

KARNATAKA LOKAYUKTA: BENGALURU

No.

Date: 06.07.2022

ORDER

During my visit to Ramanagara District in order to conduct grievance redressal meeting commencing from 2nd July 2022 to 4th July 2022, I made a surprise visit to Post-Metric Girls Hostel, Ramanagara situated closer to the Inspection Bungalow, Ramanagara on 02.07.2022 at around 7.30 p.m, in order to know the condition of the inmates of the hostel and to ascertain from them, whether they are treated fairly in the hostel by making available facilities that are legally due to them from the Government.

2. The entrance to the said hostel was through a road which was similar to that of a conservancy road and the concrete road laid on the underground drainage (UGD) was in a bad condition. On careful perusal of the kitchen, the walls were full of coated soot and there were no exhaust fans to expel the smoke. On examination of the food grains and other grocery items, toordal supplied to the hostel didn't seem to be of new stock. On my

enquiry, I found that the present warden, Smt. Chandrakala who had replaced the earlier warden Smt. Nagarathna didn't seem to have bestowed interest in maintaining the hostel in a neat and tidy manner. There was one permanent cook Smt. Gowramma assisted by three outsourced assistant's viz., 1) Smt. Lakshamma; 2) Smt. Bharathi and 3) Smt. Subhadramma provided through the agency supplying man power for the Social Welfare Department. The outsourced staff complained to me that they were not receiving their salaries periodically and the amount which was due to them is not properly credited to their accounts and a portion of their salary was withheld by the contractor who provided labourers for the hostel.

3. After sensing that the maintenance of the hostel is not proper, the officials and the other officers were asked to remain outside the dining hall and an attempt was made to elicit factual information from the inmates of the hostel in presence of the Deputy Commissioner Dr. Avinash Menon Rajendran and Chief Executive Officer Sri Digvijay Bhodke who accompanied me to have on the spot assessment of working of the hostels funded by Social Welfare Department.

4. One of the inmates complained to me that rice provided in the hostel was sticky and the sambhar provided by the cooks was not thick and tasty. One of the inmates also complained that they have detected worms in the rice at times and when this situation was brought to the notice of the cooking staff, they were asked to throw away the food and to go to Indira Canteen for food, as a result she was made to starve for the whole day. It was also brought to my notice that the food was not provided according to the menu displayed in the dining hall and they were not getting neither biscuits nor rusk in the evening after the present warden took over charge of the said hostel. On careful perusal of the indent made to the food supplying agency, a sum of Rs.635.59 paise was charged towards purchase of biscuits under HSN Code No.3309014.

5. According to the inmates, only rice items are provided in the hostel and they were not offered dosas or idlis saying that grinder is not provided. According to them, the hostel authorities were not providing sufficient food and the food provided to them was not of good quantity/quality and many a times, the hostel authorities were reluctant to prepare and supply food to the

students if the prepared food exhausts. Under such circumstances, the authorities were directing the students to take food in Indira Canteen.

6. Some of the girl students represented to me in unison that only three washrooms are constructed in the hostel and one of them situated in the ground floor is locked preventing its use for the reasons best known to the authorities and the other wash rooms were not cleaned every day and there is rush to use wash room facilities due to insufficiency of wash rooms. There is no lock provided to the bathrooms. They also complained that there was acute water shortage and the hostel is not provided with water connection from the City Municipal Council, Ramanagara and the borewell exclusively provided for pumping water to the hostel is not sufficient to cater to the needs of 80 admitted inmates as against the strength of 100 girls students.

7. It was also brought to my notice that the 08 dormitories existing in the hostel were not fitted with proper fans and some of them are not working. Many of the girl students complained to me that they were not provided sanitary pads/napkins to ensure

their personal hygiene and no incinerators are provided to scientifically dispose the used sanitary pads. The girl students also brought to my notice that none of the computers were not in working condition. Even on my personal inspection, I found that, the computer monitors were displayed on a table and they were not functional. It was also brought to my notice that the library didn't contain books relating to Law, Engineering and professional courses. The books on Constitution were made available. The inmates complained that the two storied metal cots were not properly fixed and some of them were wobbling. I could see that the steel cots were rattling even on a gentle touch. The students also mentioned to me that the authorities were expected to provide pillow and bedsheets at the time of admission, but they were not properly provided.

8. The other grievances of the students were that, the lunch hour is reduced by half an hour. Many a times the students will not be able to reach the hostel between 2-3 p.m and they would only provide two slices of bread and an omelette which will not be sufficient for growing teenagers. It was also complained to me that the hostel warden Smt. Chandrakala M.P was demanding

Rs.100/- per day to allow the students to remain in the hostel which in my considered view is a corrupt practice.

9. The students also represented to me that there would be frequent power disconnection on the ground that the hostel authorities have not paid electricity charges to the BESCO authorities. This would hamper the studies schedule of the students housed in the hostel. Even though, the diesel generator is installed at the entrance of the hostel gate, it was not maintained properly and not put to use during the time of power failure.

10. Overall administration of the hostel was abysmally bad and Sri Yogesh, Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department, Ramanagara and Sri Mahantesh, Assistant Director (I/c) attached to the Social Welfare Department appears to have never visited this hostel even though it is situated in the heart of the city. This attitude on the part of the Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department and Assistant Director, Social Welfare Department needs to be deprecated. On questioning the Social

Welfare Officer's would give untenable excuses to justify mismanagement.

11. The pathetic plight of the inmates of the hostel and the appalling conditions prevailing in the hostel prompts me to initiate suo-moto action as against the erring officials. The correctional system is to be devised to prevent recurrence of mal-administration not only in this hostel but also in all other hostels across the State run by Department of Social Welfare and Department of Backward Classes and Minorities in order to provide hygienic conditions for the younger generations in the hostel and to prevent under nourishment during their growth period. In this connection, following remedial measures be taken immediately:-

1. The respondents shall ensure uninterrupted power supply to the hostel on all days and shall effect repairs to the existing diesel generator set to make it functional at all times.
2. The respondents are directed to secure separate water line from City Municipal Council, Ramanagara for the hostel and shall install a RO plant within the hostel premises to provide potable water for the inmates and also for cooking purposes.

3. The authorities are directed to provide sufficient number of desk tops with internet facility for the benefit of students pursuing law, paramedical and other professional courses.
4. The safety and security aspects need to be addressed for the inmates of the girls hostels established in the State. Personal hygiene materials shall be supplied to all hostels without any deficiency.
5. The fans, electric fixtures should be installed wherever necessary and the existing ones shall be repaired immediately.
6. Periodic disinfection of the hostel rooms be made and mosquito nets shall be provided to every student.
7. The hostel authorities shall extend regular medical facilities to the inmates of the hostels to prevent contagious diseases, more particularly, skin diseases such as scabies, psoriasis, eczema, ring worm infestations and other diseases.
8. Sufficient quantity of rice, food grains and other provisions shall be issued to the hostels and no girl child should suffer under nourishment during their growth period.
9. The hostel authorities shall ensure supply of vegetables and food free from toxic chemical residues and utmost hygiene shall be maintained in the kitchen and the utensils

used for the preparation of food shall be scrupulously cleaned.

10. Cleaned food grains and fresh provisions should be made available to all the hostels run by the Government.
 11. The medical officers from the Government Hospitals shall periodically visit the hostels to conduct medical checkups to alleviate vitamin deficiency and anemia among students housed in all Government hostels.
 12. Food preparation shall be strictly monitored and it should be in accordance with the menu displayed in the hostel and it shall be of palatable and of good taste without using artificial essences and taste makers.
 13. The required kitchen gadgets such as grinders, mixis and utensils shall be provided to every hostel subject to availability of budgetary allocations.
 14. The officers shall take steps to change the menu atleast once in 6 months so as to avoid repetition of same kind of food being supplied in the hostels.
 15. Delicious meals containing sweets/payasam shall be provided during Festivities, National Festivals and auspicious occasions.
12. All the Superintendents of Police attached to the Karnataka Lokayukta are hereby directed to pay periodic surprise visits to

pre-metric and post-metric hostels established all over the State in order to check anomalies, irregularities, mismanagement and corruption. The concerned heads of the departments are also directed to periodically monitor these hostels in order to ensure proper food and living conditions for the students as the budding youth are assets to the society and nation and their living conditions cannot be allowed to remain deplorable. It is also necessary in the interest of healthy society as the future of the nation depends on the younger generation.

13. The conduct of the lady warden Smt. Chandrakala M.P supervising this hostel was also improper for the reason that some of the girl students complained to me that she would address them in singular form affecting their dignity. Right to life does not mean animal existence. The Constitutional mandate is living with dignity and every individual has a right to live with dignity and it is an obligation of the State to provide congenial atmosphere in the hostels so that, the under privileged and economically backward students will be able to face stiff competition prevailing in every sphere of activity. In this direction, I propose to initiate suo-moto action as against the

() officials responsible for such state of affairs that prevailed in post-metric girls hostel, Ramanagara Distirct.

14. Office to register suo-moto case against the following officers:-

1.	Sri Yogesh S.B, Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department, Ramanagara District, Ramanagara.
2.	Sri Mahantesh, Assistant Director (I/c), Social Welfare Department, Ramanagara District, Ramanagara.
3.	Smt. Chandrakala M.P, Warden, Post-Metric Girls Hostel, Ramanagara District, Ramanagara.

15. Communicate the copy of this order to the officers referred to above and call for comments from them within a week from this day with a direction to set right the anomalies in the said hostel within 15 days from today. Forward a copy of this order to:-

1. The Commissioner, Social Welfare Department, 5th floor, M.S. Building, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru.

L

2. The Commissioner, Department of Backward Classes Welfare, No.16/D, Devaraja Arasu Bhawan, 3rd Floor, Millers Tank Bed Area, Vasanthnagar, Bengaluru-560052.
3. The Deputy Commissioner, Ramanagara District, Ramanagara.
4. The Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Panchayath, Ramanagara District, Ramanagara.
5. The Commissioner, City Municipal Council, Ramanagara District, Ramanagara.

with a direction to bestow interest in improving and reforming the conditions of the hostels falling within their jurisdiction and for their future action if any in this regard from their side.

K.N. Phaneendra
.. 06/7/2022

(Justice K.N. Phaneendra)

Upalokayukta-2,
State of Karnataka.

16. ARLO-4 (Complaint Section)}