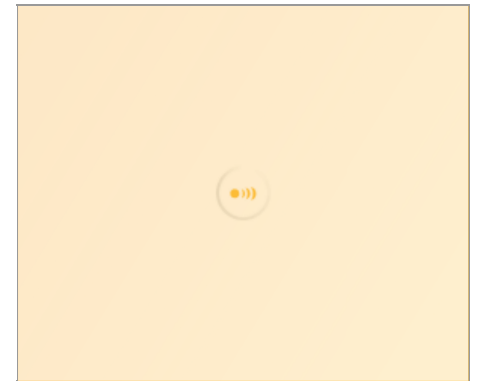
The CBFL technology uses animated graphics patterns for visualization and audio appreciation. Available free-of-cost to the beneficiaries who get empowered by the privilege of basic education, this method ensures reading, writing and basic arithmetic which can be learnt in about 40-50 hours.

CBFL uses a minimal set of words to train learners on all letters in the language. The software has features for the learner to create new words for display and teaching. A Prerak, even without prior computer training, can learn to use the machine after a day's training. CBFL is available in 9 Indian Languages including Hindi and Urdu.

Jayant Krishna, regional head, TCS and RP Singh, ADG Prisons, GoUP distributed certificates to the beneficiaries who have learnt reading, writing and basic arithmetic through this programme and the Preraks / Master Trainers who helped TCS and Jail administration to drive this programme. The felicitation ceremony was organized in Lucknow district jail, Gosainganj on Monday which was attended by about 1000 prisoners. Dr Sharad Kulshreshtha, DIG Prisons, GoUP was also present.

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The event was started with a song on the importance of literacy composed by prisoners and sung by Adarsh Orchestra consisting of a group of prisoners of Lucknow Model Jail. Earlier, the dignitaries were welcomed by a performance by an Adarsh Band comprising of prisoners. RP Singh praised them for becoming literate and appreciated TCS for its commitment and efforts to make it happen. He said this initiative should be an ongoing process to make all the prisoners in UP literate and requested TCS' continued support.

Currently, there are about 88,000 prisoners in UP out of which a very large percentage are illiterate. TCS said it would extend all support to the UP prisons to make all prisoners in UP literate through CBFL. RP Singh added that UP prisons is hopeful to make all illiterate inmates of Lucknow Jail literate in the next 3 months to make it the first jail achieving 100% literacy in the state.

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