

No.914/WBHRC/14-15

18th November, 2014

To

Shri Basueb Banerjee, IAS
Additional Chief Secretary, Home &
Home Secretary,
Govt. of West Bengal,
'Nabanna', 325, Sarat Chatterjee Rd.,
Howrah – 711101.

On November 13 to 14, 2014 the National Human Rights Commission organized a Seminar in New Delhi on topic of 'Prison Reforms'. I happened to attend the seminar on initiative of N.H.R.C. In the first part of the Seminar each State representative of Prison Directorate was asked to report on A.T.R. of the suggestions made by the N.H.R.C. on the same topic in 2011.

Following these discussions presentations were made by some D.G., Prisons. D.G., Prisons, Kerala and Law Officer, Tihar Jail submitted their presentations which were very much appreciated. The N.H.R.C. considered Trivandrum and Tihar Jails as model jails. The Special Rapporteur of NHRC, Shri Damodar Sarangi, IPS (Retd.) criticised West Bengal prisons at Presidency and Jalpaiguri for lacking basic facilities and suggested urgent upgradation which may kindly be considered.

I am summarising below some of the important points which emerged out of the deliberations for your consideration and incorporation in policy for reforms of Correctional Homes.

- (a) There was lot of emphasis laid on hygiene, health care in the Correctional Homes. Modern toilet facilities with waste recycling machines and utilisation in bio gas were emphasised.
- (b) Emphasis was laid on use of solar energy both for cooking and lighting purposes. As use of coal led to excess carbon emission leading to lung related problems, emphasis was laid on use of solar energy and of biogas.
- (c) Health check up of inmates was considered to be mandatory immediately after admission in the Correctional Homes and maintenance of computerised health cards with periodic checking.
- (d) Establishing of prison hospitals with X ray machine, U.S.G. and pathology laboratory were emphasised.
- (e) Periodic health check up of prisoners was also emphasised.
- (f) In order to remove overcrowding of prisons construction of new prisons with adequate space, open prisons etc. were deliberated upon.
- (g) A computerised visitors' management system and proper timings and proper visitors' room were emphasised.

(h) System of parole to be made easier. In fact, the D.G., Prison, Kerala informed that he has the power to grant 90 days parole which would be computed with his total period of conviction.

(i) Lot of emphasis was laid on release under trial and remand prisoners. Attention was invited to Section 436(A) of the Cr.P.C. for necessary action and it was also suggested that the matter be taken up with Hon'ble Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court to reduce the problem of U.T.P.s and remand prisoners. Also, holding of Lok Adalats inside prisons for early release of petty offenders and visit by LSA were suggested.

(j) Emphasis was laid on video conferencing with Courts for production of remand prisoners before concerned Magistrates was suggested.

(k) Lot of emphasis was laid on computerisation of records.

(l) Use of P.P.P. model for prison industries and marketing of their products were suggested.

(m) It was suggested in the Seminar that in Correctional Homes complaint boxes should be kept in which the inmates can directly address their complaints/views to the Superintendent of Correctional Homes for necessary action.

I would suggest that you could kindly consider making 2/3 prisons as model viz. Presidency, Alipore and Jalpaiguri in North Bengal on the above mentioned suggestions and any other allied matter. In case you consider necessary the State Human Rights Commission is always ready to provide all assistance to you in this regard.

Sd/-

(Naparajit Mukherjee)

No.914(1)/WBHRC/14-15

Date : 18/11/2014

Copy forwarded information and necessary to :-

Shri Adhir Sharma, IPS
Addl. D.G.,
Correctional Services,
Jessop Building, 1st Floor,
63, N.S. Road,
Kolkata – 700001.

Sd/-

(Naparajit Mukherjee)