

HIGH COURT OF TRIPURA
A_G_A_R_T_A_L_A
WP(C)(PIL) No.03 of 2024

Court on its own motion.

V E R S U S

The Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and others

..... Respondent(s)

For Court on its own motion : Mr. Sankar Lodh, Amicus Curiae,
Ms. Aradhita Debbarma, Advocate.

For Respondent(s) : Mr. S.M. Chakraborty, Advocate General,
Mr. Bidyut Majumder, Dy.S.G.I.,
Ms. Pinki Chakraborty, Advocate.

HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. APARESH KUMAR SINGH
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE BISWAJIT PALIT

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15/05/2025

Dr. Chinmoyee Das, Public Health Specialist, Grade-I, National Aids Control Organization (NACO, for short) and Dr. Samarpita Dutta, Project Director, Tripura State AIDS Control Society (TSACS, for short) have appeared through virtual mode.

On behalf of the NACO, progress report has been submitted by Mr. Bidyut Majumder, learned Dy. S.G.I on 9th April, 2025 contained in letter dated 8th April, 2025. It refers to the recent activities undertaken by the Tripura State AIDS Control Society to combat HIV epidemic in the State. Paragraph 4 of the report is extracted hereunder:

“4. Recent activities undertaken by Tripura SACS to combat HIV epidemic in the State have been detailed in the response filed by TSACS and is summarized as follows:

a) To foster inter-State and inter-departmental coordination for addressing the escalating prevalence of Injecting Drug Use and associated HIV transmission, a Multi-stakeholder Consultation was organized by Tripura SACS, in which officers from NACO, select States and other stakeholders and experts participated.

b) State Council on AIDS meeting was held on 28th February, 2025 under chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tripura with all Cabinet Ministers.

c) Sensitization programme on HIV/AIDS and Injecting Drug use has been done of members of Agartala Municipal Council and Zilla Parishad of West Tripura District, elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) and Principal/Headmaster of 220 schools.

d) District-level convergence meetings have been convened with the participation of District Magistrates, Zila Sabhadhipatis, and other key stakeholders, to deliberate on strategies for intensifying public awareness and inter-sectoral coordination for HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

e) Massive awareness campaigns have been conducted in the State under guidance and support of NACO, which include: Intensified IEC Campaigns across the State, display of IEC messages on LED screens, 37 Red Ribbon Clubs established in College & Universities for involvement of youth in spreading messages on prevention of HIV/AIDS and Injecting Drug Use, etc.

f) Mobile ICTC van was inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tripura to provide HIV/STI prevention and screening services in remote area.

g) As guided by NACO, Index Testing Campaign has been conducted to increase HIV testing among contacts of known HIV-positive persons. The same is being planned to continue in a systematic way under the programme.

h) Under the Integrated Health Campaign, around 20 health camps have been conducted covering 10 blocks of West Tripura district during the period January 2025 to March 2025, focusing on testing and detection of HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis among vulnerable groups.”

Dr. Chinmoyee Das further submits that NACO has supported TSACS to conduct capacity building activities of staff across all facilities for more effective implementation of the programme. For the financial year 2025-2026, various activities related to prevention, testing and treatment services for HIV/AIDS and STI as proposed by Tripura SACS, have been approved under the Annual Action Plan by NACO. Suitable budgetary provisions have been made accordingly for all the approved activities of Tripura SACS through the State Grant-in-Aid under NACP for the current financial year 2025-2026. NACO is continuously working with Tripura SACS to ensure provision of more effective interventions for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in Tripura. She further submits that identifiable markers in the progress of the interventions can be made after a certain

period of time. The required infrastructural and human resource support and funding have been provided to the State NACS in greater degree after the intervention of the Court through the instant PIL but the results can be assessed at the ground level only after a period of time. It is a work in progress.

On behalf of the State, an affidavit has been filed containing the progress report dated 07.05.2025 by the Directorate of Medical Education at Annexure-R/1. It contains the details of awareness campaigns/programmes of HIV/AIDS in different Medical College/Paramedical College and Nursing College/Institution under the Directorate of Medical Education. Mr. S.M. Chakraborty, learned Advocate General submits that the campaign is being conducted at a much proactive level due to the intervention of the Court and sensitization of the respective stakeholders. The efforts taken at all levels are likely to yield results over a period of time.

Dr. Samarpita Dutta, Project Director, Tripura State AIDS Control Society submits that this year the focus is more at the Panchayat level. The intervention strategies will be implemented at a more aggressive level during the current financial year to achieve the desired results.

Mr. Sankar Lodh, learned Amicus Curiae assisted by Ms. Aradhita Debbarma, learned counsel also has expressed satisfaction upon the steps taken by the TSACS in conducting awareness programmes at different levels within the State. He is also of the opinion that the results may take some time to be delivered.

Upon consideration of the report submitted by the State and the NACO and after hearing the officials representing them as also learned Advocate General for the State and learned Amicus Curiae, we are of the view that sincere efforts are being made by the respective stakeholders in line with the objectives of NACO to arrest the trend of increase in HIV/AIDS cases in this State. However, it being a work in progress, it may take time to see the actual results on the ground. We, therefore, deem it proper to adjourn the matter for 3(three) months. Further progress report be submitted by the NACO and the TSACS and any other stakeholders before the next date.

Matter is adjourned to be listed in the 2nd week of August, 2025.

(BISWAJIT PALIT) J

(APARESH KUMAR SINGH) CJ

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