

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA AT CUTTACK**  
**W.P.(C) No. 16579 of 2020**

***Prafulla Samantara***

....

***Petitioner***

Mr. Iswar Mohanty, Advocate

-versus-

***State of Odisha and Others***

....

***Opposite Parties***

Mrs. Saswata Patnaik, Addl. Govt. Advocate

**CORAM:**  
**THE CHIEF JUSTICE**  
**JUSTICE M.S. RAMAN**

**ORDER**  
**13.04.2022**

**Order No.**

20. 1. A news item titled “Aadhaar Seeding Norm Snatches Poor’s Rice” appeared in the 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 edition of the **Odisha Post** newspaper. The said news item *inter alia* states that more than 2000 beneficiaries in Rasulpur Block have been deprived of availing the benefits under the National Food Security Act on account of failure of linking the Aadhaar Card with their bank passbooks. The report says how the Public Distribution System (PDS) Dealers stated that they stopped supplying rice to the beneficiaries as per the Government order which made it compulsory to seed the Aadhaar Numbers of the beneficiaries with their bank passbooks.
2. It will be recalled that before this Court, a categorical statement was made by the State of Odisha as noted in the order dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 that no one would be deprived of rations due to non-linkage of Aadhaar.
3. Mrs. Saswata Patnaik, learned Additional Government Advocate has placed before the Court a copy of a letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2020

written by the Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Government, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department to all the Collectors regarding “Enrollment and Seeding of Aadhaars in ration card database”. She states on instructions that it has been made clear that even those not having Aadhaar will continue to receive the subsidised food grains “by furnishing other proofs like Aadhaar Enrolment ID or a copy of request made for Aadhaar Enrolment or EPIC etc. along with the ration card”. Clearly the above instructions have been misconstrued and as a result more than 2000 beneficiaries in one Block have been deprived of the rations. A direction is issued to the Commissioner-cum-Secretary to the Government, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department to forthwith issue a fresh unambiguous instruction to all the Collectors reiterating that no beneficiary shall be deprived of rations because of non-linkage of Aadhaar with the Bank Pass Book or seeding in the PDS Database. A further direction is issued that a team will be immediately sent to Rasulpur Block to ensure that 2000 odd beneficiaries, who have been deprived of rations are immediately restored the benefits without any delay.

4. A compliance affidavit be filed before this Court by the next date.

5. List on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 at 10.30 am along with the connected cases listed today.

***(Dr. S. Muralidhar)***  
***Chief Justice***

***(M.S. Raman)***  
***Judge***