

# Union/State Government to Make Available Transport Facility to Send Back Home Migrant Labourers, Plea in Karnataka HC

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An Agriculturist has moved the Karnataka High Court seeking directions to the state government to screen the migrant laborers who are kept in shelter homes or their temporary dwelling and if tested negative for Corona virus, then drop them to their homes for free, using the State/Central government transport facility.

The petition filed by Mallikarjuna A, is likely to be taken up by the court on April 21. The plea states that on March 29, the Union government invoking their powers under section 10 (2) (I) of the Disaster Management Act, directed all the states to provide temporary shelters, food and basic needs to migrant labourers and if such migrant labourer has moved out to reach their home towns they shall be quarantined for 14 days.

The petitioner made a representation to the state government to release the migrant workers who were quarantined and not found to be COVID positive then drop them till their doorstep with due respect. The petitioner has relied on newspaper reports about people walking hundreds of kilometers and even dying during their journey.

The plea claims that it is a violation of Article 21 of the Constitution of India and Section 61 of the Disaster Management Act by the State and Central government in not providing transport to the migrant workers to travel back home. Moreover, there is no science in locking them down even though they are asymptomatic of COVID-19. The migrant labourers have their own responsibilities and natural emotions towards their kith and kin, which they have left for so many days and in this time of pandemic situation they are much eager to reach out to their respective places. The state or centre cannot take the risk or have efficiency of dealing with such labourers kith and kins necessities and emotions.

The plea also argues that as on date neither the State nor the Centre, can predict the time of closure of lockdown as we are seeing the number of infections is rising day by day. In such an uncertain situation it is impossible for a sentimentally attached human to be away from his responsibilities of looking after his family.

The plea prays for screening all the migrant labourers and whoever is willing to go back to their hometowns and if they are negatively tested for COVID-19 be dropped back home.