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***IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY  
ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION***

***PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION NO. 13 OF 2019***

National Association for the  
Blind (India)

... Petitioner

V/s.

Reserve Bank of India and Ors.

... Respondents

Mr. Uday Warunjikar with Mr. Sumit Kate for the Petitioner  
Mr. Venkatesh Dhond, Senior Advocate with Mr. Dhaval Patil with  
Mr. Mihir Mody i/b. K. Ashar & Co. for Respondent No.1  
Ms. Uma Wagle for Respondent Nos. 2, 3 and 4

***CORAM : NITIN JAMDAR , ACJ &  
ARIF S. DOCTOR, J.***

***DATE : 19 JULY 2023***

**P.C. :-**

Additional affidavit is filed by the Assistant General  
Manager of the Reserve Bank of India. In the affidavit it is stated as  
follows :-

*“(i) The last time a new series of banknotes was  
introduced, was in the year 2016. The introduction of  
this series was preceded by an elaborate process of  
consultation among various stakeholders, which took*

*several years. This process included constitution of a Design Committee by the Reserve Bank of India in 2010 comprising of field experts to make recommendations on the designs/size of the next series of banknotes including making them sensitive to the requirements of the differently abled persons. This Committee submitted its recommendations in the form of a Report to the Reserve Bank of India in 2011.*

*(ii) The Report of the Committee was then subjected to intensive discussions among various stakeholders within the Reserve Bank of India and consultation with the Central Government (Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic Affairs). After this process of consultation and discussion, the final recommendations/proposal was placed before the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India for recommendation to Government of India as required in terms of Section 25 of RBI Act, 1934.*

*(iii) With the recommendations of the Central Board, after due consultation and approval from the Central Government in 2016, a new series of Bank notes was introduced. Considering the needs of the visually impaired persons, features such as intaglio, identification marks, bleed lines etc. have been included in the banknotes in addition to the difference in sizes of various denominations though the same were reduced from the earlier series to make them aligned with the international norms and to make them more wallet friendly.*

*(iv) As is clear from the facts set out above, the process of introducing a new series of banknotes is an extremely complicated and time-consuming process extending over a period of 6-7 years. This process involves*

*multiple considerations, including incorporation of visually impaired friendly features. These include the security and design features that are to be included in the banknote to make them counterfeit deterrent, the intricate printing processes to achieve the same, technology considerations, production feasibility in large volumes, cost of production, changes in manufacturing techniques, adaptation of the paper production, printing machines and the entire currency dispensation and processing eco-system to any proposed changes.”*

2. The learned Counsel for the Reserve Bank of India states that the Reserve Bank is aware and acknowledges the concern of visually impaired persons regarding the identification of the banknotes. It is states that the work on the next series of banknotes has been underway since 2017 and while taking care of the visually impaired persons, the Reserve Bank of India also has to take into consideration various other complex facets, which exercise will take some time. The learned Counsel for the Petitioner states that however the Reserve Bank of India should periodically inform the steps that are being taken and based on this general commitment, the Public Interest Litigation could not be disposed of. The learned Counsel for the Petitioner also seeks time to file an additional affidavit as indicates in the order dated 28 June 2023.

3. Considering the concern expressed in this Petition and the fact that this Court has looked into the issue right from the year

2016, we do not intend to dispose of the Petition on the general commitment made by the Reserve Bank of India. However, we do take note of the stand of the Reserve Bank that the process would require substantial time.

4. At present we defer the hearing of this Petition by a period of twelve weeks to **11 October 2023** so that the Reserve Bank can place before this Court the details of the steps that have been taken within the said period.

5. The learned Counsel for the Reserve Bank of India states that the transfer Petition filed by the Reserve Bank of India in the Supreme Court to tag the Petitions filed in the different High Courts, has been rejected.

*ARIF S. DOCTOR, J.*

*ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE*