

## **‘Collect details of convicts who have not filed appeal’, Madurai Bench directs TNSLA**

Madurai Bench of the High Court asks TNSLA to undertake the exercise and submit a report

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Friday directed the member-secretary of the Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority (TNSLA) to instruct the District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) to visit central prisons, open-air prisons and special prisons for women to collect the details of convicts who had not filed an appeal against their conviction.

A Division Bench of Justices V. Bharathidasan and J. Nisha Banu directed the TNSLA to submit a report to the court.

In its preliminary report, the TNSLA submitted that the DLSAs were taking steps to identify the convicts and were filing the appeals. Para-legal volunteers were appointed at the central prisons.

The court was hearing the case of a man from Tirunelveli who was languishing in prison for over 25 years, as no assistance was extended to him to file an appeal against the conviction. In 1996, the II Additional Sessions Judge, Tirunelveli, sentenced him to life imprisonment for committing sexual assault and murder.

The appeal was filed through legal aid before the High Court only in 2018. Appearing for the man, advocate R. Alagumani submitted that many such convicts were languishing in prisons for want of proper legal aid. Their details could be collected through the TNSLA for providing them with legal aid, he said.

### **Counsel face issues**

**At the hearing, advocate Henri Tiphagne submitted that counsel faced problems while visiting the prisoners. They were made to meet them in front of prison authorities. Taking note of the submissions, the court also sought details of the issues faced by counsel and adjourned the hearing to October 8.**

The court sought the assistance of the Advocate-General.

It said prisoners should be facilitated to appeal against their conviction. To allow the appeal or uphold the conviction was based on merits.

Following the direction, the TNSLA member-secretary appeared before the court to assist it in the case.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/collect-details-of-convicts-who-have-not-filed-appeal/article36527951.ece>