

## **Prison Conditions in Karnataka**

The following document contains preliminary research on prison conditions in Karnataka. The information has been derived from various sources including independent studies, research projects, new articles etc. The same has been mentioned post indicating the relevant data.

### **Introduction**

Prisons in India are not governed uniformly as every State applies a different set of rules and regulations that suits their social background. In 1959 a Model Prison Manual was prepared for the purpose of updating and revising the State manuals. It was also meant to lend uniformity to rules and regulations as also to procedure and punishment. Twenty years later, an interstate conference admitted that the Model Prison Manual had yet to be implemented in most of the States. In Karnataka, The State jail manual has been revised in the light of the provisions contained in the Model Prison Manual. The new manual has come into force in the State with effect from July 15, 1978.

The Prisons and Jails in Karnataka State are constituted under the Karnataka Prisons Act 1963 (Karnataka Act 33 of 1963). All Prisons situated in Karnataka State fall under the following classes, viz.: (i) Central Prisons (ii) District Prisons Class I (iii) District Prisons ClassII (iv) District Headquarters Sub-jails and Special Sub Jails (v) Taluk Sub-jails (vi) Juvenile Jails. (vii) Special Prisons. (viii) Open Air Jails. (ix) Boarstal School. The names of various prisons under the different classes of Prisons shall be as follows:- The following are the Central Prisons; Belgaum Central Prison, Bangalore Central Prison, Bellary Central Prison.

[‘Prison administration in Karnataka’](#) a study by S B Shimpiger conducted in 2006 details the organizational aspects of prisons and jails in Karnataka and attempts at reforms. It provides a comparative study into possible reforms in administrative principles, jail infrastructure, living conditions, and institutional provisions.

Similarly, [‘Critical study of prison reforms in India an overview of the prevailing system of prisons in Karnataka’](#) provides a far more comprehensive statistical analysis of overcrowding in jails, conditions of undertrials in prison, appointments of prison officials and staff, and funding to prisons in Karnataka among other considerations. The collected data from the study shows that there are overcrowded District Prisons, District Sub Jails, and few Taluk Sub Jails apart from the Central Jails. Central Prison, Mysore has the highest percentage of overcrowding (120%), Whereas the Central Prison, Bangalore recorded the lowest percentage of Overcrowding (43%). The lowest percentage of prison population among the central prison of Karnataka is recorded in the Central Prison, Bijapur (75%). The District Prison, Mangalore has the highest percentage of prisoners overcrowding (92%), followed by Chikkaballpur District Prison holding upto 47% of the prisoners in excess. Whereas, in almost every District Prison hold up below their actual capacity. The District Prison, Ramanagara holds up 81% of prisoners which less than its actual capacity. 3 out of 4 District Sub Jails are overcrowded, i.e., District Sub Jail, Mandya holds up about 44% of prisoners, District Sub Jail, Hassan holds up about 35% of prisoners and District Sub Jail, Kolar holds 32% of Prisoners.

There has been an increasing trend in the number of undertrial prisoners in the jails of Karnataka according to the prison statistics which were published by National Crime Records Bureau from 1999 to 2012. Although in the subsequent years after a rapid increase in undertrial numbers there has been a small decrease, the number of undertrials is still more than that of convicts, which is of the prime reason for overcrowding of prisons and also a major threat for the prison reforms.

During 2011-2012, 57 deaths of Prison inmates were reported from Karnataka. 52 deaths of Prison Inmates in Karnataka were reported as natural deaths and remaining 5 were unnatural deaths. The Unnatural Deaths were caused by only two reasons in Karnataka one was by suicide (4) and another was due to Murder by Inmate (1). The total percentage of natural deaths reported in Karnataka was 91%. It is also very important to note that out of 57 deaths of prison Inmates 56 were Male Prison Inmates and 1 was a female Prison Inmate.

[‘Custodial provisions for women - an empirical study of Karnataka central prison’](#) is a study on the conditions of women in Karnataka’s prisons. Among other considerations, The living

conditions of different Central prisons in Karnataka has been depicted. A total of 553 women prisoners are present in various jails of the State. Out of 553 women, prisoners 355 are undertrial women, prisoners, 192 are Convicted Women Prisoners and 6 are the other prisoners. A sample of 165 female prisoners (Convicts) from the seven Central Prisons of Karnataka was taken for the study in 2011. There is no separate Central Prison for women in Karnataka State. Out of 165 women prisoners, 138 ( 84%) of the prison inmates opine that the prisons are overcrowded. 121 ( 73%) women prisoners point out that clothing facilities in the prison are sufficient. 142 (86%) prison inmates state that there is lighting facility in the prison. majority of the women prisoners 147 (89%) expressed that the food supplied to them is satisfactory.

In Tumkur, a Separate central prison for women has been functioning since 28.04.2013. The conditions of prisoners within the prison are unknown.

[Conditions of Detention in Prisons of Karnataka](#), a study conducted by the Common Wealth Human Rights Initiative in 2010 gives another set of comprehensive data sets to portray the conditions of prisons in Karnataka.

There have been recent [reports](#) on mental health conditions of prisoners published by NIMHANS as well as a [focus of researchers](#) on [medical conditions](#) of prisoners in Karnataka.

Further, these are some reports on [prison reform](#) and [prison conditions](#) in [India](#) overall that might be useful for comparison.