

TRIPURA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
KUNJABAN: AGARTALA

Complaint No. 04 of 2024
(A Suo-Motu cognizance.)
{Water crisis at GBP Hospital.}

FINAL ORDER

Dated, 08th of October-2024.

A news item was published in a local daily newspaper dated 29/04/2024 reporting inadequacy of drinking water in the Govind Ballabh Pant (GBP) Govt. Hospital, Agartala, which is the state's largest hospital as well as a Govt. Medical College. The Commission took note of the news item about drinking water crisis on 30/04/2024 and passed the following order:

“ Attention of the Commission is drawn to a news published in a daily newspaper namely Syandan Patrika, dated 29/04/2024, Monday, wherein, it is inter alia reported that there is acute shortage of drinking water in GBP Hospital and its premises and as a result, not only the indoor patients and their relatives but also the outdoor patients are suffering from water crisis and there is no step taken immediately to minimize the crisis by the hospital authority and the Health Department.

Adequate supply of drinking water is an essential service to be ensured by the hospital authority and any deficiency in doing so would amount to gross violation of human rights. In this hot weather if adequate and safe drinking water is not made available, there will be severe health hazard and the common man will be easy prey of
it.



The Commission therefore, takes note of the situation as reported prima facie and thought it appropriate to issue an urgent notice to the Medical Superintendent of AGMC & GBP Hospital to submit a report in respect of the water crisis as reported in the news item.

The Commission also considers it appropriate to bring the issue to the notice of the Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Tripura to take note of any such situation and submit a report to the Commission.

List it on 20/05/2024.

Send a copy of this Order along with the copy of the news item to the Medical Superintendent, AGMC & GBP Hospital and the Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Tripura”.

2. Pursuant to the communication of the above order, the Medical Superintendent and HOD of AGMC & GBP Hospital on 29/06/2024, made a communication which was grossly inadequate in respect to the queries made by the Commission and therefore, by order dated 22/07/2024, the Commission passed the order directing the Medical Superintendent to submit report in terms of the Commission's order dated 30/04/2024.

3. On 19/09/2024, the Medical Superintendent and HOD of AGMC & GBP Hospital has submitted a detailed report. We would like to reproduce here the contents of the report which reads as follows:

"Providing pure drinking water to the admitted patients and other visitors is one of the most important responsibilities. Hence, for 24 X 7 availability of the drinking water, AGMC & GBP Hospital has taken the following measures:

- I. Installed 02 nos. water ATM & 1 no. Air-O-water system.** One is near to Mortuary, another one is adjacent to Generic medicine counter & the **Air-O- water system** is near to Gynae Ward. Presently, 01 no. water ATM and Air-O- system are non-functional.
- II. Installed total 18 nos. of RO filter** in various locations of AGMC & GBP Hospital, Agartala. Out of which 17 nos. are currently non-functional and 01 no. is functional.

In the past an amount of Rs.234820/- had been sanctioned for repair of non-functional water ATM. **(Copy enclosed for kind perusal in Annexure-I).** Likewise an amount of Rs. 234702/- had been sanctioned for repair of 13 nos. RO water purifier **(Copy enclosed for kind perusal in Annexure-II).**

After repair all the water ATM and water purifier were functional for considerable period. But as of today, only 1 water ATM and 1 water purifier is functional.

- III. On dated 20.02.2024, the Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Tripura, had visited the AGMC & GBP Hospital & directed the Authority of AGMC & GBP Hospital for installation of additional drinking water sources in various locations of hospital premises. (Copy enclosed for kind perusal in Annexure-III, Sl-11).**

In compliance to the instruction of the Secretary, Health & FW Deptt., Govt. of Tripura and considering the fact that there are no technical experts in AGMC & GBP Hospital, the responsibility of maintenance of all RO water purifier, water ATMS Air-O- water

generator and installation of new drinking water sources has been handed over to the Executive Engineer, PWD, Mechanical Division on dated 21-03-2024 **(Copy enclosed for kind perusal in Annexure-IV & V)** and accordingly they have taken over the responsibility of providing drinking water at AGMC & GBP Hospital.

- IV.** On 12-04/2024 a letter was issued in favour of Executive Engineer, PWD, Mechanical Division for arrangement of urgent repairing of non-functional RO water filters installed in various location of AGMC & GBP Hospital, as per the information received from Ward master and forwarded by the RMO, AGMC & GBP hospital. **(Copy enclosed for kind perusal in Annexure-VI).**

Further, it is also to inform that an amount of **Rs. 955929/- on dated 10-06-2024** for providing installation & Testing & Commissioning of 32 nos. water purifier (with applicable company's product warranty) and 5 years post-warranty, Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) at different location of AGMC & GBP Hospital has been sanctioned in favour of Executive Engineer, PWD, Mechanical Division. **(Copy enclosed for kind perusal in Annexure-VII & VIII).**

- V.** On 05-08-2024 one more letter is issued in favour of Executive Engineer, PWD, Mechanical Division to repair water ATM and Air-O-Water filter machine at AGMC & GBP Hospital after receiving information from Ward Master forwarded by the RMO, AGMC & GBPH, **(Copy enclosed for kind perusal in Annexure-IX)**".

4. A bare reading of Para (i) & Para (ii) of the above report makes it abundantly clear that 2 nos. of water ATM and 1 No. of Air-O- water system were installed, out of which 1 water ATM and 1 Air-O- system got non functional and only 1 water ATM is functional.



Further, out of 18 nos. of RO filters, 17 nos. are currently non functional and only 1 is functional.

5. The AGMC and GBP Hospital is the state's most important and largest hospital. Thousands of patients visit OPD daily, besides the indoor patients and patient parties. Moreover, doctors and nursing staff as well as other administrative staff of AGMC & GBP Hospital are hundreds in numbers. For this huge population, gathering every day in the hospital premises, drinking water is a must. So, the report in the newspaper to which the Commission's attention is drawn seems to be a reality. It is the solemn duty of the State Government to ensure drinking water in the premises of such important institution, where the service of treatment is rendered.

6. Article 47 of the Constitution prescribes thus:

“Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.—The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health”.

7. Ours is a welfare government and therefore, the state has established such a huge establishment of a Government Hospital cum Medical College at state cost. While such a huge state establishment is functional and the common people from different parts of the state are daily attending the hospital, it is the duty of the authority who are responsible to maintain the hospital and its administration to ensure adequate supply of pure and healthy drinking water to each one of them.

8. The State Human Rights Commission is a statutory body to take cognizance of the facts where right to life, liberty, equality and dignity of an individual seems to be violated by any public servant or authority and it is the solemn duty of the Commission to take note of the fact and to make appropriate recommendation to the authority.

9. From the report of the Medical Superintendent, who is also the HOD of AGMC & GBP Hospital, it is painfully revealed that there is acute scarcity of drinking water in the hospital wards and its premises.

10. In the report of the Medical Superintendent, it is also stated that the responsibility of repairing the non functional water ATM and RO etc has been handed over to PWD and it is now looked after by PWD and certain amount has been sanctioned to repair the same etc. are only certain steps appears to have been taken in the meant time.

11. We are constrained to observe that all those water ATMS, Air-O- water and RO filters have not gone inoperative in a day. Of course the authority did not attach importance on the issue and therefore, such large number of drinking water sources has gone inoperative and when the Commission has taken note of it, certain steps have taken.

12. Thousands of patients, patient parties and visitors besides doctors, nurses, hospital staffs and administrative staffs and other incidental visitors visit the hospital every day. For such huge population, attending or visiting the hospital every day, requirement of per head water of such population should be

ascertained by the hospital authority and according to such requirement, drinking water sources such as water ATM, Air-O-water system or RO filters etc. should be installed in the hospital and its premises and ensure adequate supply of drinking water to the people.

Regular check up and cleaning of the system should also be maintained.


13. The Commission accordingly recommends that the Medical Superintendent of AGMC & GBP Hospital shall ascertain the tentative requirement of pure and safe drinking water for visitors, patients, patient parties, staffs and incidental visitors etc. to the hospital daily and per head requirement of adequate amount of pure and safe drinking water and arrange to provide the same in the premises without any break.

14. The above recommendations shall be complied and the compliance report should be communicated to the Commission within 3(three) months from the date of receipt of a copy of it.

15. A copy of the recommendations should be sent immediately to the Medical Superintendent of AGMC & GBP Hospital, Director of Health Services, Govt. of Tripura, the Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Tripura as well as to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Tripura, for compliance in terms of Section 18 of the Protection of Human Rights Act-1993.

List it after 3(three) months.

Fix it on ...09/10/2025.....


(U. Choudhuri)
Member


(Justice S. C. Das)
Chairperson

(on leave)
(B.K. Ray)
Member