

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Women inmates in Goa Central Jail lack legal aid

PRESS NOTE

30 May, 2018: In compliance of its mandate, a team from the National Commission for Women (NCW), led by Chairperson (I/C) Smt. Rekha Sharma, visited Goa Central Jail in Colvale on May 30.

The inspection was carried out for assessing and looking into various aspects including overcrowding, availability of legal help, rehabilitation plans including skill development and training, legal awareness and legal help for women inmates, proper facilities for the children of these inmates among others.

Giving details of the visit, Smt. Rekha Sharma said that there were 21 women inmates – eight convicted and 13 under trails- lodged in the women's wing of the prison. The amenities available in the jail were satisfactory, with well-maintained and clean jail premises, and adequate space in the cells for the inmates. As regards to nutrition, food provided to inmates was observed to be wholesome and of good quality. Food provided to inmates is first checked by the medical officer before being served.

Health facilities provided also seemed to be adequate with a small hospital in the jail premises, with a doctor and a staff of four. Counselling services, meditation and yoga classes are also available for the inmates.

The jail authorities have involved NGOs to provide skill training aimed at their rehabilitation like stitching and embroidery courses.

However, certain areas that need substantial improvement were identified. Smt. Sharma said the low hanging fans in the cells were potential safety hazards. She also took note of the lack of legal aid for the inmates and the need for more efficient empaneled lawyers.

The inspection conducted today is a part of the NCW's ongoing project to visit all jails in the country in order to formulate a manual for comprehensive prison reforms for women inmates in India. A detailed Proforma for comprehensive inspections of prisons, where women are inmates, has been developed by the Commission. The Proforma has been shared with the Director Generals of Prisons and State Commissions for Women across the country. The State Commissions for Women are also conducting the prison inspections as per the guidelines of NCW and sharing the reports with the Commission. So far, NCW has received 88 proformas.

During 2017- March 2018, NCW conducted inspections of Central Prison Ambala, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Ranchi, Nellore, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Delhi, Kolkata & Mizoram and sent the recommendations to the Ministry of Women & Child Development.

A number of other jail inspections have been planned by the Commission for the coming months.