

W.P.Nos.8277, 7511, 7533 and 7722 of 2020

THE HON'BLE CHIEF JUSTICE
and
SENTHILKUMAR RAMAMOORTHY, J.

(Order of the Court was made by the Hon'ble Chief Justice)

The State has filed a further status report and several documents, but it is still not clear as to whether the entire quantum of amount earmarked for distribution as aid to persons with disabilities has been reached to the appropriate citizens.

2. There are several anomalies indicated in the State's reports and documents. Though the number of persons with disabilities in the State is recorded to be in excess of 13.35 lakh, the State says that in several cases there are duplicate registrations; deaths are not reported; and, several persons with disabilities do not apply to obtain any assistance. It is also evident that a recent drive has started to link persons with disabilities with their aadhaar cards, but the exercise has not been completed. The latest status report reveals that about 3.15 lakh registrations in such regard have thus

far been generated.

3. Thus, what is evident is that persons with disabilities in this State may number considerably more than 3.15 lakh, but somewhat less than 13.35 lakh. For a start, it appears to be disturbing that the State does not have accurate figures in such regard.

4. Secondly, Section 24 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 requires persons with disabilities to be provided somewhat more of assistance than others are. It appears that the State provided assistance of Rs.4,000/- to rice card holders in 2021, but the assistance to persons with disabilities was limited to Rs.1,000/-.

5. A recent letter of July 3, 2021 issued by the State Relief Commissioner under the Disaster Management Act to all District Collectors requires utilisation certificates to be furnished and every attempt be made to find out persons with disabilities in the districts to reach out to them with the meagre assistance that the State

offers.

6. The matter may require a fresh consideration, both as to the quantum of the assistance and the mode of reaching the assistance to the right people. It may also be permissible to classify persons with disabilities on the basis of their financial status. At any rate, the earmarked amount of about Rs.133 crore has to be disbursed and if it is discovered that the number of persons with disabilities is substantially less than the 13.35 lakh figure that is shown in the database, it will only permit such earmarked sum to be distributed to the lesser number of persons with disabilities such that each person receives substantially more than Rs.1,000/-.

7. It is necessary that this vulnerable class of citizens is appropriately taken care of, as several of them may not have the resources or ability to either raise their voice or point out any anomaly or even comprehend that there are anomalies.

8. It also appears from one of the status reports filed that

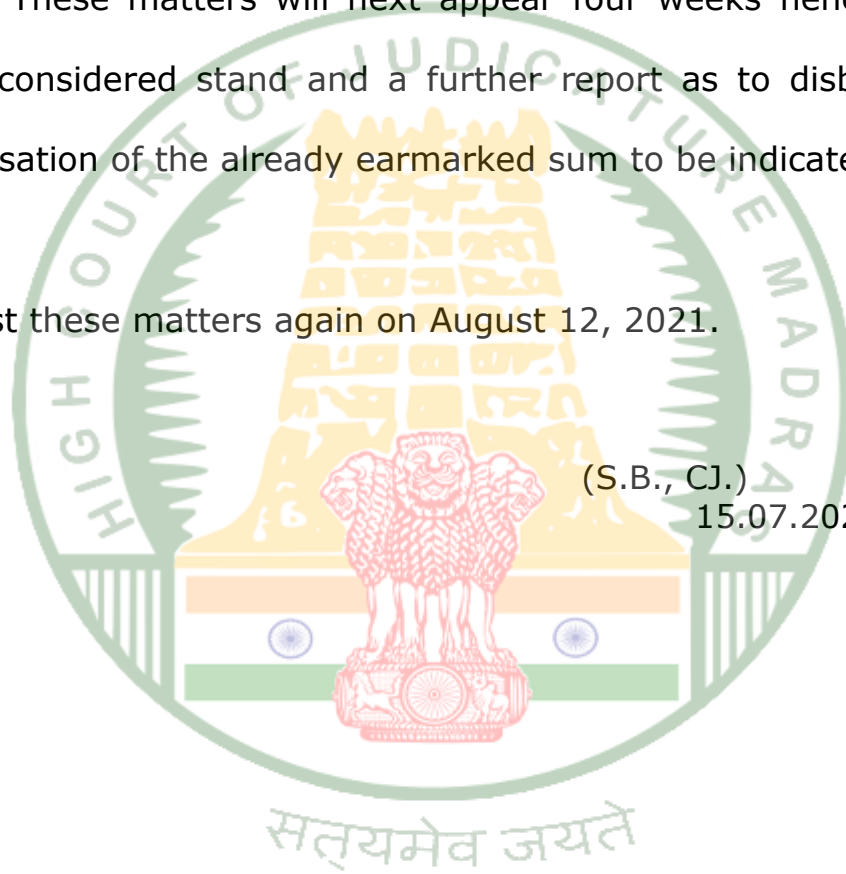
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though persons with locomotor disabilities, hearing impairment and the like may have been identified, persons with visual disability have not been categorised as a group.

9. These matters will next appear four weeks hence for the State's considered stand and a further report as to disbursement and utilisation of the already earmarked sum to be indicated.

List these matters again on August 12, 2021.

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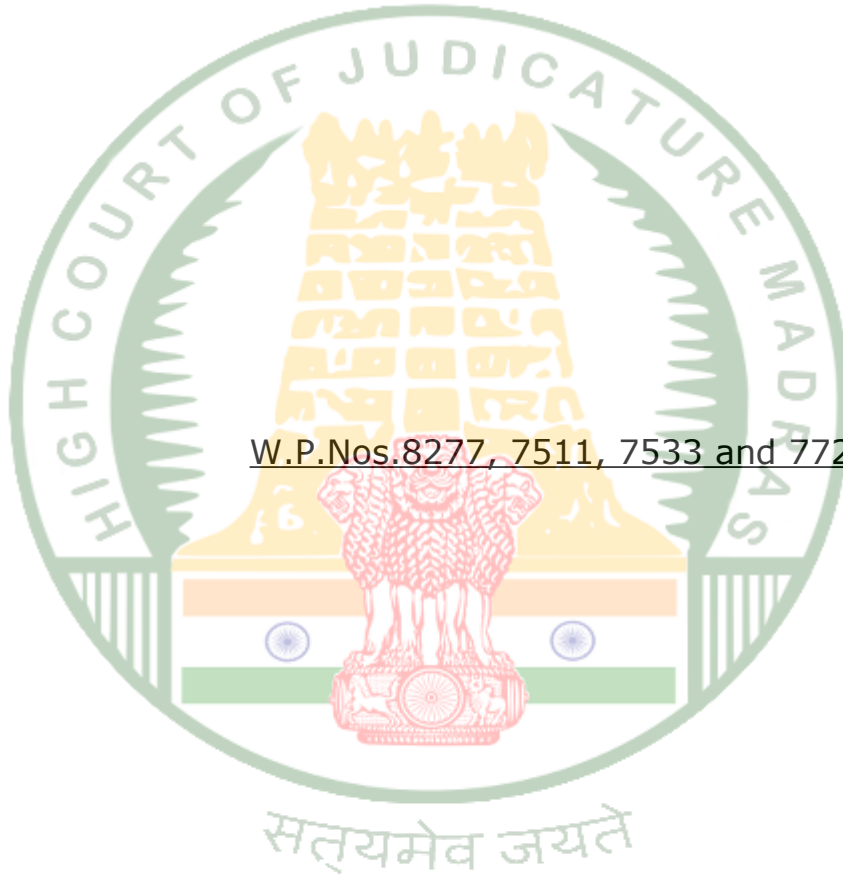
(S.B., CJ.) (S.K.R.,J.)
15.07.2021

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