

ITEM NO.1502

COURT NO.3

SECTION II

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A  
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Petition(s) for Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No(s). 6378/2024

[Arising out of impugned final judgment and order dated 14-02-2024 in WP No. 25381/2023 passed by the High Court of Andhra Pradesh at Amravati]

SUKDEB SAHA

Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

THE STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH & ORS.

Respondent(s)

(IA No. 108392/2024 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT AND IA No. 113429/2024 - PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES)

Date : 25-07-2025 This matter was called on for pronouncement of judgment today.

For Petitioner(s) :Mr. Joydeb B. Saha, Adv.  
Mr. S Ramamoorthy, Adv.  
Mr. S Senthil Elangovan, Adv.  
M/s V. Maheshwari & Co., AOR

For Respondent(s) :Mr. Rajkumar Bhaskar Thakare, A.S.G.  
Mr. Mukesh Kumar Maroria, AOR  
Mr. Vivek Gupta, Adv.  
Mr. Rohit Khare, Adv.  
Mr. Padmesh Mishra, Adv.  
Mr. Merusagar Samantaray, Adv.  
Mr. Tanmay Mehta, Adv.

Ms. Prerna Singh, Adv.  
Mr. Guntur Pramod Kumar, AOR  
Mr. Dhruv Yadav, Adv.

Mr. P. Santhosh Kumar, Adv.  
Mr. P. Venkatraju, Adv.  
Mr. Sravan Kumar Karanam, AOR

Mr. Y. Raja Gopala Rao, AOR  
Mr. B. Mohan, Adv.  
Mr. Akshay Singh, Adv.  
Ms. Sanjana Jain, Adv.

Ms. Manasi Chatpalliwar, Adv.

Mr. Pranav Proothi, Adv.  
Mr. Pulkit Agarwal, AOR  
Mr. Sudhanshu Kaushesh, Adv.

Mr. M Srinivas R Rao, Adv.  
Mr. Abid Ali Beeran P, AOR  
Mr. Sarath S Janardanan, Adv.  
Mr. Saswat Adhyapak, Adv.  
Ms. Namita Kumari, Adv.

Mr. Anand Varma, AOR  
Ms. Apoorva Pandey, Adv.

Mr. Kunal Mimani, AOR  
Mr. Abhinav Rana, Adv.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sandeep Mehta pronounced the judgment of the Bench comprising Hon'ble Mr. Justice Vikram Nath and His Lordship.

Leave granted.

The appeal is disposed of in terms of the signed reportable judgment. The conclusion, guidelines and directions contained in the judgment are reproduced hereunder:

“(v). Conclusion: -

24. In view of the above discussion, the Impugned Order dated 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2024, passed by the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in Writ Petition No. 25381 of 2023, rejecting the appellant's prayer for transfer of investigation to the CBI, is hereby quashed and set aside.

25. We direct that the investigation into the unnatural death of Ms. X shall be transferred to the CBI forthwith. The Investigating Officer and concerned authorities of the IV Town Police Station, Visakhapatnam, shall hand over the entire case records, including all relevant papers, documents, CCTV footage, forensic reports, and any material evidence, to the

office of Director, CBI without undue delay. The Director, CBI, shall ensure the immediate registration of an RC and assign the investigation of the same to a team of competent officials under the supervision of the jurisdictional Superintendent, CBI.

26. We clarify that the observations made above are not intended to touch the merits of the case at hand, and they shall have no bearing on the investigation conducted by the CBI or the trial, as the case may be. None of the above observations shall prejudice the defence of the person/s, who may be arrayed as an accused in this case. The concerned officials of CBI shall conduct an extensive and comprehensive investigation into the matter and, upon conclusion, submit a report under Section 193(2) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023<sup>1</sup>, before the competent Court having jurisdiction, within four months from the date of receiving the record.

(iii) Guidelines: -

35. Keeping in view of the above, and in exercise of the powers conferred upon this Court under Article 32 of the Constitution of India for the enforcement of fundamental rights, and treating this pronouncement as law declared by this Court under Article 141, we hereby issue the following guidelines, which shall remain in force and be binding until such time as appropriate legislation or regulatory frameworks are enacted by the competent authority. The Guidelines are prescribed as under:

- I. All educational institutions shall adopt and implement a uniform mental health policy, drawing cues from the *UMMEED* Draft Guidelines, the *MANODARPAN* initiative, and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy. This policy shall be reviewed and updated annually and made publicly accessible on institutional websites and notice boards of the institutes.
- II. All educational institutions with 100 or more enrolled students shall appoint/engage at least one qualified counsellor, psychologist, or social worker with demonstrable training in child and adolescent

1 Formerly, Section 173(2) of the CrPC.

mental health. Institutions with fewer students shall establish formal referral linkages with external mental health professionals.

- III. All educational institutions shall ensure optimal student-to-counsellor ratios. Dedicated mentors or counsellors shall be assigned to smaller batches of students, especially during examination periods and academic transitions, to provide consistent, informal, and confidential support.
- IV. All educational institutions, more particularly the coaching institutes/centres, shall, as far as possible, refrain from engaging in batch segregation based on academic performance, public shaming, or assignment of academic targets disproportionate to students' capacities.
- V. All educational institutions shall establish written protocols for immediate referral to mental health services, local hospitals, and suicide prevention helplines. Suicide helpline numbers, including Tele-MANAS and other national services, shall be prominently displayed in hostels, classrooms, common areas, and on websites in large and legible print.
- VI. All teaching and non-teaching staff shall undergo mandatory training at least twice a year, conducted by certified mental health professionals, on psychological first-aid, identification of warning signs, response to self-harm, and referral mechanisms.
- VII. All educational institutions shall ensure that all teaching, non-teaching, and administrative staff are adequately trained to engage with students from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds in a sensitive, inclusive, and non-discriminatory manner. This shall include, but not be limited to, students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), LGBTQ+ communities, students with disabilities, those in out-of-home care, and students affected by bereavement, trauma, or prior suicide attempts, or intersecting form of marginalisation.
- VIII. All educational institutions shall establish robust, confidential, and accessible mechanisms for the reporting, redressal, and prevention of incidents

involving sexual assault, harassment, ragging, and bullying on the basis of caste, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or ethnicity. Every such institution shall constitute an internal committee or designated authority empowered to take immediate action on complaints and provide psycho-social support to victims. Institutions shall also maintain zero tolerance for retaliatory actions against complainants or whistle-blowers. In all such cases, immediate referral to trained mental health professionals must be ensured, and the student's safety, physical and psychological, shall be prioritised. Failure to take timely or adequate action in such cases, especially where such neglect contributes to a student's self-harm or suicide, shall be treated as institutional culpability, making the administration liable to regulatory and legal consequences.

- IX. All educational Institutions shall regularly organise sensitisation programmes (physical and/or online) for parents and guardians on student mental health. It shall be the duty of the institution to sensitise the parents and guardians to avoid placing undue academic pressure, to recognise signs of psychological distress, and to respond empathetically and supportively. Further, mental health literacy, emotional regulation, life skills education, and awareness of institutional support services shall be integrated into student orientation programmes and co-curricular activities.
- X. All educational institutions shall maintain anonymised records and prepare an annual report indicating the number of wellness interventions, student referrals, training sessions, and mental health-related activities. This report shall be submitted to the relevant regulatory authority, which may be the State Education Department, University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), or as otherwise indicated.
- XI. All educational institutions shall prioritise extracurricular activities, including sports, arts, and personality development initiatives. Examination

- patterns shall be periodically reviewed to reduce academic burden and to cultivate a broader sense of identity among students beyond test scores and ranks.
- XII. All educational institutions, including coaching centres and training institutes, shall provide regular, structured career counselling services for students and their parents or guardians. These sessions shall be conducted by qualified counsellors and shall aim to reduce unrealistic academic pressure, promote awareness of diverse academic and professional pathways, and assist students in making informed and interest-based career decisions. Institutions shall ensure that such counselling is inclusive, sensitive to socio-economic and psychological contexts, and does not reinforce narrow definitions of merit or success.
- XIII. All residential-based educational institutions, including hostel owners, wardens and caretakers, shall take proactive steps to ensure that campuses remain free from harassment, bullying, drugs, and other harmful substances, thereby ensuring a safe and healthy living and learning environment for all students.
- XIV. All residential-based institutions shall install tamper-proof ceiling fans or equivalent safety devices, and shall restrict access to rooftops, balconies, and other high-risk areas, in order to deter impulsive acts of self-harm.
- XV. All coaching hubs, including but not limited to Jaipur, Kota, Sikar, Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, and other cities where students migrate in large numbers for competitive examination preparation, shall implement heightened mental health protections and preventive measures. These regions, having witnessed disproportionately high incidents of student suicides, require special attention. The concerned authorities, namely, the Department of Education, District Administration, and management of educational institutions, shall ensure the provision of regular career counselling for students and parents, regulation of academic pressure through structured academic planning, availability of continuous psychological support, and the establishment of institutional mechanisms for

monitoring and accountability to safeguard student mental well-being.

36. The above guidelines shall apply to all educational institutions across India, including public and private schools, colleges, universities, training centres, coaching institutes, residential academies, and hostels, irrespective of their affiliation. We may clarify that these guidelines are not in supersession but in parallel to the ongoing work of the National Task Force on Mental Health Concerns of Students and are being issued to provide an interim protective architecture in the interregnum. We believe that these guidelines shall be read as complementary to the ongoing work of the National Task Force and would inform and assist the National Task Force in the development of a more comprehensive and inclusive framework.

(iv) Directions:-

37. All States and Union Territories shall, as far as practicable, notify rules within two months from the date of this judgment mandating registration, student protection norms, and grievance redressal mechanisms for all private coaching centres. These rules shall require compliance with the mental health safeguards prescribed herein.

38. A district-level monitoring committee shall be constituted in each district under the chairpersonship of the District Magistrate or Collector. The committee may include representatives from the departments of education, health, and Child protection, civil society and shall oversee implementation, conduct inspections, and receive complaints.

39. Having regard to the serious and continuing nature of the concerns addressed herein, we direct the Union of India to file a compliance affidavit before this Court within a period of 90 days from the date of this judgment. The affidavit shall detail the steps taken to implement these guidelines, the coordination mechanisms established with State Governments, the status of regulatory rulemaking with respect to coaching centres, and the monitoring systems put in place. The affidavit

shall also indicate the expected timeline for the completion of the report and recommendations of the National Task Force on Mental Health Concerns of Students.

40. Let a copy of this judgment be circulated to the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Law and Justice, University Grants Commission, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Central Board of Secondary Education, All India Council for Technical Education, and the Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories for immediate compliance and necessary action.

41. The present appeal is disposed of, accordingly.

42. In view of the disposal of the above appeal, no further orders are required to be passed on the application(s) seeking impleadment as well as application (I.A. No. 63866/2025) seeking direction to produce chemical/medical reports, hence, the same stands disposed of as infructuous.

43. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of accordingly.

44. List again on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2025, for receiving the compliance report."

(NEETU KHAJURIA)  
ASST.REGISTRAR-CUM-PS

(RANJANA SHAILEY)  
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

(Signed reportable judgment is placed on the file.)