

W.P.No.13642 of 2021

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

(Made by the Hon'ble Chief Justice)

The petitioner has brought an important aspect to the notice of the Court, particularly in the wake of the pandemic and the complete closure of schools for the last fifteen months or so. The petitioner refers to the National Food Security Act, 2013 and the nutritional content of the daily meals for children. The petitioner says that since schools remain closed and the midday meals cannot be provided, the State needs to ensure that children in the State get the food and nutritional content as specified in the statute.

2. The essence of the petitioner's submission appears to be that even though children may not be attending schools where midday meals were provided, the State has to be proactive and almost ensure door to door delivery of meals to children all across the State. There may be logistic and practical difficulties in such regard, but there is no doubt that aggressive steps need be taken by the State to ensure that the children are well fed and nourished, particularly since many

families have lost jobs or have less resources available as a result of the pandemic and business not being normal.

3. While it may be easier for the State, whether through the Corporations or the Municipalities, to organise adequate food and nourishment for children in the urban or semi-urban areas, the difficulties may come up in the rural areas. The Panchayat system may be used by the State and NGOs may be roped in for the purpose of reaching food and nourishment to children in the rural areas, particularly since family incomes in the rural areas may have suffered more during the pandemic.

4. The matter needs the immediate urgent attention of the State. For such purpose, notices be issued immediately. A copy of the petition will be reached to the office of learned Advocate-General. The matter will appear on July 7, 2021 for the State's initial response to be indicated. It would serve the children well if the State has a road-map ready so that the lack of adequate food and nourishment that children have suffered over the last 15 months or so, particularly among the more vulnerable sections, may be remedied without delay.

5. Mr.R.Rajesh Vivekananthan, learned counsel, accepts notice on behalf of respondents 1 to 3. Mr.P.Muthukumar, learned counsel, accepts notice on behalf of respondent no.4.

6. Issue notice to respondents 5 and 6. Private notice is permitted.

List on 07.07.2021.

sra



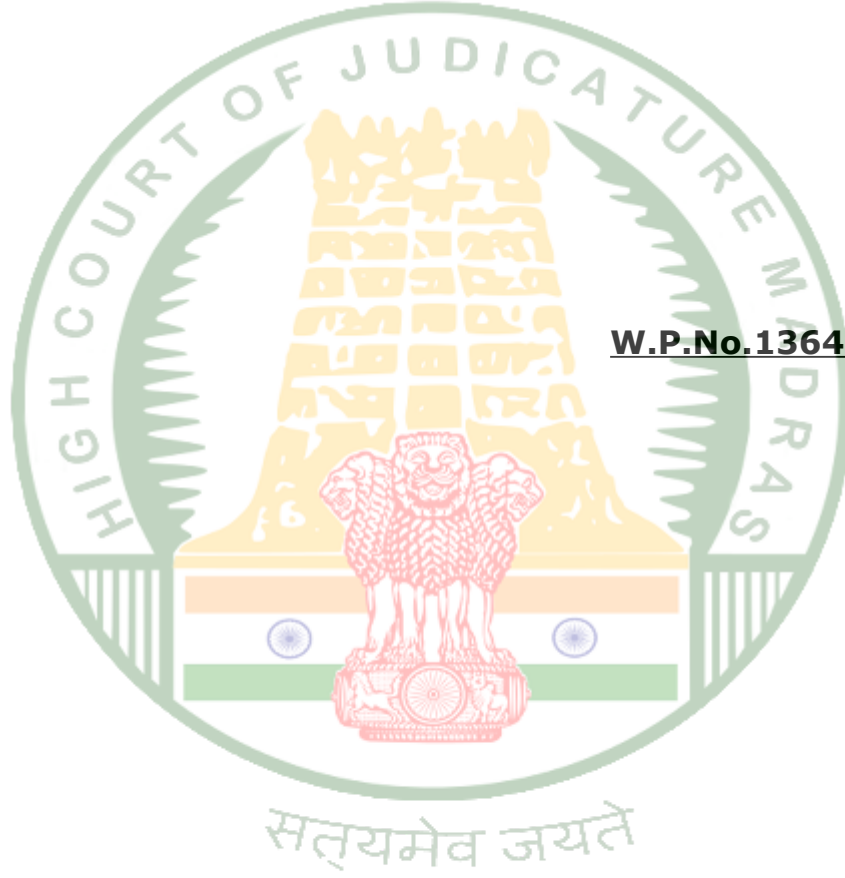
(S.B., CJ.) (S.K.R., J.)
02.07.2021

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