

No.V-17013/17/2020– PR
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs
Women Safety Division

Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium
India Gate, New Delhi – 110002
March 12, 2020

To

- 1) The Chief Secretaries of all States and UTs
- 2) The Home Secretaries of all States and UTs
- 3) The DsG/IsG Prisons of all States and UTs

Sub: Precautionary measures in Prisons in view of Covid-2019 Corona Virus scenario.

Sir/Madam,

As per the Bulletin of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as on 11.3.2020 the total number of confirmed COVID 2019 cases across India is 60. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information is being updated as it becomes available.

2. The Government of India is taking a series of measures to check and contain the spread of Corona Virus. The situation is being monitored at the highest level. However, in view of the prevailing situation, it is considered necessary that appropriate measures are taken at all levels without any exception.

3. According to the World Health Organisation, the most effective protective measures are the following: cleaning hands regularly, properly covering mouth when you cough and social distancing.

4. While the Prison authorities in States and UTs may take appropriate precautions and steps for maintaining proper hygiene condition in Prisons, it may also be necessary to take various steps to reduce movement of prisoners including their production in Courts, for the time being, to ensure 'social distancing'. A large number of Prisons and Courts in the country have Video Conferencing set up for court production of prisoners. This includes traditional VC setup (point to point) connected to designated places in Court Complexes and "Vidyo" system setup - established under eCourts project, which is an internet based software solution for VC between court and prisons. Majority of the prisons and Courts in the country are equipped with 'Vidyo' set up facility.

However, at places where the “Vidyo” set up is not operational, State NIC Units may be approached by Prison and Court authorities for obtaining user-ids and passwords and making the system operational. The system is very user friendly and can be operated on Smartphone also. State NIC Units will render all necessary assistance to Prisons in this regard. This procedure will reduce movement of prisoners and their visit to crowded places in Court complexes and contact with anyone having this virus. States and UTs may engage with appropriate authorities of Courts, State Legal Services Authority and Legal Service Clinics for various measures to reduce movement of prisoners.

5. Due care may also be taken in handling prisoners (including foreign nationals) and visitors to Prisons. States and UTs are requested to engage with their Health Department for arranging screening devices and kits to be used in Prisons for screening inmates and their visitors. You are also requested to encourage the meeting of prisoners with their visitors through video conferencing facility available as e-mulakat, a module under e-prisons project, for the time being, to avoid physical contact.

6. It is expected that with the cooperation of all concerned, these measures can go a long way in checking the spread of Corona virus.

Yours sincerely,



(Punya Salila Srivastava)

Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India

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Copy to:

- 1) Registrars of all High Courts with the request for appropriate action.
- 2) Member Secretary, NALSA, Jamnagar House, New Delhi – for issuing appropriate instructions to all concerned.
- 3) Secretary, Department of Justice, R.No. 14, Jaisalmer House, New Delhi
- 4) DG, NIC, CGO Complex – to issue appropriate instructions to all State Units.