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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ W.P.(C) 3621/2020

ADVOCATE SUNIL KUMAR Petitioner

Through: Petitioner-in-person.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ANR. Respondents

Through: Ms. Urvi, Adv. for UOI.

Mr. Sameer Vashisht, ASC for
GNCTD.

CORAM:

HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRATEEK JALAN

ORDER

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19.06.2020

Proceedings of the matter have been conducted through video conferencing.

1. This Public Interest Litigation has been preferred with the following prayers:-

“(a) Direct the Respondent No.2 & 3 to create Counseling Centers at District level to provide Counseling to the people at large, and

(b) Direct the respondent No.2 & 3 to put material of Counseling on the website of Delhi Government along with details of Counseling centers, And

(c) Direct the respondent no. 2 & 3 to launch a toll free number round the clock to provide counseling in Delhi, and

(d) Direct the Respondent No.1, 2 & 3 to advertise in Newspapers as well as on Television in Delhi by preparing the material of Counseling to deal with psychological issues, or

(e) pass any other order/direction, which this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the interest of justice."

2. Petitioner, who is a practicing advocate appearing in person, submitted that it would suffice for the disposal of this public interest writ petition if a suitable direction is given to the respondent No.3 to treat this writ petition as a representation and decide the grievances ventilated in this petition about the establishment of counselling centres at district levels in Delhi to deal with psychological issues arising day to day due to onslaught of Covid-19 pandemic resulting in rise in the cases of suicide, depression, anxiety, stress, etc. in the society at large. Petitioner in person has also prayed for launching a toll-free number round the clock for providing counselling for the aforesaid purpose to the residents of Delhi.

3. Having heard the petitioner in person and looking to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic situation in Delhi, we are of the considered view that counselling to deal with psychological issues is utmost requirement of the residents of Delhi in the present scenario.

4. We, therefore, direct the respondent No.3 to treat this writ petition as a representation and decide the same in accordance with law, either by itself or by constituting a Committee of experts for establishment of district level counselling centres in the city of Delhi and for providing a toll-free number round the clock to provide counselling to the persons in need.

5. In the meantime, taking note of the prevalent situation in Delhi, we are of the considered view that respondent no. 3 may consider the necessity of opening at least some counselling centres on emergent basis in few districts as early as possible and practicable, along with arrangement of a toll-free number round the clock to provide counselling in Delhi. Necessary publicity in this regard should also be given in the print and electronic media so that public at large may avail the benefits of counselling centres.
6. With these observations, this writ petition is hereby disposed of.

CHIEF JUSTICE

PRATEEK JALAN, J

JUNE 19, 2020
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