



authority to take stern action against the persons for whose connivance or negligence, the identity of persons infected/affected by Corona virus (COVID-19) could be divulged and accordingly, prayed to direct the appropriate Government authorities to frame Rules/Guidelines and take steps for ameliorating the problems of persons infected/affected by COVID-19, so as to ensure that they are not stigmatized or victimized.

**3.** The petitioner in this writ petition had given several instances of stigmatization and harassment of Covid-19 patients throughout the country for disclosure of the identity. Furthermore, he has also given instances where the Government of Orissa itself in one of the cases under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation had disclosed the identity of a COVID-19 patient in utter disregard to the norms prescribed in this regard as well as the disclosure of the identity of thirteen persons in WhatsApp message, a popular social media platform, in the district of Kendrapara by a third party, but no action against the person making such disclosure has been taken by the Government. Pleading the aforesaid in detail, the petitioner has made the payer in the writ petition, as stated earlier.

**4.** This Court while issuing notice vide order dated 28.05.2020 directed the opposite party-State to ensure that identity of any person, who is admitted to Covid centres-any Government Hospital/private Hospital or any Quarantine centre in the State, found infected with Corona virus (COVID-19) is not disclosed/publicized either in any intradepartmental communication or in any media platform including social media and without delay, the learned Advocate General assured the Court that necessary steps shall be taken to ensure compliance of the guidelines issued by the Government

of India and the order of this Court to secure the aforesaid purpose.

**5.** In the counter affidavit filed, the State of Orissa has pleaded that it is not divulging the names of the persons who are infected with COVID-19 and the State Government has come up with a policy of non-disclosure of the identity of the COVID-19 patients which is being strictly followed keeping in mind the interest of such patients. Vide such guideline dated 18.3.2019 the Government of Orissa in the Health & Family Welfare Department has instructed all the Collectors, District Magistrates and Municipal Commissioners that no person other than the Medical Superintendent or person duly authorized by him, shall speak to the media regarding persons who are under treatment and isolation for COVID-19. So also it has been directed that under no circumstances, the name, exact address and telephone number of the person under treatment for COVID-19 shall be disclosed. Keeping in view such guidelines the officials of the State Government are maintaining a strict protocol in protecting the identity of the persons who have been affected by COVID-19. However, it has been admitted in the counter affidavit that identity of the 5<sup>th</sup> corona virus infected patient in Bhubaneswar was disclosed, but according to the State, such disclosure was made with the sole intention of safeguarding the public who would have come in contact with COVID -19 infected person and in order to enable the authorities to trace out the people who have actually come in contact with the said infected person. That happened at a very early stage when the person concerned was fifth Covid patient in the State. So far as other allegations with regard to disclosure of names of thirteen COVID-19 patients in Kendrapara district are concerned, the same has not come in the knowledge of the authorities as it has not been reported to the Collector, Kendrapara in any manner.

**6.** On 4.6.2020 an additional affidavit was filed by the petitioner indicting the victimization and stigmatization of the persons who have come from outside i.e. ostracisation in the hands of the people of their locality and the village which has been reported in the newspapers i.e. “The Statesman” at Annexure-3 and the news item published in the newspaper and “The New Indian Express” at Annexure-4, stating that one person was forced to remain in quarantine in his car in Sanakhemundi block in the district of Ganjam. So also, he supplied the information i.e. snapshots of the WhatsApp message regarding disclosure of identity of 13 infected persons in a sealed cover to the learned Advocate General.

**7.** The learned Advocate General on that date made a submission that on the aforesaid information given in the additional affidavit shall be examined and the needful shall be done and as such following order was passed on 4.6.2020.

“Heard Mr. S.K. Dash, learned counsel for the petitioner and Mr. A.K. Parija, learned Advocate General appearing for the State opposite parties.

In the context of the order passed by this Court on 28.05.2020, learned Advocate General has submitted that already in sub-clause-vi of clause-3 of the Odisha COVID-19 Regulations, 2020, it has been stipulated that no person, other than the Medical Superintendent or person duly authorized by him, shall speak to the media regarding persons who are under treatment and isolation. Under no circumstances, the name, exact address and telephone number of the persons shall be disclosed.

As regards the instance given by the petitioner in para-6 of the writ petition about the disclosure of the identity of the patients who tested positive of corona virus by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, learned Advocate General submitted that Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, vide order dated 02.04.2020, disclosed the identity of such persons who the sole intention of safeguarding the public, for the purpose of tracing out the people who come in contact with them. That happened at the early stage when the person concerned was the 5<sup>th</sup> corona virus patient discovered. But thereafter,

the State Government has been strictly following the guidelines provided in the Odisha COVID-19 Regulations, 2020 to ensure that identity of any person, who test positive of corona virus or under treatment or in isolation in quarantine centre or otherwise, is not disclosed.

Learned counsel for the petitioner at this stage invited attention of the Court towards the pleadings in para-16 of the writ petition where it is alleged that identity of 13 persons in the district of Kendrapara of the State was disclosed in the WhatsApp message, a popular social media platform, received by father of a victim. He has deliberately not given the name of such persons in pleadings but has handed over a screenshot of such WhatsApp message to learned Advocate General. It is submitted that the State Government is not taking adequate steps to ensure that the people, who test positive or who come from outside and in quarantine, are not stigmatized and victimized. In this respect, the petitioner has today filed a specific affidavit giving such instances.

Learned Advocate General submits that he shall have the WhatsApp message, which the learned counsel for the petitioner has provided in a sealed cover, and the instances of stigmatization and victimization given in the additional affidavit, examined and needful done.

Call this matter on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2020.”

**8.** However, when the case is taken up today, learned Advocate General drew attention of the Court towards the counter affidavit filed to the allegations made in the additional affidavit regarding stigmatization of persons so also the WhatsApp message. In the said counter affidavit it has been admitted that allegation that the identity of thirteen infected persons in Kendrapara district was disclosed unauthorizedly by a third party, was found to be true and, as such, a case has been registered for violation of Epidemic Disease Act, 1987 vide Mahakalpada P.S. Case No.73 dated 22.6.2020 against the person concerned, namely, Nanda @ Bharat Chandra Routray son of Trilochan Routray for such unauthorized disclosure of the COVID-19 patients and investigation is going on. So far as the stigmatization and ostracisation of the persons from the

community with regard to newspaper report at Annexure-3 is concerned, it has been stated in the counter to the additional affidavit that the same is not based on verified information. Furthermore, pertaining to the incident of quarantine in car and social boycott in Sanakhemundi block, it has been averred that the person concerned, who had come to his native place from the State of Bihar on 21.5.2020, was on arrival advised by the concerned Anganwadi Workers to remain at the nearest institutional quarantine centre because he was unable to produce the discharge certificate from any institutional quarantine centre or any COVID negative report as claimed by him. However, he denied and decided to remain in his car in quarantine. Thereafter on the intervention of the IIC, Patapur Police Station, he remained in institutional quarantine for seven days and completed his seven days institutional quarantine on 28.5.2020. After completing his quarantine period, he received a financial incentive of Rs.1000/- and the balance of Rs.1000/- was provided to him after completing his home quarantine.

Furthermore, in the above counter affidavit, the State of Odisha has also been mentioned that it has on 3.4.2020 framed the Odisha COVID-19 Regulations, 2020 and as per the Regulation 3 (ix) thereof, no person other than the Medical Superintendent or person duly authorized by him, shall speak to the media regarding persons who are under treatment and isolation and the name, exact address and telephone number of the persons shall not be disclosed, but in exceptional circumstances affecting public health and safety, the name and details of such person(s) may be disclosed, with approval of Government. So also, it has been pleaded therein that Regulation-4 of the said Regulation prohibits spread of any unauthenticated information and/or rumors regarding COVID-

19 and if any person/institution/organization is found indulging in such activity, it will be treated as a punishable offence under this Regulations and also any other provision of law. In addition to the same, the Regulations also provide any person wilfully violating the orders of the public authorities issued in relation to COVID-19 shall be prosecuted under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code. Furthermore, in the said counter affidavit it has also been pleaded that various Information Education Communication activities have been undertaken by the Government of Odisha for awareness of the people to prevent COVID-19 related social stigma, i.e., audio-visual clip has been prepared and sent for telecast in various media platforms, the same content has been broadcasted in audio mode in All India Radio and all FM channels and community radios, a cartoon play has been designed and disseminated in social media, advertisement in print media is being published by I&PR Department, Government of Odisha on social stigma and awareness about the social stigma attached to COVID-19 and adverse effect of social stigma and sensitization against the discrimination have been incorporated in training module for health care workers and others.

**9.** During the course of hearing, drawing the attention of the Court towards to the disadvantages regarding disclosure of identity of COVID-19 infected persons and persons in quarantine, particularly suffering of the persons infected / died of Covid-19 infection and their family members including Covid Warriors fighting to arrest the spread of the disease putting their lives at risk, learned counsel for the petitioner urged this Court to issue necessary directions to the State not to disclose the identity and details of the persons infected or in quarantine in public and also in the intra-departmental communication in any circumstances as there is risk of pilferage of such personal

detail and ensure for non-disclosure of such identity in print and electronic or social medial and also to proceed against the persons making the same public.

**10.** In response, learned Advocate General appearing for the opposite party-State submits that the Government of Odisha in Health and Family Welfare Department vide Notification No.9570 dated 03.04.2020 (copy of which has been annexed as Annexure-A/2) has formulated necessary regulations under the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897 wherein the aforesaid submission of the petitioner to prevent disclosure of identity has been sufficiently taken care of. The State Government is meticulously following the mandate of the Regulation to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of the information with regard to Covid-19 patients and persons in quarantine centre and shall also proceed against the persons guilty of violation of such Regulations with the exception that the State Government in exceptional cases in the interest of public health, i.e., particularly to prevent the arrest of the spread of Covid-19 Pandemic, should have the liberty to disclose such identity. Furthermore, it is also submitted by the learned Advocate General that so far as Covid Warriors such as, Doctors, Nurses, Para medical staff, Asha Karmies, Anganwadi workers and police personnel and other Government servants, engaged in the treatment of persons infected and assigned duties to contain the spread of Covid-19 in the State, if lay their lives being infected during discharge of their duties, as the same is a sacrifice in the service of the Nation, there should be no bar in publishing / disclosing their names, inasmuch as the same is done by the State Government, with the prior consent of his legal representative, for a noble purpose, i.e., to extending them State honour in their funeral in presence of Higher Officers of the District Administration, such as, Collector and Superintendent of Police



concerned and also appropriately rehabilitate their family/dependant including compensation in appropriate cases. In addition, an exgratia amount is paid to his/her family. This is meant to boost the moral of the other Covid-19 warriors, who are engaged in fighting to arrest of spread of the Pandemic putting their lives at risk, inasmuch as the same would make them feel that the State is there to appropriately honour their sacrifice and take care of their dependants, if their lives are sacrificed in discharge of the duty. Since the State is strictly following the protocol and the regulation in this regard, and there is no deviation from the protocol, and whenever there is any deviation, the same is strictly dealt with as per the Regulation in the manner known to law, this writ petition may be disposed of recording the aforesaid submission of him, submits the learned Advocate General appearing for the opposite party-State.

**11.** Before addressing the contention of the parties, it would be apposite to mention here that maintaining confidentiality of the information of a patient that comes to the knowledge of the treating doctors during the course of treatment or otherwise, is an ethical code of the Hippocratic Oath. Basing on the same, the International Code of Medical Ethics has also laid down that a physician shall preserve absolute confidentiality on all he knows about his patient even after the patient has died. In India, the information of a patient details that has been received by the Medical Professionals during the exercise of their profession is protected by the Code of Professional Conduct made by the Medical Council of India under Section 33(m) read with Section 20-A of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956. The relevant provision of the Code of Medical Ethics that has been made by the Indian Medical Council Act, inter-alia, provides not to disclose the secret of a patient that have been learnt in the exercise of their profession

with the exception of disclosure of the same in the Court of law under the orders of the Presiding Judge, before the Regulation made in this regard made in 2002. So, the patient has a right to confidentiality and privacy of the information about the details provided by him. The patients as such has right to privacy with regard to their personal details. Right to privacy is one of facets human rights, has since been recognized in different International & Regional Convention on human rights. But, the aforesaid right of privacy is not an absolute one as seen from Article 8 of the European Convention on human rights which defines the right to privacy as follows:-

- “(1) Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
- (2) There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of rights and freedoms of others.”

The right to privacy is also implicit in the fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution, i.e., right to life and liberty though not absolute, is the view of the Apex Court in ***Rajagopal vrs. State of Tamil Nadu***, reported in (1994) 6 SCC 632. In the case of ***Mr. ‘X’ vrs. Hospital ‘Z’***, reported in (1998) 8 SCC 296, the Apex Court dealing with a case for claim of damages made by the appellant ‘X’ against hospital ‘Z’ for disclosure of information relating to his HIV+ status by the Hospital ‘Z’ unauthorisedly when before donation of blood by him to a patient, he was found to be HIV+, which resulted in his marriage being called off and social opprobrium, the Supreme Court taking note of the aforesaid Convention on human rights with regard to right to privacy as well as view of

the Supreme Court as aforesaid, so also the Code on Ethics as prescribed by the Indian Medical Council, then have held as follows:-

“Right to privacy has been culled out of the provisions of Article 21 and other provisions of the Constitution relating to the Fundamental Rights read with the Directive Principles of State Policy. Right of privacy may, apart from contract, also arise out of a particular specific relationship which may be commercial, matrimonial, or even political. Doctor-patient relationship, though basically commercial, is, professionally, a matter of confidence and, therefore, doctors are morally and ethically bound to maintain confidentiality. In such a situation, public disclosure of even true private facts may amount to an invasion of the right of privacy which may sometimes lead to the clash of one person’s “right to be let alone” with another person’s right to be informed. The right, however, is not absolute and may be lawfully restricted for the prevention of crime, disorder or protection of health or morals or protection of rights and freedom of others.

Paras-21, 27 &28)

[Quoted from Placitum]”

The Regulation 2.2 of the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002 made after the aforesaid decision rendered in the case of **Mr. X (supra)**, provides that defects in the disposition or character of patients observed during medical attendance should never be revealed unless their revelation is required by the laws. The same further mentions that doctors can also reveal such information when there is a larger public good. The Union Ministry of Health had also released the Charter of Rights of Patients, 2017 which also recognizes the public interest exception to the right to confidentiality.

**12.** The Nine Judge Constitution Bench of the Apex Court in **K.S. Puttaswamy and another vrs. Union of India and others**, reported in (2017) 10 SCC 1, has held that right to privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution and as a

part of the freedom guaranteed by Part-III of the Constitution, overruling the earlier decision rendered in the case of **M.P. Sharma vs. Satish Chandra**, reported in AIR 1954 S.C. 300 (a Bench consisting of eight Judges) wherein it was held that right to privacy was not protected by the Constitution. The decision rendered in the case of **Mr. X (supra)** has been affirmed by the Apex Court in the case of **K.S. Puttaswamy (supra)**. Hence, the aforesaid right to privacy with regard to the personal details though implicit in Article 21 of the Constitution, but not absolute one and can be subject to reasonable restrictions. However, the Apex Court in the case of **K.S. Puttaswamy (supra)** have held that the interference in such right to privacy can only be justified if the same is passed the three-prong tests, i.e., (i) the action is sanctioned by law; (ii) the action is aimed at achieving a legitimate aim; and (iii) the action is necessary and proportionate for the achievement of that aim.

In order to tackle the social stigma attached with COVID-19, the Ministry of Health Family Welfare of the Government of India on their official Website-<http://www.mohfw.gov.in> has under the caption “Addressing Social Stigma Associated with COVID-19” has published the following advisory:-

**“Addressing Social Stigma Associated with  
COVID-19**

Public health emergencies during outbreak of communicable diseases may cause fear and anxiety leading to prejudices against people and communities, social isolation and stigma. Such behavior may culminate into increased hostility, chaos and unnecessary social disruptions.

Cases have been reported of people affected with COVID-19 as well as healthcare workers, sanitary workers and police, who are in the frontline for management of the outbreak, facing discrimination on account of heightened

fear and misinformation about infection. Even those who have recovered from COVID-19 face such discrimination. Further, certain communities and areas are being labeled purely based on false reports floating in social media and elsewhere.

There is an urgent need to counter such prejudices and to rise as a community that is empowered with health literacy and responds appropriately in the face of this adversity.

**In this regard, all responsible citizens are advised to understand that:**

- Although COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease which spreads fast and can infect any one of us, we can protect ourselves through social distancing, washing our hands regularly and following sneezing / coughing etiquettes.
- Despite all precautions, if anybody catches the infection, it is not their fault. In situation of distress, the patient and the family need support and cooperation. It must be noted that the condition is curable and most people recover from it.
- Healthcare workers including doctors, nurses, and allied & healthcare professionals are rendering their services tirelessly to provide care and medical / clinical support in this situation of crisis. Sanitary workers and police are also doing selfless service and playing critical roles in addressing the challenge of COVID-19. They all deserve our support, praise and appreciation.
- All those directly involved in the management of COVID-19 are equipped with appropriate protective equipment to keep them safe from the infection.
- Targeting essential services providers and their families will weaken our fight against COVID-19 and can prove grievously detrimental for the entire nation.

**As responsible citizens, we must observe following Do's and Don'ts:**

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appreciate efforts of people providing essential services and be supportive towards them and their families.</li><li>• Share only the authentic information available on the</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Never spread names or identity of those affected or under quarantine or their locality on the social media.</li><li>• Avoid spreading fear and panic.</li><li>• Do not target healthcare</li></ul>

website of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India or the World Health Organisation. • Cross check any information related to CoVID-19 from reliable sources before forwarding any messages on social media. • Share positive stories of those who have recovered from COVID-19.	and sanitary workers or police. They are there to help you. • Do not label any community or area for spread of COVID-19. • Avoid addressing those under treatment as COVID victims. Address them as "people recovering from COVID".
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**13.** In the light of the aforesaid, when the arguments raised in this case by the learned counsel for the petitioner and the learned Advocate General appearing for the opposite party-State are addressed vis-à-vis the materials on record, it goes without saying that the State Government now has come up with the aforementioned regulation at Annexure-A/2 to prevent unauthorized disclosure of the identity of the Covid-19 infected persons as well as persons in Quarantine and also made the same to be punishable in the manner prescribed therein, leaving the discretion to the State to disclose the identity of such persons in exceptional circumstances of public health and safety; that too with the approval of the State Government. According to the learned Advocate General, to prevent the arrest of spreading of the Covid-19 virus in the State affecting the public in exceptional circumstances as mentioned in the Regulation after obtaining the approval of the Government the same is disclosed. As regards the disclosure of identity of deceased Covid Warriors, the same is done for the purpose, as contended by the learned Advocate General and that too with the consent of the family of the deceased Covid warriors. In such circumstances, though we are in agreement with the argument of the learned counsel for the petitioner that disclosure of the identity of such persons in Quarantine and also the persons infected in Covid-19 virus visits them and their family members with trauma, tribulations and also at a

times leads to their ostracisation from the Society, so also a danger to their lives and limbs owing to unjustifiably perceived stigma attached to the disease, in the mind of large number of people but no blanket order, as prayed for prohibiting the State with regard to such disclosure of identity which is in their possession, more particularly when the State is not going to indiscriminately disclose the same, but reserves the right to disclose the same in the rare and exceptional circumstances mentioned in the Regulation, can be passed. However, the aforesaid personal details of the persons provided to the State being an informational privacy, protected under the right to privacy of them, being implicit in Article 21 of the Constitution, i.e., right to life and liberty, though not absolute and subjected to reasonable restriction, considering the adverse impact of such disclosure of identity of a patient and also persons in quarantine as well as their family members, as stated hereinbefore, we hope and trust that the State shall take further steps if not already taken to keep the personal information masked by applying appropriate method if not there, such as, providing code number for keeping the details in anonymity and keep utmost confidentiality of such information in different intradepartmental communication, as from the different instances brought to our notice, we have reason to believe that there is pilferage of the personal details unauthorisedly in some cases by some persons. So also, we hope and trust that before disclosing the identity of Covid-19 infected persons or persons in quarantine in exceptional circumstances, as stated in the Regulation, to achieve the goal, the State shall also must take note the fact that the same is subject to scrutiny of triple test prescribed in the case of **Puttaswamy** (supra) before invasion of such right to privacy of the persons in quarantine / Covid-19 infected persons alive or dead.

**14.** So far as the unauthorized disclosure of the identity of Covid-19 patients in print and Electronic media is concerned, notice can also be taken to a decision of the Apex Court rendered in the case of ***Rajagopal vrs. State of Tamil Nadu***, reported in (1994) 6 SCC 632 wherein the Apex Court dealing with right to privacy vis-à-vis the right of a Press under Article 19 of the Constitution, in paragraph-26 have held as follows:-

“The right to privacy is implicit in the right to life and liberty guaranteed to the citizens of this country by Article 21. It is a ‘right to be let alone’. A citizen has a right to safeguard the privacy of his own, his family, marriage, procreation, motherhood, child-bearing and education among other matters. None can publish anything concerning the above matters without his consent – whether truthful or otherwise and whether laudatory or critical. If he does so, he would be violating the right to privacy of the person concerned and would be liable in an action for damages. Position may, however, be different, if a person voluntarily thrusts himself into controversy or voluntarily invites or raises a controversy.”

The State has also in Regulation-4 made unauthorized disclosure of identity is a punishable offence of such personal details of the Covid-19 infected persons and also persons in quarantine. At the cost of repetition, it is mentioned that disclosure of such identity in Print and Electronic media, visits the persons infected alive or dead as well as the persons in quarantine and their family members with trauma and tribulations and at a times leading to ostracization, so also endanger their lives and limbs in view of the stigma attached to the disease in this Country. The same also does more harm to the health of the public in general as for the opprobrium as aforesaid, Covid-19 virus infected and persons who having come in contact with such persons, as such, required to be kept in quarantine, are not likely to come forward to disclose the same which shall contribute enormously in spread of the Pandemic Covid-19 virus, a great threat to the mankind. No



doubt, the aforesaid public interest cannot be a ground to gag the freedom of the Press. But, for the reasons stated above, we hope and trust that the Press in this Country; both Print and Electronic Media, which is responsible one and shall behave in a more responsible manner with regard to disclosure of identity and should not disclose the identity of such persons unauthorisedly.

**15.** So far as the disclosure about the Covid-19 patients in different social media platform by the unauthorized persons are concerned, since the State has already formulated the Regulations for the said purpose and also proceeding against such persons, we have, therefore, no manner of doubt that the State shall also proceed against such persons who are spreading rumour and/or unauthorized information with regard to Covid-19 infected persons alive or dead or persons in quarantine. However, for more effective implementation of the Regulation, the State must have vigil over spreading of such rumour and unauthorized information in the social media platforms and whenever it comes to their knowledge regarding such disclosure of names unauthorisedly and any rumour in the social platform, to proceed against such persons in the manner known to law.

So also, the awareness programme undertaken by the State to obliterate the stigmatization from the Society with regard to disease be also vigorously persuaded further to reach out the people of the State, which we feel, is highly essential to prevent the spread of the dangerous virus of Covid-19 and remove the stigma attached.

**16.** So far as the disclosure of identity of Covid-19 Warriors are concerned, since the Covid-19 Warriors who dies while coming in contact with the persons infected in Covid-19 during the discharge of their duties, there is no impediment on the part of the State Government to disclose their identity as the Government have decided to disclose the same to honour those warriors by extending State Honour in their funeral by the higher officers of the District Administration, such as, District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police concerned and also suitably

rehabilitate their dependants, if any, and also compensate them by payment of ex gratia amount and the same is also done with the prior consent of legal representatives of such deceased Covid Warrior competent to consent and as the same is going to be done with an avowed object to boost the morale of the other Covid-19 warriors who are fighting to arrest the spread of the pandemic by putting their lives in danger, inasmuch as the same is a message to them that the State is alive to their such sacrifice and adequately take care of their dependants in the event they lay their lives in service of the Nation.

**17.** With the aforesaid order, this writ petition (P.I.L) stands disposed of.

As lock-down period is continuing for COVID-19, learned counsel for the parties may utilize the soft copy of this order available in the High Court's website or print out thereof at par with certified copies in the manner prescribed, vide Court's Notice No.4587, dated 25.03.2020.

**(S. PUJAHARI)**  
**JUDGE**

**(MOHAMMAD RAFIQ)**  
**CHIEF JUSTICE**