

## Punjab Jails Department: Organizational Structure and Functions

Dr. Ranjit Kaur  
Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of Public Administration  
Punjabi University, Patiala  
Email- [ranjitbajwa1987@gmail.com](mailto:ranjitbajwa1987@gmail.com)

### *Abstract*

*The Department of Jails in Punjab plays a pivotal role in the administration, management, and reform of prisons across the state. Its organizational structure is designed to ensure effective governance, security, and rehabilitation of inmates while maintaining coordination with other government agencies. This study highlights the hierarchical framework of the department, detailing the roles and responsibilities of officials at various levels—from the Inspector General of Prisons to jail superintendents and supporting staff. It also examines the functional dimensions of the department, including custody and care of prisoners, maintenance of law and order within prisons, rehabilitation and reformation initiatives, and administrative support systems. By analyzing the structure and functions together, the paper underscores how the department balances discipline with reformatory measures, and addresses the challenges of overcrowding, human resource limitations, and infrastructural constraints. The study thus provides a comprehensive understanding of the Punjab Jails Department as an essential institution in the state's justice and correctional system.*

**Keywords:** Punjab Jails Department, Organizational Structure, Prison Administration, Jail Management

### **Introduction**

Administration is cooperative effort of a group of people in pursuit of a common objective. It is necessary that this group should be organized in order to attain the desired goal. Organization is one of the most important functions of management. In layman terms, one can look at organizing as an activity to eliminate chaos and introduce a systematic functioning in the enterprise. But by organization definition, the organization helps in establishing authorities, dividing workloads, assigning responsibilities, grouping tasks and allocating resources. Organisation may be described as the backbone of the management. Without efficient organisation, no management can be performing its functions smoothly.

Prisons Department, Punjab was established in the year 1854 and is governed by The Punjab Prison Act, 1894 and Punjab Jail Manual, 1996. This department bears the motto of Custody, Care and Correction, and work gradually for achieving the mission of maintaining a balance between Security, Control and Justice. Prison personnel try their best to provide a secure environment to the prisoners, with inculcating discipline among them and providing them with ample opportunities of Reformation and Rehabilitation.

### **Objective of the Department of Prisons, Punjab**

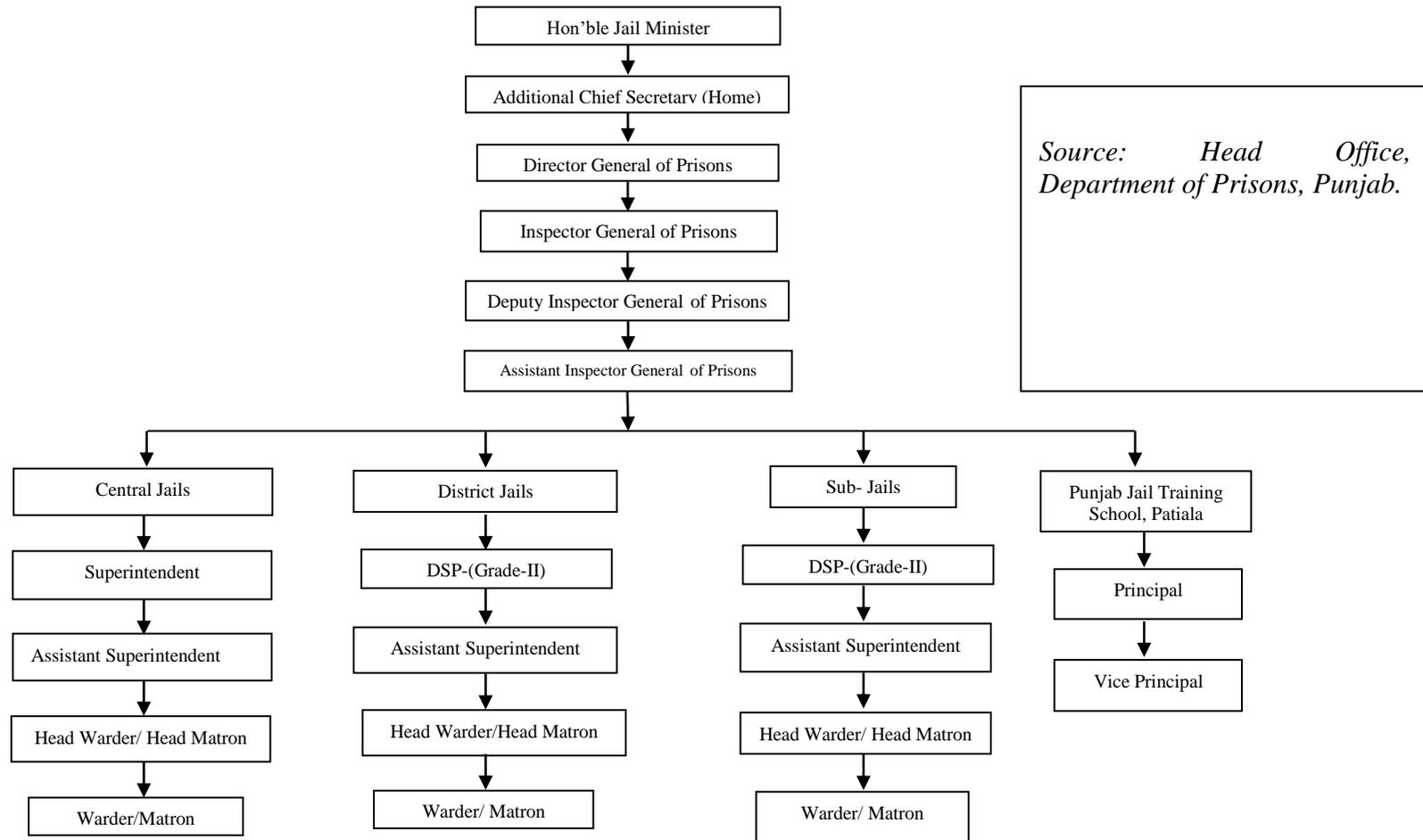
1. Punjab Jail Department shall endeavor to reform and re-assimilate offenders in the social milieu by giving them appropriate correctional treatment- their institutional care, aftercare, probation and other non-institutional services.
2. To evolve proper mechanism to ensure that no under-trial prisoner is unnecessarily detained.
3. Ensure that the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, is effectively implemented throughout the state.
4. Jails shall be compatible with human dignity in all aspects such as accommodation, hygiene, sanitation, food, clothing and medical facilities.
5. To develop the fields of criminology and penology and promote research.
6. To organize programmes for the treatment of offenders.
7. To develop vocational training and work programmes in prisons.
8. Payment of fair wages and other incentives.
9. Provide free legal aid to all needy prisoners.
10. Young offenders (between 16 to 21 years in the case of boys and 18 to 21 in the case of girls) shall be confined in separate institutions.
11. Women offenders shall be confined in a separate institution specially meant for them.
12. Prison service shall be developed as a professional career service.
13. Proper training facilities for prison personnel.
14. To secure and encourage voluntary participation of the community.

The Prison Act 1894 governs the organization, functions and duties of the Prison Department Punjab. Punjab Jail Manual 1996 based on the Act gives details of the duties and functions of the Prison Department. To make correctional treatment, a continuous and complete process, this integrated department is called "Department of Prisons & Correctional Services". The organizational structure of this department is laid down in chapter 4 of Revised Punjab Jail Manual 1996. The Principal Secretary, Department of Jails is the controlling authority of this department.

### **Organisational Structure of Department of Prisons, Punjab**

Organisational structure is important for any department to provide guidance. The provisions regarding organized structure, classification and control have been incorporated in chapter III, IV and V of Punjab Jail Manual, 1996. As per Punjab Jail Manual, 1996 Inspector General is the head of the department but now this department is under the direct control of the Director General of Prisons. Subject to the order of State Government he exercises the powers to control and superintendence over all the prisons. He also controls the expenditure of the prisons department and submits its annual budget to state government. Inspector General of Prisons is appointed by the State Government of Punjab. He is the executive head of prisons department. The next rank is Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Prisons and Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of the prison. Deputy Inspector General of Prisons and Assistant Inspector General of Prisons are assisting to Inspector General of Prisons according to the provisions as prescribed in the Punjab Jail Manual, 1996. After this comes the rank of Jail Superintendent. He has managed all matters of jail. In addition to above there are Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Jail, Warder, Head Warder, Matrons, Clerk and Class Four staff. The next figure 1.1 shows the organizational Structure of Department of Prisons Punjab:-

**Figure 1.1**  
**Organisational Structure of Department of Prisons, Punjab**



*Source: Head Office,  
 Department of Prisons, Punjab.*

Figure 1.1 shows that the organizational structure of Department of Jails, Punjab. A brief description of the hierarchy of Department of Jails in Punjab has been described as under as indicated by figure No. 1.1:-

### **Hon'ble Jail Minister, Punjab**

In Punjab a Cabinet Minister is dealing with the matter regarding Jails. At present Sh. Laljit Singh Bhullar from the Aam Aadmi Party, holds the portfolio of Jail Ministry. He is political head of Jails Administration in Punjab.

### **Additional Chief Secretary (Home)**

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) is very important post in State Department and plays a vital role managing Law and Order Administration, Safety and Security and curbing crime issues and taking actions on subsequent prosecution thereof. It deals with matters relating to civil defense, jails and justice. Currently A. Venu Prasad (IAS) is appointed as Additional Chief Secretary (Home). Director General of Prisons is accountable to Additional Chief Secretary (Home).

### **Director General of Prisons (DGP)**

This post was created in 2001. He exercises powers subject to the orders of State Government's general control and Superintendence over all prisons. He also controls the expenditure of the Jail Department and submits its annual budget to the state government.

### **The Inspector General (IG)**

An Inspector – General of prisons shall be appointed for the state and shall exercise subject to the order of the State Government, the general control and superintendence of all prisons in the State.

### ***Powers and Functions of IG:***

- The Inspector- General may, from time to time, in respect of any jail and correctional staff entertains or sanction the entertainment of temporary establishment in accordance with the provisions of the Punjab Financial Rules. Any temporary subordinate officer shall be subject to the same liabilities as regards transfer, promotion, removal and punishment as are, under these rules, applicable to subordinate officers permanently employed.



- Subject to the general control of the State Government and to the provisions of these rules, the Inspector-General may be necessary for the construction of all works relating to, and the supply of all articles for use in, or in any way relating or incidental to or connected with, jails and for the sale of all articles manufactured in jails.
- Subject to the arrangements for securing due budget provision and the allotment of funds to meet the expenditure of the jail department, made under the orders of the State Government in that behalf, the entire control over all expenditure on the maintenance of jails and on all matters in any way relating to, or connected with the administration of jails and correctional services shall vest in the Inspector-General;

Provided further, that the expenditure incurred on-

- (a) public works;
- (b) the supply of stationery and the like;
- (c) the supply of medical stores; shall be regulated according to the provisions of Punjab Financial Rules and rules of the department concerned.
- Subject to the provisions of the proceeding rule, the Inspector-General shall cause monthly bill of all expenditure of whatever description, on or relating to jails and correctional services to be sent regularly to be him and shall himself audit such bills or cause to be duly audited under his direction and orders.
- It shall be the duty of the Inspector-General, as far as may be, personally to visit and inspect every jail at least once in each year, and to satisfy himself that the provisions of the Prisons Act, 1894, and all rules, regulations, directions and orders made or issued there under, applicable to such jail, are duly obeyed and enforced, and that the management of each jail is in all respects efficient and satisfactory. A note recording the result of each visit and inspection shall be made in a register (Visitor's Book) to be maintained by the superintendent for the purpose or otherwise communicated.
- A copy of any part of the minute required by the proceeding paragraph which deals with matters which should, in the opinion of the Inspector-General, be brought to the notice of Government, shall be forwarded by the Inspector-General to the State.



### **Deputy Inspector General (DIG)**

This post is filled by promotion from amongst the superintendents, central jails and assistant IG, who have put in at least five years service in the grade. DIG's duty is to assist IG. There are total 4 DIG's in Punjab Prisons Department-

- DIG- Head Quarter
- DIG- Patiala Circle
- DIG- Ferozepur Circle
- DIG- Amritsar Circle

### **Assistant Inspector General (AIG)**

This post is also filled by promotion from amongst Superintendents District Jail and Deputy Superintendents grade-I who are members of Punjab Prison Service Class-II and have experience of working on either or both of these posts for a minimum period of five years. AIG's duty is to assist IG.

### **Superintendent, Central Jail**

Functions of Superintendent, Central Jail:

- Subject to the orders of the Inspector-General, the superintendent shall manage the prison in all matters relating to discipline, labour, expenditure, punishment and control.
- Provide for the support, care and custody of and control over, all prisoners at any time confine in the jail.
- Maintain order and discipline amongst the prisoners confined, and the subordinate officer employed, in the jail.

### **Superintendent, District Jail/ Deputy Superintendent (Grade-I)**

The Deputy Superintendent (Grade-I) shall discharge the duties under the immediate direction and orders of the Superintendent. It Shall be the duty of the Deputy Superintendent strictly to enforce, or cause to be so enforced, all laws, rules regulations, directions and orders, respectively, relating to the management of jails and prisoners and applicable to the jails and or to any prisoner confined therein, for the time being in force.

Functions of the Deputy Superintendent:

- The Deputy Superintendent shall reside in the prison
- The Deputy Superintendent shall not be absent from the prison for a night without permission in writing from the Superintendent.



- The Deputy Superintendent shall do all acts and things which may be necessary or expedient for ensuring the safe custody of all prisoner at any time received into or confined in the jail, as well as for enforcing and maintaining discipline and order amongst such prisoners and all subordinate officers of the jail at any time serving under his orders or control.
- The Deputy Superintendent shall regularly maintain an journal in which he shall from time to time record, as they occur, all events of importance effecting the jail.
- The Deputy Superintendent not to delegate his duties without permission.
- It shall be the duty of the Deputy Superintendent to be present every evening when the prisoners are locked up for the night and every morning when the prisoners are taken out of the sleeping wards, cells or other compartments.
- The Deputy Superintendent to be present at the superintendent the daily weighing and serving out of rations and satisfied himself that the food-stuff are properly clean and cooked.
- The Deputy Superintendent supervise the distribution of food and satisfy himself that each prisoner receives his proper quantity at the prescribed times.

**Superintendent, Sub Jail/ Deputy Superintendent (Grade-II)**

Functions of Deputy Superintendent (Grade-II):

- Deputy Superintendent (Grade-II) not to delegate his duties without permission.
- It shall be the duty of the Deputy Superintendent (Grade-II) to be present every evening when the prisoners are locked up for the night and every morning when the prisoners are taken out of the sleeping wards, cells or other compartments.
- The Deputy Superintendent to be present at the superintendent the daily weighing and serving out of rations and satisfied himself that the food-stuff are properly clean and cooked.
- Upon the death of the prisoner, the Deputy Superintendent (Grade-II) shall give immediate notice thereof to the superintendent and medical officer.
- The Deputy Superintendent (Grade-II) supervise the distribution of food and satisfy himself that each prisoner receives his proper quantity at the prescribed times.



### **Assistant Superintendent**

The service of assistant superintendents in the Punjab Jails Department is a subordinate service and officers holding these appointments will be non-gazetted officers.

Functions of Assistant Superintendent:

- Assistant Superintendent shall be subordinate to the Deputy Superintendent and shall obey his orders.
- The Assistant Superintendent shall, subject to the orders of the Superintendent, be competent to perform any of duties and to the subject to all the responsibilities of a Deputy Superintendent under the Prisons Act or any rule there under for the duties assigned.
- The Assistant Superintendent shall at least once a week personally search the relieved and relieving guard between the Main Gate.

### **The Head Matron and Matron**

In every jail in which accommodation is provided for female prisoners, or in which such prisoners are ordinarily detained or are liable to be detained, there shall be a female Deputy Superintendent or Head Matron, or one or more Matron, who shall, subject to the control of the Superintendent Deputy Superintendent, respectively, have complete charge of all female prisoners at any time committed to, or detained in the jail. No male person employed in any capacity in or connected with the jail accommodating female prisoners shall, otherwise than in case of emergency and when called upon so to do by the Deputy Superintendent or a female warder, and then only when accompanied by the Deputy Superintendent, or other portion of or place in the said jail occupied by any female prisoner. In the Ludhiana Female Jail Permanent female Superintendent and female staff from Matron shall be maintained and the term Matron includes the head Matron where one is appointed.

The main functions of Matron:

The Matron shall;

- Receive all female prisoners committed to the jail upon their admission thereto;
- Entrust all money and other articles so removed from such female prisoner, to the custody of concerned official.



- Bring to the notice of the superintendent every default on the part of any female prisoner complete allotted task;

### **Head Warder**

Functions of Head Warders:

It shall be the duty of every head warder to;

- Assist in every possible way in the management of the jail, the prevention of escapes and the maintenance of order and discipline generally amongst subordinate officers and prisoners;
- Comply with the requirements of all laws, rules, regulations, directions and orders for the time being in force as to the duties which he is to perform and the manner in which he is to perform them;

### **Warder**

Each Warder shall have a particular duty assigned to him by the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent or Head Warder such as charge of a ward, or set of wards, a workshop or set of workshops, or gang of prisoners either inside or outside the jail. The posts and duties of warders shall be frequently changed so as to prevent them forming relations with any of the prisoners.

It shall be the duty of every Warder at all times to;

- obey the orders of all officers superior to him in rank;
- be in a state of readiness to turn out fully accoutered and armed immediately, whenever called on to do so or an alarm is given;
- to know the number of prisoners in his charge to count them frequently during his turn of duty and to satisfy himself that he has in his custody;

### **Punjab Jail Training School, Patiala**

Punjab Jail Training School was established at Patiala on 05<sup>th</sup> May 1988. This institution was established to cater for the training requirements of the prison staff of the Department of Prison and Correctional Services Punjab. This institution was spread in about ten acres of land. Punjab Jail Training School, Patiala is one of the premier institutes in the Northern India to cater for training of newly recruited Prison Officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Head Warders, Warders and Matrons of the state



of Punjab. In addition to home state, this institute also trained prison officers and employees of the state of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Andaman & Nikobar Island, Union Territory Chandigarh and N.C.T. Delhi. Punjab Jail Training School, an auxiliary agency of the Punjab Jails Department, is headed by the Principal, the posts of Assistant Inspector- General, Superintendent Central Jail and Principal, Punjab Jail Training School are equivalent in rank. The incumbents are inter-transfer-able. In addition to training activities, National Level Thematic Training Courses in collaboration with BPR&D, MHA, New Delhi and NISD, MSJE, New Delhi are organised at this institute. Prison officers from different states of Indian are participates in these training courses.

### **Classification of Prisons**

The classification of prisons is done at different levels. According to requirement prisons are situated at central, district and sub- divisional levels. Following are the brief classification of prisons;

#### **Central Jail**

Central Jail means any prison in which criminal convicted prisoners are received, for the purpose of undergoing their sentence, by transfer from any other jail and in which such prisoners are not, when committed to prison, in the first instance are ordinarily received. Provided that no jail shall be deemed to be a Central Jail unless and until the State Government shall have declared it to be such;

#### **District Jail or Medium Security Jail**

"District Jail" or "Medium Security Jail" means any prison to which prisoners from one or more districts are in the first instance, ordinarily committed and includes every jail other than a central jail or a special jail.

#### **Maximum Security Jail**

Maximum Security Jail means any prison meant for confinement of dangerous, habitual, professionals, terrorists, organized and sophisticated types of criminals.

#### **Minimum Security Jail (Open Jail)**

Open Air Jail or Minimum Security Jail means prison meant for keeping well-behaved prisoners, where there is no material and physical precaution against escape (such as walls,



locks, bars, armed or other special security guard) which is governed by a system based on self-discipline and sense of responsibility of the inmates towards the group in which the lives,

### **Women Jail**

Women's jails are prisons that exclusively house female prisoners. Women's jails may exist at the central, district and sub-divisional level. In women jail all types of under-trial, convicted and sentenced women prisoners are kept here. Only women personnel are recruited in these jails.

### **Borstal Jail**

Borstal Schools are a type of youth detention centre and are used specially for the imprisonment of minors or juveniles. The main purpose of Borstal Schools is to ensure care, welfare and rehabilitation of young offenders in an environment suitable for children and keep them away from contaminating atmosphere of the prison. The juveniles in conflict with law detained in Borstal Schools are provided various vocational training and education with the help of trained teachers. The emphasis is given on the education, training and moral influence conducive for their reformation and prevention of crime.

### **Sub Jail**

Sub Jail or Subsidiary Jail means any place so declared by the State Government, by general or special order, and used permanently or temporarily under that authority for the detention of prisoners. It includes all lands and buildings appurtenant thereto.

### **Prisons in Punjab**

Prisons are supposed to be good thing, but when so many problems come out of them it's hard to keep in mind what they're there for. Prisons play an important role in running the administration. When a criminal is sentenced in prison, the prison disciplined life changes him a lot. Prisons are meant not only to make criminals prisoners, but also to make them good human beings. The following table 1.1 shows the prisons in Punjab:-

**Table 1.1  
Prisons in Punjab**

Sr. No.	Prisons	No. of Prisons	Locality
1.	Central Jail	10	Patiala, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur, Goindwal, Ferozepur, Bathinda, Faridkot
2.	District Jail	06	Barnala, Ropar, Sangrur, Sri Muktsar Sahib, Nabha
3.	Maximum Security Jail (Special Jail)	01	Nabha
4.	Minimum Security Jail (open Jail)	01	Nabha
5.	Women jail	02	Ludhiana, Bathinda
6.	Borstal Jail	01	Ludhiana
7.	Sub Jail	05	Malerkotla, Pathankot, Patti, Fazilika, Moga

*Source: Head Office, Department of Prisons, Punjab.*

Table 1.1 relives that there are 26 jails in Punjab which constitute 10 Central Jails, 6 District Jails, 2 Women jails, 1 Borstal jail and 5 Sub Jails. Prison Department Punjab also has a Jail Training School at Patiala. These jails further divided into circles. The following table 1.2 shows the Circles of Prison Administration in Punjab:-

**Table 1.2  
Circles of Jail Administration in Punjab**

Ferozepur Circle	Patiala Circle	Amritsar Circle
Central Jail Ferozepur	Central Jail Ludhiana	Central Jail Amritsar
Central Jail, Bathinda	Central Jail Patiala	Central Jail Gurdaspur
Central Jail, Faridkot	District jail, Ropar	Central Jail, Hoshiarpur
District Jail, Mansa	Maximum Security Jail, Nabha	Central Jail, Kapurthala
District Jail, Barnala	District Jail, Sangrur	Central Jail, Goindwal Sahib
District Jail, Sri Mukatsar Sahib	New District Jail, Nabha	Sub Jail, Pathankot
Women Jail, Bathinda	Women Jail, Ludhiana	Sub Jail, Patti

Sub Jail Moga	Borstal Jail, Ludhiana	
Sub Jail, Fazlika	Sub Jail, Malerkotla	
	Open Jail, Nabha	
	Punjab Jail Training School, Patiala	

*Source: Head Office, Department of Prisons, Punjab.*

Table 1.2 relives that there are total twenty six jails in Punjab, these further divided into three circles namely Ferozpur Circle, Patiala Circle and Amritsar Circle. In Ferozpur Circle there are total nine jails, ten jails and one training school in Patiala Circle. Amritsar Circle covered seven jails.

### **Conclusion**

In organizational structure of jails administration we can see as a legacy of the British times continuing for the sake of its efficient practices and no other better alternative to the same till now. The post of Director General of Prison was created in 2001. But there are no official notification by Government regarding this post, only joining date will had mentioned. He exercises powers subject to the orders of State Government’s general control and superintendence over all prisoners. There is no certified copy of Punjab Jails Manual is available on official website. The structure of Jails Department is very complicated and there is lack of proper documentation in many orders. At present Department of Jails, Punjab is working on amendments to be made in jail manual. Jails Department has been also working on betterment of its official website.

### **Reference**

- <https://prisons.punjab.gov.in>
- Manual for the superintendence and management of prisons in the Punjab, Prescribe by the govt. of Punjab, chapter-1, pg. no. 2, 1996.
- Headquarter, Department of Prisons, Punjab.
- N.R. Madhva Menon, “Criminal Justice India Series”, Allied Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 2002, p. 292.