

Possibilities of Implementation of »yoga-nidra« Relaxation Programme in the Minimum Security Penal Institution Valtura – Pula

Željko Brgles

Minimum Security Penal Institution, Valtura – Pula

Summary

This paper reviews an attempt to propose a new addition to the existing methods and techniques used in penological treatment of convicted persons through theoretical and empirical arguments showing the usefulness of »yoga nidra« programme in conditions of penal institutions. It explains the basic characteristics and effects of »yoga nidra«, which prompted the minimum security Penal Institution Valtura – Pula to approve the experimental relaxation programme for convicted persons based on technique of »yoga nidra«. This paper presents the basic elements of this programme, and also its theoretical and scientific justifiability.

Key words: Minimum security Penal Institution Valtura – Pula, adults, convicted persons, relaxation programme, »yoga nidra«

1. Introduction

In defectological practice, but also in the new science of penology, the term »rehabilitation« is often used to describe the process of recovering some lost or reduced functions or dealing with some functional disorder. The 20th century penological thought, in its complete turn toward modernization of penitentiary system, centers its philosophy on rehabilitation of delinquent behaviour and delinquent person's readaptation. In the course of history, the forms of society's reactions in regard to the perpetrators of criminal acts have been changing progressively from banishment and exclusion from the community, from the blood feud and vengeance, over the period of expiation, daunting measures and deportation, to evolve gradually toward humanized treatment and individualization, which puts the accent on question of treatment of an individual offender. It is not always easy or simple to determine the process of penological rehabilitation, since it is constantly on a dividing line between rehabilitation and repression, i.e. exclusion of the delinquent from the wider social environment for the purpose of elimination of danger to the society.

Still, the most important characteristics of the ideal penological rehabilitative system are based on following elements (Mladenović-Kupčević, 1981):

1. *Individualization* - offender's treatment is adjusted to the particular traits of offender's personality, which means that it is necessary, first, to establish the offender's biopsychosocial structure, then to define the »pathological disposition« in relation to offender's deviant behaviour and finally, to decide on the most adequate »cure« according to that individual's specific needs.
2. *Transformation of delinquent behaviour* - targeting of rehabilitative measures, with the offender's acceptance of social norms as the final goal (establishing of psychosocial balance).
3. *Post-penal protection* - the concluding part of the rehabilitation process aimed at prevention of offender's future criminal activity. In an integral approach to the process of transformation of offender's behaviour, the process includes various procedures, methods and techniques of institutional treatment.

Penological treatment within penal institutions consists of various forms of training or education courses; working activities; leisure time functions,