

# Business Standard

## HC bats for migrant workers' welfare

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The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court today directed the Central and the Tamil Nadu governments to implement a series of suggestions made by an advocate for the welfare of migrant workers.

The suggestions include a comprehensive law for all unorganised labourers, particularly inter-state migrant workers, PAN and Aadhaar cards for them, group insurance and education facility for their children.

A bench of Justices S Vimala and T Krishnavalli forwarded the suggestions made by advocate Jeya Karthick to the Labour and Employment department of the central and state governments for a follow-up action.

The advocate, who made the suggestions while highlighting the plight of migrant labourers, also wanted the Labour department to maintain a register of migrant labourers containing details, including their terms of the employment.

It was closing a habeas corpus petition filed by Hari Prasad Malgam of Madhya Pradesh, seeking to set free five of his relatives allegedly in the illegal custody of their employer running a borewell company in Cumbum in the neighbouring Theni district.

A habeas corpus petition is filed to ensure that a person, allegedly under illegal detention, was produced in the court and set free.

The bench noted that though there was an Inter-State Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act 1979, it had no provision for the protection of individual employee.

The petitioner Prasad alleged that his relatives were under the custody of their employer since March 12, 2018 and were beaten up by the latter's henchmen.

During the hearing, the employer alleged that the petitioner had taken a huge amount agreeing to work along with his relatives.

He had also taken away cash and articles worth Rs 3 lakh from the employer and a police complaint was lodged in this connection. It was, however, withdrawn after a compromise was worked out and hence the petition was not maintainable.

The court then said the HCP was liable to be dismissed with heavy cost, but in view of the poor economic condition of the labourers, it was sparing them the penalty.

It said the suggestions made by the petitioner's lawyer were well-taken and directed the governments to implement them, as they would give legal benefit to the migrant workers.