PAPER 350

CORRECTIONAL TECHNIQUE —
A FRESH APPROACH THROUGH SCI

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The author discusses insights from the Science of Creative Intelligence into the problem of criminal behaviour, and proposes the application of its practical aspect, the Transcendental Meditation programme, as a solution to the current crisis in criminal correction.—EDITORS

The following is the text of the original paper which was presented to the Third All India Penological Conference under the aegis of the Government of Uttar Pradesh and convened by the All India Crime Prevention Society, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, 22, 23, and 24 November 1975.

Nehru (1) made the most pertinent remarks about prison policy and administration when he said:
Not the least effort is made to consider the prisoner as an individual, a human being, and to improve or look after his mind.

Evaluating the prison programme, the U.P. Jail Reforms Committee 1946 (2) observed:
Ideologically, it was deterrence that guided the units of administration, and not reformation.

During the last thirty years, a number of reformatory schemes have been introduced in the jails. The existing prison programmes, though laudable and useful in several ways, have not been able to cut much ice, as far as reformation is concerned. A recent study of the problems of lifer convicts in the jails of Uttar Pradesh revealed that only three per cent of these convicts reported having no problems and that the remaining ninety-seven per cent reported problems in the various spheres of life, physical, mental and social (3).

Since the middle of this century there has been a great emphasis on introducing correctional programmes in the jails all over the world. Tappan (4) comments that some of the greatest paradoxes in penology arise from the disparity in purposes which the prison system attempts to serve. How to secure the offender against escape at the same time that he is trained for responsibility and freedom? Whether blame and punishment or diagnosis and therapy serve best the public weal remains a burning issue of the prison policy.

We have not been able to separate or even spell out separately the custodial requirements and the correctional programmes in a jail. This has, however, been done in some of the more progressive countries, together with a separation of the custodial and correctional staff. Schnur (5), discussing current practices in correction, observes:

Treatment is not supported in many institutions that profess to have treatment, since custody is entrusted with the veto power over treatment activities.... Treatment personnel, popularly known as 'head shriners' or by other appellations intended to degrade or belittle them and their role, are regarded as intruders upon an otherwise well-disciplined order ... some prisons maintain a treatment staff of sorts for window dressing.... In these institutions, treatment staff are neutralized by having their time consumed by non-treatment activities.

Let us dispassionately examine why the so-called corrective techniques or correctional treatment methods have failed to find acceptance with the prison authorities. Could it be the case that the present correctional techniques were only roughly or generally so without any specific or direct evidence of a diagnosis-treatment pattern as seen in the medical field? Even textbooks on criminology do not show a separat-
ate chapter listing the correctional techniques. For instance, the book *Contemporary Correction* (4) has no such chapter. The only relevant and nearest title introduced is ‘Part III. Programs in the Correctional Institution’ under which the very first of the seven chapters is ‘Custody and Discipline’ followed by ‘Medical Services’. Provision of custody, discipline and medical services—is this what we mean by correctional techniques?

A fundamental observation in this context is that in the field of crime, the search for a direct cause and effect link has not been a successful or rewarding effort so far. In the medical field, the great breakthrough in the treatment of ailments has been possible because of the success in establishing a number of cause and effect links in respect of several diseases and drugs. It would be meaningful if we could have something akin to this in the field of crime.

Today, the Science of Creative Intelligence advances a direct cause and effect link in the field of crime and also offers a remedial technique based upon it. The Science of Creative Intelligence makes a bold claim (6) ‘to solve the age-old problem of crime and all behaviour that brings unhappiness to the family of man’. In our present state of helplessness in the correctional field, it would be wise for us to give a serious look and trial to the new approach put forward by the Science of Creative Intelligence.

Permit me to quote a relevant paragraph from my Ph.D. thesis (3), written several years before I came to be acquainted with the Science of Creative Intelligence:

Separation of the custodial functioning from correctional programmes, highlights the issue, how to bring about the reformation in the prisoner (in the present context). Our prison policy givers seem to have been carried away in the general Western stream of technological progress and material gains. True, the basis of our present prison administration lies in the West, but that is no argument to overlook the cultural demands of the motherland and forget our rich heritage of civilization. In the West, maddened by his success in the physical world of materialism, man has begun to believe in power, pelf and possession, as the highest value of life, forgetting that this has also given him tension, turmoil and conflict in his life, whereby he has lost the ultimate aim of achieving happiness within and happiness without. The contention here is, that while adopting the best in the teaching and practice of modern social sciences in the West, we should primarily put into use those procedures and programmes of regenerating the prisoner’s personality and uplifting his character, which are indigenous to the soil and culturally acceptable to him. Such programmes call for a high priority and shall be discussed first.

In introducing those programmes, reference had been made to the important part of Indian Philosophy as advocated in Yogavashishta, which prescribes methods for transforming ordinary life, characterized by suffering and unhappiness, into one of unending happiness and bliss, right while carrying out the full chores of life in the material world.

**WHAT IS CRIME?**

Let us then have a look at the cause and effect link, in respect of crime, advanced by the Science of Creative Intelligence. Defining crime it says:

Crime is a short-cut to satisfy a craving—a short-cut which goes beyond normal and legal means. (7)

This definition of crime is very similar to that of Barnes and Teeters (8) who have stated:

In our day, crime is a violation of the law punishable by the force of government.

Holt (9) is all the more near to the Science of Creative Intelligence when he says:

Criminal behaviour, then, is in part symptomatic of the needs of the individuals which have been frustrated by their culture (the demands of others).

**CAUSATION OF CRIME**

Discussing causation of crime, the founder of the Science of Creative Intelligence, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, elaborates (7):

Crime, delinquency and the different patterns of antisocial behaviour express the tensions which arise from a deep discontent of mind, from a weak mind and from unbalanced emotions.

This elaboration of Maharishi’s is very parallel to the psychiatric view of delinquency and crime, which Barnes and Teeters (8) have summarized as follows:

Mental life is physio-chemical response to stimulation. The manifestation of such responses is what we know as human behaviour. These responses take place on physical, physio-chemical,
sensory-motor, psychological and social levels. The total conduct or behaviour of the individual represents the integrated result of responses on all these levels of stimulation. Important defects or inadequacies on any level may create certain departures from what is regarded as normal behaviour. The normal mind is characterized by adequate responses on every level of stimulation.

What the psychiatrists term as ‘important defects or inadequacies on the level of stimulation’ is termed by Maharishi ‘the state of the weak mind and unbalanced emotions’. Explaining what is meant by a ‘weak mind’, Maharishi (7) writes:

A weak mind is one which lacks balance and a sense of proportion.

The basic point being made here is that in the cause and effect logic, the Science of Creative Intelligence holds a weak mind lacking in balance and sense of proportion as the cause of delinquent and criminal behaviour, and this hypothesis is fully supported by the psychiatric approach to crime.

THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE REMEDY

In the same chain of thinking, to work out the remedial process, the Science of Creative Intelligence (7) argues:

No approach to the problem of delinquency and crime can be truly effective unless the basic weakness of the mind ... (which means the lack of balance and sense of proportion) ... is remedied.

Thus the formula advanced by the Science of Creative Intelligence is one of restoring balance and sense of proportion in the mind. This is again very similar to the psychological point of view about mental functioning, which has been summarized by Barnes and Teeters (8) in the following words:

From the psychological point of view...mental normality is viewed primarily as a matter of relatively complete psychic integration and thorough adjustment to the social environment. The ideas entertained by the individual must be relatively consistent, and the individual must feel in reasonable rapport with the social habits of the community. The tasks and responsibilities of life should be agreeable to the individual. In short, the individual must respond with enthusiasm and efficiency to the realities of life.

This very state of weakness of the mind, its lack of balance and sense of proportion, is being increasingly recognized by the science of medicine as the phenomenon of ‘stress’. Explaining what happens when people begin to suffer from accumulated stress, Bloomfield (10) writes:

They also find themselves troubled by inexplicable anxiety, frustration, depression or a general feeling of dissatisfaction and aimlessness. When stress accumulates, a loss of mental clarity and emotional openness damages interpersonal relationships. Excessive stress also leads to the inability to make decisions, plan effectively and work efficiently.

THE CORRECTIVE TECHNIQUE
—THE TM PROGRAMME

‘The Transcendental Meditation (TM) programme’ is the name of the technique advanced by the Science of Creative Intelligence that eliminates the weakness of the mind, which was found to be the root cause of criminal behaviour. It reduces anxiety, mental stress and accumulated fatigue, and by stabilizing the functioning of the autonomic nervous system, synchronizing the working of the various parts of the nervous system, it brings about orderliness in thinking, a rested and balanced state of mind, and stabilized emotional responses with optimism, zest and interest in life, leading to warm and co-operative social behaviour.

The effects of the Transcendental Meditation programme have been summarized as the rejuvenation and normalization of the functioning of the nervous system, elimination of mental stress, promotion of clearer thinking and greater comprehension, enrichment of perception, improvement of outlook, promotion of efficiency and effectiveness in life, with more harmonious and fulfilling interpersonal relationships, thus making every individual more useful to himself and to others, thereby bringing fulfilment to the purpose of society.

The claims put forward by the Science of Creative Intelligence are really great and valuable. If the TM technique does reduce the level of stress and anxiety in prisoners, gives them clarity and efficiency of conscious thought processes leading to a purposeful organization of ideas, and if these beneficial effects continue beyond the hours of the practice with cumulative results, it would certainly be a precious correctional tool. Let us then
look at some of the scientific evidence that validates these claims of the Science of Creative Intelligence.

SCIENTIFIC VALIDATION OF THE TM PROGRAMME AS A CORRECTIONAL TOOL

Scientific researches on the physiological, psychological, sociological, ecological and correctional effects of the TM programme total more than one hundred. Reference is made here to only a few selected studies to provide some evidence to support the viewpoint expressed above.

1. Reduction in Level of Stress. (11; fig. 1)—At La Tuna Federal Penitentiary, New Mexico, U.S.A., Orme-Johnson and others studied 'Personality and Autonomic Changes in Prisoners Practicing the Transcendental Meditation Technique' and reported that the TM programme reduced the level of stress in prisoners, as measured physiologically by the number of spontaneous skin resistance responses. The study showed that regularity of meditation was positively correlated with the degree of increase in autonomic stability.

2. Reduction in Anxiety Level. (11; fig. 2)—At the Stillwater Prison, David Ballou of the University of Kansas studied the change in the anxiety level and the behaviour of prisoners in the TM programme and reported that the prisoners participating in the TM programme indicated:
   (a) a reduction in anxiety,
   (b) a reduction in the number of prison rule violations,
   (c) an increase in the number of positive activities, indicated by participation in such activities as sports, clubs, and education (100 per cent increase),
   (d) an increase in time spent in positive activities (179 per cent increase).

3. State of Relaxation. (11; fig. 3)—Robert Keith Wallace, in the Department of Physiology, University of California, Los Angeles, working on 'The Physiological Effects of Transcendental Meditation', reported that during the Transcendental Meditation technique skin resistance increased significantly. In fig. 3, the chart on the left shows a characteristic meditation for one individual, illustrating the details of changes over time.
The chart on the right is an averaged curve for a group of 15 subjects. During stress or anxiety skin resistance decreases. The marked increase in skin resistance during the Transcendental Meditation technique indicates deep relaxation and reduction of anxiety.

4. Brain Wave Synchrony. (11; fig. 4)—Jean-Paul Banquet, working on the project 'EEG and Meditation', performed computerized spectral analysis on selected channels of the EEG recorded during Transcendental Meditation in ten subjects as compared with a control group. The results were graphed on tri-dimensional charts to display time, amplitude and frequency. He reported that during the practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique the alpha brain waves (8–12 cycles per second) spread spontaneously (without any attempt at specific training) from the back to the front of the brain. This pattern of increased brain wave orderliness represents an improved level of physiological integration within the brain. This finding of improved physiological order based on integration suggests a possible explanation for the observed improvements in the capacity of the brain to perform its integrative functions of thinking and thought-action co-ordination brought about by the TM programme.

5. Increased Orderliness of Thinking. (11; fig. 5)—Donald E. Miskiman of the University of Alberta, Canada, working on 'The Effect of the Transcendental Meditation Programme on the Organization of Thinking and Recall (Secondary Organization)' found that improved organization of memory took place even while the meditators were engaged in problem-solving, while members of the control group, who relaxed twice daily by sitting with the eyes closed, did not show any significant change. He reported that after beginning the Transcendental Meditation technique meditators significantly increased their speed in solving arithmetic problems accurately. The efficiency of solving the arithmetic problems increased in meditators compared with members of the control group. These results show that the TM programme increases the clarity and efficiency of conscious thought processes and at the same time improves the unconscious processes leading to spontaneous and purposeful organization of thought.

CONCLUSION

As these and several other research findings show that the TM programme, practised twenty minutes morning and evening regularly, reduces mental tension and anxiety, brings about orderliness in thinking, improves memory, and develops mental balance and emotional stability, they lend proof to the claims made by the Science of Creative Intelligence that the TM programme could be successfully utilized as a correctional technique.

The TM technique is easily learnt in seven steps, spread over seven days, one hour every day. It is therefore suggested to the teachers, thinkers and practitioners of correctional techniques to give this logically established and scientifically validated technique of the TM programme a fair trial in our prisons and correctional institutions.
REFERENCES