



**HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE FOR RAJASTHAN
AT JODHPUR**

**IN RE: "In the matter of Welfare and Future of
Generation Gen-Z, Gen-Alpha and Gen-Beta"**

JUSTICE ANOOP KUMAR DHAND

ORDER



24.08.2026

Reportable

By the Court:

Children are future of a nation because they grow up to become its workforce, leaders and caretakers. How we, as a nation, care, teach and protect them today will decide the strength, safety and success of our country tomorrow. They are flowers of our national garden and it is our prime duty to protect these flowers.

1. This Court takes judicial notice that the students currently studying in Schools, Colleges and Universities across the Nation and the State, especially in Government Schools situated in Urban/Rural and village areas, where they study in Primary, Upper-Primary and Secondary Schools belong to the "Generation Alpha"; the newly born babies, i.e. "Generation Beta", who are supposed to get admission in Nursery and Primary Schools soon; and the students studying in Colleges and Universities belong to the "Generation Z". In short these three generations are the ones who are going to be leading the nation in coming future. The generation known as "Gen-Z" are the ones born between 1997 to 2012. The key trait of this



generation is that they are digital natives. Whereas, the “Gen-Alpha” are those born between 2013-2025 and this generation is also known as “the AI Generation”. They have grown up with Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) technology since their birth. Then come the newly born babies and future generation, i.e. “Gen-Beta”, also known as “Automation Generation”. Their birth years fall between 2025 to 2039. This generation will grow up with AI assistants, robotics, climate change and space exploration as normal day-to-day things. This generation will lead our nation in the future going forward.

2. Day in and day out, the Electronic and Print Media highlights the condition of the Government Schools situated in Urban, Rural and Village areas, which do not provide the basic education, technology and infrastructure for growth of these children.

3. This Court is deeply concerned that where on the one hand, the nation prepares “Gen Z”, “Gen Alpha” and “Gen Beta” to lead India in 2047 (i.e., 100 years of Independence of our Nation) and beyond, on the other hand, the foundational institutions meant to nurture them, particularly the Government Schools in Rural and Village areas continue to suffer from systemic deficiencies. The current state of the Rural Schools reflects a larger malaise. When these educational institutions, where the most vulnerable sections of the children belonging to the new “Gen Alpha” and “Gen Beta” study, lack basic infrastructure, training, medical facilities, wash rooms, newly emerging technology, etc. is a matter of grave concern.



4. The entire world is rapidly progressing in today's technological era. In order to compete with international standards and with other developing and developed nations, it is imperative that our nation's educational institutions, particularly Universities, Schools and Colleges, adopt new techniques including Artificial Intelligence, Digital Learning, and allied technologies.

5. The right to education is not merely a statutory right, but it flows from Article 21 and Article 21A of the Constitution of India. Education is the foundation of a democratic polity and the means through which the fundamental duties under Article 51A of the Constitution of India are realized. The State, under Article 45 of the Constitution of India and the Directive Principles of State Policy, is under a constitutional obligation to provide facilities for education to all children and to ensure that such education is holistic, scientific and progressive, while preserving the cultural and intellectual heritage of the nation.

6. This Court is conscious that while technological advancement is the need of hour, an unbridled and exclusive dependence on technology in the field of education may also have irreversible consequences. If the present and future generations are trained solely on the basis of latest technology, with the exclusion of foundational skills, the following consequences are apprehended:

- a. The skill of handwriting and manual writing may become extinct;



- b. The habit of reading physical books and developing comprehension through written text may be lost;
- c. Students may become entirely dependent on speech-to-text technology, AI-generated content and print-outs, thereby eroding independent thought process, analytical ability and original writing skills;
- d. The cognitive development that arises from reading, writing by hand and contemplation by oneself may be stunted.

Thus, while we must embrace AI and modern pedagogical tools to remain globally competitive, we cannot do so at the cost of abandoning the basic faculties of reading and writing.

7. Education must equip children not only to operate machines and algorithms, but also to think, write, read and reason independently. Technology is to be a tool and an aid, not a substitute for human intellect. Therefore, there is an urgent necessity to amend and reframe the present education policy being imparted in Schools, Colleges and Universities across the State and the Country, in a manner that:

- i. Integrates AI, digital literacy, coding and technology-based learning to meet global standards;
- ii. Mandatorily retains and strengthens the practices of handwritten work, reading of physical books, note-making, and conducting examinations in written format;
- iii. Ensures that technology is used to supplement, and not supplant, foundational learning.





8. Generation Z is facing grave difficulties due to repeated paper leaks. This malpractice is adversely affecting both, their present academic performance and future prospects. Paper leaks severely disrupt the academic timelines, mental health and career opportunities of Generation Z, creating widespread mistrust in the public evaluation system. A foolproof and robust mechanism must be established to address this issue in order to safeguard the interests of the students.

9. The World Health Organisation (for short "WHO") has issued the "Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age" on 02nd April, 2019 where the growing issue of sedentary screen time has been addressed.

WHO defines Screen Time as the "Time spent passively watching screen-based entertainment (TV, computer, mobile devices)". WHO recommended zero Screen Time for Infants below 1 year of age. For children between 1-4 years of age, the Screen Time was recommended to be less than 1 hour a day.

As per WHO, quality sedentary time spent in interactive non-screen-based activities with parents, family members or caregivers, such as reading, storytelling, singing and puzzles, is very important for development of children.

Spending more time on screens is correlated with mental and physical harm in the development of children. The positive or negative health effects of screen time are influenced by levels and content of exposure. To prevent harmful excesses of



screen time, some governments have introduced regulations on usage in foreign countries.

10. The right to health, nutrition and safe food for children is an integral part of Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The State is also duty bound under Article 47 of the Constitution of India to raise the nutrition levels and standard of living, and also improve public health as among its primary duties. To give effect to aforesaid duties, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India ("FSSAI") has notified the *Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and Balanced Diets for Children in Schools) Regulations, 2020* ("2020 Regulations") under Section 16(1) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 ("Act of 2006"). The 2020 Regulations, *inter alia*, provide for: (a) Ban on sale of HFSS - High Fat, Sugar and Salt food within 50 meters of school gate; (b) Mandatory availability of fresh, nutritious and balanced food in school canteens; (c) Display of calorie count and nutritional information; (d) Constitution of "School Food Safety and Nutrition Committee" in every school; and (e) Prohibition on advertisement of junk food in school premises.

11. Regulation 3 of the 2020 Regulations deals with the responsibilities of School Authorities to ensure safe food and balanced diets on school premises. Regulation 4 deals with the promotion of safe food and balanced diet in and around the school campus. Regulation 5 deals with marketing and advertisement and selling of food to children; and Regulation 6 deals with monitoring and surveillance to ensure that safe,





balanced and hygienic food is served to students. These provisions are reproduced as under:-

"3. Responsibilities of School Authority to ensure safe food and balanced diets on school premises.—

(1) School Authority selling or catering school meals by itself in the school campus shall get registered as a food business operator from the concerned authority under the provisions of the Act, rules or regulations made thereunder and ensure that the food is safe and balanced.

(2) Any School Authority entering into a contract or transaction with a food business operators (FBOs) selling or catering school meal on school campus shall ensure that such FBOs are duly registered or licensed under the provisions of the Act, rules or regulations made thereunder and ensure that the food is safe and balanced.

(3) The Department of School Education shall ensure that all FBOs contracted by it for operation of the mid-day meal scheme are registered or licensed under the provisions of the Act, rules or regulations made thereunder and ensure that the food is safe and balanced.

(4) The FBOs selling or catering food on school campus shall ensure compliance to the requirements of sanitary and hygienic practices provided to the food manufacturers in Schedule 4, Food Safety Display Board and Food Safety Supervisor(s) as specified under the Food Safety Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011.

(5) School Authority shall ensure that no person shall sell or offer for sale including free sale, or permit sale, of food products high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium in school premises or campus.

(6) School Authority shall ensure that the board containing warning "Do not sell including free sale or market or advertise the food products high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium within school premises or campus" in English or one Indian language as applicable, is





displayed prominently at the entrance gate or gates of the school.

(7) School Authority shall ensure that there shall not be any advertisement banner or wallpaper of food which is high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium on school computers.

4. Promotion of safe food and balanced diet in and around school campus.—(1)

The Food Authority or the State Food Authority shall encourage schools to adopt a comprehensive program for promoting safe food and balanced diets amongst school children and meet specified benchmarks to convert school campus into 'Eat Right Campus' that focus on serving of safe food and balanced diet, local and seasonal food and no food waste.

(2) The School Authority shall encourage and promote consumption of a safe and balanced diet in the school canteen or mess or kitchen based on guidance from "Dietary guidelines for Indians - A Manual" issued by the National Institute of Nutrition and other expert institutions or authorities.

(3) The School Authority shall ensure that the FBOs supplying prepared school meals in the school premises is are identified and selected foods which can be served or sold on the basis of the broad guidelines given in the Schedule to these regulations and as per the directions, issued by the Food Authority or the Commissioner of Food Safety of the state.

(4) The School Authority may engage with nutritionists, dietitians, nutrition associations or seek parental support to assist in the drafting of the menu for the children, periodically.

(5) The creches or day cares for infants or children up to the age of twenty-four months old are also expected to serve safe and balanced diets to them.

5. Food marketing and advertisement and selling to children in school.—(1)

No person shall advertise or market or sell or offer for sale including free sale, or permit sale of, food products high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium in school campus or to school





children in an area within fifty meters from the school gate in any direction.

(2) When marketing foods to children in school premises or campus, the FBOs shall.-

(a) only offer premiums and incentives such as toys, trading cards, apparel, club memberships, contests, reduced-price specials, or coupons with foods, meals, which is not high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium;

(b) use sponsorship of sporting, school, and other events for children only with food which is not high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium.

(3) FBOs shall support balanced eating in schools and not market, sell, or give away food which is high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium anywhere on school campuses, including through,-

(a) logos, brand names, spokes-characters, product names, or other product marketing on or in vending machines; books, curricula, and other educational materials; school supplies; posters; textbook covers; and school property such as scoreboards, signs, athletic fields, buses, and buildings;

(b) educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward;

(c) direct sale of food which is high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium;

(d) free samples or coupons;

(e) school fundraising activities.

6. Monitoring and surveillance.—(1) The School Authority shall have a system of regular inspection of premises to ensure that safe, balanced and hygienic food is served to students. The School Authority may appoint a Health and Wellness Ambassador or Health and Wellness team, who shall act as the nodal persons to monitor availability of safe, balanced and hygienic food.

(2) The State Food Authority shall conduct surveillance and periodic inspection of food business operators covered under these regulations so as to ensure that compliance of the Act, rules or regulations made thereunder are met.





(3) Any public authority like Municipal Corporation or any other local body or Panchayat in an area, as may be notified, in addition to State Food Authority shall ensure the compliance of sub-regulation (1) of regulation 5 of these regulations.

(4) If the School Authority, without reasonable grounds, fails to comply with the provisions under these regulations, the Central or State Food Authority shall take up the matter with the concerned Department of School Education or Affiliation Body, if any, to take appropriate action.

(5) The State Level Advisory committee (SLAC) constituted under sub-regulation 2.1.15 of the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011 shall create a subcommittee to monitor the implementation of these regulations and to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food to school children.

(6) The sub-committee shall include representatives from the Department of School Education, and public health professionals in the field of foods and nutrition. The sub-committee shall meet at least twice in a year.

(7) The sub-committee shall recommend indicative list of food groups and preparations which shall be served or sold in the school canteen or mess or kitchen within the State based on local variations in the diets of people of that area and as per the broad guidelines given in the Schedule to these regulations."

12. In spite of passing of more than six years since the 2020 Regulations came into force, till date, no effective steps have been taken by the Centre and State Governments for strict implementation of the provisions of the 2020 Regulations. The recent media reports necessitate monitoring by this Court to ensure compliance of the 2020 Regulations and to protect the





health of lakhs of children in the State of Rajasthan from obesity and lifestyle diseases.

13. Taking a serious note of the above facts and in the best interest and welfare of the Generations – Gen-Z, Gen-Alpha and Gen-Beta, this Court takes *Suo Moto* cognizance of the matter. Let the matter be accordingly registered as a Public Interest Litigation titled:

Suo Moto : In the matter of Welfare and Future of Generation Gen-Z, Gen-Alpha and Gen-Beta

Versus

(1) Union of India through the Secretary, Department of Education and Human Resources, New Delhi.

(2) The Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, New Delhi.

(3) State of Rajasthan through Chief Secretary, Secretariat, Jaipur.

(4) The Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Education, Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

(5) The Secretary, Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Secretariat, Jaipur.

(6) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, New Delhi through its Chairperson.

(7) Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Right, Jaipur through its Member Secretary.

14. Issue show cause notice to the respondents by making the rule returnable by eight weeks.





15. The respondents are directed to file a Status Report and Action Plan on the following points:-

(A) Steps taken by the Centre as well as by the State Government to frame foolproof and robust mechanism in order prevent paper leakages in the future.

(B) For these Generation Z, the Government needs to address these major challenges for their better future and career:

i. *Education to Employment Gap*

Degrees are not matching market skills. Government needs to reform curriculum with AI, Data, Green Skills, and promote skill-based degrees, apprenticeships, and industry-linked internships from college 1st year.

ii. *Mental Health & Digital Burnout*

Gen Z is acutely vulnerable to unprecedented levels of anxiety, isolation and psychological distress due to social media pressure, screen addiction and uncertainty. Need for accessible mental health counseling in colleges, digital detox programs and helplines.

iii. *Unemployment & Gig Economy Insecurity*

Gen Z prefers freelancing/creator economy/startups over the regular 9-to-5, but there is no social security, PF, health cover for gig workers. This necessitates the creation of a Gig Workers Welfare Board, social





security code implementation, and easy startup loans procedures.

iv. *High Cost of Living & Housing*

In metropolitan cities, rent and education cost is no affordable for the new hires with entry-level salaries. Need for affordable rental housing, student hostels, and education loan reforms.

v. *Climate Anxiety & Future Security*

Gen Z is highly climate-conscious but feels helpless about their stance towards it. Need for green jobs, sustainable infrastructure, and involving youth in policy making.

vi. *Lack of Political & Policy Representation*

They feel policies are made for them, not with them. Need for establishment of youth commissions, along with student unions and youth participation in local governance.

vii. *Cyber Safety & AI Disruption*

In today's day and age when the threat of AI taking over entry-level jobs, data privacy, so also cyber bullying and fraud, there is a need for AI literacy, strong data protection law implementation, and cyber safety education.

(C) QUALITY EDUCATION & DIGITAL READINESS

i. Filling up of all vacant posts of teachers, principals and wardens on priority. Special recruitment drive for



Physical Training Instructors (PTIs), Computer Teachers and Counsellors.

ii. Implementation of "Digital Z-Alpha-Beta" plan: Provision of smart classrooms, computers, internet connectivity and digital literacy training in all village schools to equip Generations Z, Alpha and Beta for the future.

iii. Training of teachers in modern pedagogy suited for Gen-Z, Gen-Alpha and Gen-Beta learners.

(D) HEALTH, NUTRITION & SAFETY

i. Regular health check-ups, availability of first-aid and tie-up with nearest Primary Health Centre/Community Health Centre for medical emergencies.

ii. Audit of Mid-Day Meal quality and diet, to ensure nutritional standards for growing children of Gen-Z, Gen-Alpha and Gen-Beta.

iii. Installation of CCTV cameras and appointment of female staff for safety and security of girl students.

(E) BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE & HYGIENE

i. Provision of functional toilets – separate for boys and girls, drinking water, electricity with power backup, and boundary walls in all village Government Schools.

ii. Availability of proper playgrounds and sports equipment for physical development of Gen-Z, Gen-Alpha and Gen-Beta students.





(F) PREPARE A POLICY FOR LIMITING SCREEN TIME FOR THESE GENERATIONS

- i. Too much screen time ruins their sleep schedule, focus and social skills. The maximum of their valuable time from the 24 hours in each day is unnecessarily wasted without any actual learning.
- ii. Too much use of digital devices stops their mental development. They are forgetting how to read, learn and write. They are shifting from the practice of speaking to texting.
- iii. Their mental and physical development would stop if they are allowed to remain dependent on digital devices.

(G) ACCOUNTABILITY & MONITORING

- i. The Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Rights and concerned District Collectors of all the districts are directed to conduct surprise inspections of Government Schools in villages within 8 weeks and submit a report to this Court.
- iii. The State shall constitute a "Generation Z, Alpha and Beta Monitoring Cell" under the Chief Secretary to review progress every 3 months and submit quarterly reports to this Court, regarding the state of infrastructure at these Schools.

16. In light of the observations and discussions made herein above, this Court deems it just and proper to issue the following directions to the respondents:





(a) COMPLIANCE REPORT: The State of Rajasthan and FSSAI shall file a detailed affidavit within 6 weeks stating steps taken for implementation of the 2020 Regulations in all Government, Government-aided and Private schools in Rajasthan.

(b) BAN ON HFSS FOOD: The State shall ensure strict enforcement of Regulation 5(1) of the 2020 Regulations and ensure that no HFSS food as defined therein is sold in school canteens or within 50 meters of school gates. District Magistrates and Block Education Officers shall conduct monthly inspections to ensure compliance with the aforesaid.

(c) CALORIE LABELLING: All school canteens shall within 8 weeks display menu boards with calorie count, ingredients and nutritional information for every food item. "Traffic Light Labelling" shall be adopted.

(d) SCHOOL COMMITTEES: Every school shall within 4 weeks constitute a "School Food Safety and Nutrition Committee" comprising teachers, parents and student representatives. List of such committees be uploaded on the Department website.

(e) AWARENESS: The State, in coordination with FSSAI, shall launch awareness drives for students, parents and vendors regarding balanced diets and ill effects of junk food.

(f) MID-DAY MEAL: The State shall ensure that Mid-Day Meal and other nutrition schemes comply with balanced diet guidelines issued by FSSAI under the Schedule attached to the 2020 Regulations.

(g) GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL: A dedicated portal/helpline shall be created for reporting violations in schools.





17. Till further orders, the State-respondents shall ensure that carbonated drinks, chips, bakery items with trans-fat, or other food items having High Fat, Sugar & Salt (HFSS Foods) are not sold in any school in Rajasthan in contravention of the mandate contained under the Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and Balanced Diet for Children in Schools) Regulations, 2020.

18. Let a copy of this order be sent to all the respondents for necessary compliance.

19. This Court requests Mr. Ravi Bhansali, Mr. Sachin Acharya, Mr. Vikas Balia, Senior Advocates to assist this Court on the issue involved in this order on behalf of the Generation Z.

20. This Court further requests Mr. Pankaj Sharma, Ms. Priyanka Borana, Mr. Naman Mahnot, Mr. Avin Chhangani, Advocates to assist this Court on behalf of the Generation Alpha.

21. This Court requests Ms. Aditi Mod, Ms. Akshiti Singhvi, Ms. Nidhi Singhvi and Ms. Abhilasha Bora, Advocates to assist this Court on behalf of the Generation Beta.

22. This Court also requests Mr. Bharat Vyas, Additional Solicitor General of India and Mr. Rajendra Prasad, Advocate General to appear on behalf of the respective respondents.

23. Let the names of the above advocates and their associate lawyers be reflected in the Cause List. Let a copy of this order be also sent to them for their intimation.





24. Office is directed to place this matter before the Hon'ble Acting Chief Justice under the administrative side for its listing before the appropriate Bench.

(ANOOP KUMAR DHAND),J



Karan