

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGH
POWERED COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, THE
29th DAY OF APRIL, 2021 AT 02.30 P.M. THROUGH
VIRTUAL MODE.**

PRESIDED BY:

Hon'ble Shri. Justice Aravind Kumar, Judge, High Court of Karnataka & Executive Chairman, Karnataka State Legal Services Authority and chairman of High Powered Committee.

Members Present:

1. Sri. Alok Mohan, The Director General (Prisons & Correctional Services) Karnataka State.

Special Invitees:

1. Hon'ble Sri Justice A.N. Venugopala Gowda, Former Judge, Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka, Bengaluru (Hon'ble Chairman of the State Level Monitoring Committee)
2. Hon'ble Sri Justice K.N. Keshavanarayana, Former Judge, Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka, Bengaluru (Hon'ble Member of the State Level Monitoring Committee)
3. Sri Venkatesh Naik. T, Prl. Law Secretary, Government of Karnataka.
4. Sri V.P. Baligar, IAS, Officer (Retd) (Member of the State Level Monitoring Committee)
5. Sri S.T. Ramesh, IPS, Officer (Retd) (Member of the State Level Monitoring Committee)
6. Smt. Anuradha, Director, DWCD, Bengaluru.
7. Sri Ranganath, Chief Superintendent, Central Prison, Parappana Agrahara, Bengaluru.
8. Smt. Nagarathna, Deputy Secretary, (PCAS), Government of Karnataka.

Hon'ble Executive Chairman, KSLSA formally welcomed the virtual gathering and expressed apprehensions regarding the surge in covid infection in the State of Karnataka. His lordship highlighted news papers reports indicating that 23 UTPs at subjail of Shorapur, Yadgir District and 39 UTPs in Bagalkot District Jail being found positive for Covid - 19 infection.

Thereafter, the following agendas were taken up.

Agenda No.1	To discuss regarding the steps taken by Prison Administration to enforce COVID protocols in the prison
Resolution	<p>Hon'ble Executive Chairman commenced the discussion and enquired DG, Prison as to what steps have been taken for daily screening of Prisoners and their regular health checkup including Covid test.</p> <p>It is brought to the notice of the participants that the State Level Monitoring Committee of Karnataka State Legal Services Authority which is headed by Hon'ble Sri Justice A.N. Venugopala Gowda, Former Judge, High Court of Karnataka and comprising of Hon'ble Sri Justice K.N. Keshavanarayana, Former Judge, High Court of Karnataka and 2 other members have been specially invited for better interaction in the meeting. The State Level Monitoring Committee is</p>

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formed at the instance of Hon'ble Executive Chairman for the purpose of inspecting hospitals and supervision of covid management and precautions taken up by the State Administration.

Hon'ble Sri Justice A.N. Venugopala Gowda, informed Hon'ble Executive Chairman, KSLSA that, he had a long conversation with one of the members of their Committee by name Sri S.T. Ramesh, Former IPS, officer with regard to the steps which may have to be taken up in the prison. As such with the leave of Hon'ble Executive Chairman, Sri S.T. Ramesh, submitted his inputs before the Committee.

Sri. S. T. Ramesh stated that some of the measures mentioned in the SOP of prison authorities dated 28-09-2020 are impracticable, especially the daily screening of all the prisoners at bigger prison like Parappana Agrahara, Bangalore. He stated that the congregation happens in the prison especially at the time of distribution of food. He wanted to know how the prison authority is able to maintain covid protocol by following social distance at that point of time. He further enquired as to whether telephone facility is upgraded and sanitary napkins are provided to the women prisoners. He also

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made an appeal to Hon'ble Executive Chairman to direct the Criminal Courts in the State to liberally consider the applicability of Sec. 436-A of Cr. P.C. and also to liberalize parole system. Hon'ble Executive Chairman informed Sri S.T. Ramesh about the steps taken up by High Power Committee mandating use of Sec. 436-A of Cr. P.C. provision by all Criminal Courts across the State and also steps which were taken during first wave of Covid by liberally releasing convicts on parole. Sri S.T. Ramesh respectfully appreciated the steps taken up by the High Powered Committee.

Sri Alok Mohan, DGP, Prison, informed the Committee that the Prison Authorities have taken greater initiative to ensure that Covid Infection does not affect the Prisoners in Karnataka. He was happy to inform the Committee that due to the early intervention and several directions issued by High Powered Committee, prison authorities were successful in withstanding first wave of COVID-19. It is informed that one of the biggest prison in Karnataka at Belagavi has not reported a single case of Covid positive. Further there is no single causality due to COVID, reported in the prisons of Karnataka. Hence, he expressed that with the assistance of Hon'ble High Court and High



Powered Committee, Karnataka has become No.1 Model State in the country in respect of prison management. For the enquiries raised by Sri S.T. Ramesh it is informed by DG, Prison that daily screening of the prisoners at Parappana Agrahara is conducted barrack-wise. Apart from providing telephone facility, a VC facility by name E-Mulakath was introduced from January 2021 which has helped the prisoners to communicate visually with their family members as well as the District Legal Services Authority to approach the panel advocates. He also informed that sanitary napkins are provided to the women prisoners and with the help of women staff they are educated as to its utility. He also spoke with regard to the steps taken for increasing the strength of Open Air Prison and steps being taken at many district prisons to increase the space by way of further construction. According to him if the said further construction is completed, additional 5,500 inmates can be accommodated in the said district prisons.

Another member of State Level Monitoring Committee Sri V.P. Baligar enquired DG, Prison as to the chances of creating oxygen bed/ICU in the prison, as there is unfortunate shortage in the

City. For this, DG, Prison informed that the Health infrastructure is to be taken care by the Health Department and presently the District Health Authority is ensuring its best to provide health care facility inside the prison. It is brought to the notice of the Committee that the Prison Authorities are finding it difficult to provide treatment to non-covid emergency in the City of Bengaluru as the Government Hospitals are overcrowded with covid patients.

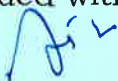
DG, Prison had submitted his detailed report with regard to the steps taken for enforcing covid protocol in the prison. It is mentioned that there are presently 240 active Covid positive prisoners in 49 prisons in the State who are undergoing medical treatment as per COVID medical protocol. It is informed by DG, Prison that 240 active covid positive prisoners are the new entrants who were quarantined prior to their entry into prison. This has prevented spreading of infection in the prison. The report submitted by DG, Prison with regard to the measures taken for preventing spreading of Covid-19 in the prisons in the Karnataka will be read as part of record and it is accordingly resolved.

Agenda No. 2	To discuss regarding the steps taken by ICPS to enforce COVID protocols in the Observation Homes, place of safety and CCIs
Resolution	<p>Hon'ble Executive Chairman referring to the recent incident at Observation Home in Bengaluru, wherein the Children-in-Conflict with Law tried to ransack the premises, enquired if the Covid protocols are being properly enforced in the Observation Homes or not. In the absence of Smt. Pallavi Akurathi, Director of KSICPS, Smt. Anuradha, Director DWCD participated in the meeting and she assured that preventive measures will be taken to ensure that no such incidents will take place in future. She informed that there are around 962 Child Care Institutions and other Centres housing children in the State of Karnataka and at present 78 children therein are tested positive for Covid-19. It is further informed that out of 78, total 43 children are presently in hospital for treatment. Remaining are isolated and monitored at the Centres itself. Hon'ble Executive Chairman directed the official to furnish the list of those children who are hospitalized so that KSLSA can direct its Member Secretaries of concerned DLSAs to monitor the health condition of said children. Hon'ble Executive Chairman further requested the official to take necessary steps for</p>

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	enforcing Covid-19 protocol in the Observation Homes, Place of Safety and CCI's and to submit compliance report.
Agenda No. 3	Steps taken for vaccinating all prison personnel's, JJB Staff, their families and inmates on priority.
Resolution	<p>It is informed by DG, Prison that 92% of the prison staff have been vaccinated as they are considered as Front Line Warriors. Further, steps are being taken to vaccinate the remaining prison staff and he has already spoken with the Health Department officials to arrange for vaccination drive in the prison for prisoners. When enquired by the members of the State Level Monitoring Committee, it is informed that vaccination to the prisoners is carried out without insisting for their ID cards.</p> <p>The official representing ICPS Department is also directed to take necessary steps for vaccinating all the staff connected with JJB, Observation Home, Place of Safety and CCIs.</p>
Agenda No. 4	Any other subject with the permission of the Chair.
Resolution	Nil.

Meeting concluded with vote of thanks.



(Hon'ble Shri. Justice Aravind Kumar)