

**HIGH COURT OF TRIPURA
AGARTALA**

WP(C)(PIL) No.9/2020

Court on its own motion : Mr. Somik Deb, Amicus Curiae.

For Respondent(s) : Mr. S S Dey, Advocate General.

Mr. Debalaya Bhattacharya, Govt. Advocate,
Ms. Ayantika Chakraborty, Advocate.

with WP(C)(PIL) No.7/2021

For the Petitioner(s) : Ms. R Guha, Advocate.

For Respondent(s) : Mr. S S Dey, Advocate General.

Mr. Debalaya Bhattacharya, Govt. Advocate,
Mr. Bidyut Majumder, Asstt. S. G.,
Ms. Ayantika Chakraborty, Advocate.

with WP(C)(PIL) No.8/2021

For the Petitioner(s) : Mr. P Roy Barman, Sr. Advocate,
Mr. Samarjit Bhattacharjee, Advocate,
Mr. Kawsik Nath, Advocate.

For Respondent(s) : Mr. S S Dey, Advocate General.

Mr. Debalaya Bhattacharya, Govt. Advocate,
Ms. Ayantika Chakraborty, Advocate.

**HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. AKIL KURESHI
HON'BLE JUSTICE MR. S TALAPATRA**

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19/7/2021

(Akil Kureshi, CJ).

In our previous order, dated 9th July 2021, we had made certain observations and requested the respondents to provide certain details in connection with Corona Virus in the State and the status of vaccination. In particular, we had referred to a public statement made by Dr. Siddharth Shib

Jaiswal, Mission Director of National Health Mission, Tripura, was published by local newspapers on 25th June 2021 giving details of the vaccination in the State. Finding that the statement claiming that 80% of the entire eligible population of the State and 98% of the population over 45 years had received first doze of vaccination by then to be inaccurate, we had requested the Mission Director to clarify and also to correct the position in this respect. Pursuant to this order, the Mission Direction had made a public statement, on 12th July 2021. He has also filed an affidavit dated 17th July 2021 in which he has given the updated figures of the vaccination with more accurate data of the total population of the State, age wise distribution of population as well as vaccination as on 13th July 2021. Though this affidavit does not clarify the reasons why his previous statement contained substantially inaccurate claims of vaccination, now that he has updated the figures and made amends, we close the issue at this stage.

From the said affidavit dated 17th July 2021 of the Mission Director we gather that as on 13th July 2021, almost 100% of the population of the State over 45 years had received first doze of vaccine. Likewise 57% population in the age group of 18-44 years had received the first doze. Together 79.45% of the total eligible population had been administered first doze of vaccine. 55.59% population above the age group of 45 had received the second doze as well.

These figures are quite impressive and could not have been achieved without selfless and tireless work put in by the health workers and the frontline workers, nor could have been achieved without the whole-hearted participation of the population of the State. The very fact that 100% population over 45 years of age has volunteered to receive the vaccines, would show that there is little or no vaccine hesitancy in our State. This would imply that given steady and sufficient supply of vaccine doses, large scale vaccination can be carried out effectively in coming months.

One more aspect which emerges from the said affidavit dated 17th July 2021 of the Mission Director is that the State Government has installed a helpline to assist registration for vaccination of those people who do not have easy access to internet facility. Learned Advocate General stated under instructions that this helpline has been made operational. Giving widest publicity to this facility would enable the population in need of such support to access it. When we are talking of an issue of such importance in the sphere of healthcare, it is not all about sheer numbers. It is equally important to ensure that the treatment covers even the marginalised and under-privileged section of the society who perhaps needs it more than others. We, therefore, request the State Government to ensure widest publicity to this helpline facility and the helpline numbers.

In our order dated 9th July 2021, we had also referred to a relatively high rate of mortality and asked the State Government to provide data if there is any systematic analysis of the causes thereof. The two affidavits filed by the respondents in response to the said order are silent on this aspect. If it is believed that one of the contributory factors could be late reporting of Covid cases and patients to the hospitals, let the better analysis based on available data be presented before us. In the next affidavit, the respondents may throw more light on this aspect of the matter.

Before closing, we may touch on one more aspect emerging from the public information distribution system. As is well-known, on 9th July 2021, Dr. Deep Debbarma, State Surveillance Officer under the Director of Health and Family Welfare, had stated that out of 151 samples of Covid positive patients sent for laboratory analysis, in as many as 138 Delta Plus Variant was detected. On the next day, the Government of India issued a statement that none of the samples out of 151 which were analysed by the Central Laboratory had detected Delta Plus Variant. We do not have official statement on the reasons for such discrepancy. We only observe that official public communications by responsible State officials must carry accurate information. Such inadvertent inaccuracy in public statements undermines the confidence of the people in the data being supplied and in cases like the present one, has the propensity to spread fear. We stop at that.

List on **9th August, 2021.**

(**S TALAPATRA, J**)

(**AKIL KURESHI, CJ**)

HIGH COURT OF TRIPURA



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