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HC reserves orders on rehab guidelines for prisoners' children

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Madurai: The Madurai bench of the Madras high court has reserved orders on a petition seeking guidelines to deal with children of parents who are prisoners and children who are victim of violence. A division bench of justice S Vimala and justice T Krishnavalli had earlier directed an amicus curae to file a report on the issue and directed the report be sent to the additional director general of police, prisons and central prisons across the state for consideration.

The bench took up the case again on Wednesday through videoconferencing and after hearing the submissions made, the orders were reserved.

The amicus curae report proposed that not only the children of incarcerated parents, but also children who are victims of violence also be brought under the same umbrella. The report suggested that the State Legal Services Authority (SLSA) be bestowed with the responsibility of maintaining a database of children of incarcerated parents and the collection of data be co-ordinated by the member secretary of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) at the district level under the overall supervision of the SLSA.

The amicus curiae report noted that in most cases, the regular growth of the child, his/her quality of education, health status and general well-being almost comes to an end with the imprisonment of their parent or caregiver.

Noting that it is the responsibility of the state to ensure the welfare of these 'invisible' children, the report sought for a partnership from institutions to implement the scheme. The report stated that it would be imperative for the SLSA, District Child Protection Unit, Juvenile Justice (care and protection of children) Act, chief education officer of school education department and NGOs to work together for the welfare of these children.

The report also sought for setting up of a creche in every special prison for women in the state, especially to cater to children born and living with their mothers in prison and also a separate kitchen in the women prisons so that women prisoners may cook food for themselves and for their children as per the diet requirements.