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IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA AT CUTTACK

W.P.(C) No.30161 of 2021

Amulya Behera and Others *Petitioners*
Mr. Abhijit Pati, Advocate
-versus-
State of Odisha and another *Opp. Parties*
Mr. D.K. Mohanty, AGA

**CORAM:
THE CHIEF JUSTICE
JUSTICE B. P. ROUTRAY**

Order No.

**ORDER
1.10.2021**

01. 1. Twenty Petitioners who claimed to be the office bearers of various Puja Committees in and around Cuttack city have come together to file the present petition in which there are broadly two prayers. The first concerns to the standard operating procedure (SOP) dated 9th August, 2021 of the Government of Odisha placing restrictions and issuing guidelines and instructions for observance of the Puja celebrations and festivals in the months of August, September, October and November, 2021 and in particular the restrictions in relation to Durga Puja in the month of October, 2021.
- 2 As far as the first prayer is concerned, this Court has, in its order dated 17th September, 2021, approved the aforementioned SOP dated 9th August, 2021. It therefore does not propose to re-visit the issue since the reasons for the Court's decision are spelt out in that order.

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3. The second prayer is regarding the livelihood of those workers whose livelihood during the festival has, according to the Petitioners, got adversely affected. An earnest prayer is made that a direction be issued to the State Government to frame a scheme or extend financial assistance to such workers.

4. As far as the second prayer is concerned, since the restrictions placed by the SOP is in the background of COVID-19 pandemic and since the pandemic has affected a large number of workers in various trades and avocations since March, 2020, it is not possible for the Court to direct the State Government to separately provide for workers associated with the puja festivals for grant of such relief. In any event this is a matter of the policy of the Government. The Court is not expected to issue such directions in the absence of empirical data.

5. Leaving it open to the Petitioners to seek other avenues for ventilating their grievance as regards the second prayer, the Court disposes of the writ petition.

6. An urgent certified copy of this order be issued as per rules.

(Dr. S. Muralidhar)
Chief Justice

(B.P. Routray)
Judge