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

+ W.P.(C) 14517/2024

SMITA KUMARI RAJGARHIA

.....Petitioner

Through: Ms. Smita Kumari Rajgarhia, Mr.
Narendra Sharma, Mr. Kamal Kant
Sharma, Advocates.

versus

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI

.....Respondent

Through: Mr. Sameer Vashisht, ASC (Civil) for
GNCTD with Ms. Harshita Nathrani,
Advocate.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV NARULA

ORDER

16.10.2024

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1. The Petitioner, a practicing Advocate at District Court South, Saket, has brought to the attention of this Court the deplorable and unhygienic conditions of the washroom facilities in the Lawyers Chamber Block, District Court South, Saket, particularly those designated for female lawyers. The pictures annexed to the petition depict an alarming state of neglect, with washrooms maintained in unsanitary conditions. The Petitioner's representation dated 9th September, 2024, highlights critical issues including non-functional toilet seats, the absence of adequate water supply, and the state of the washroom doors that are either broken or lack proper locking mechanisms. The situation is particularly concerning for female lawyers, for whom privacy and safety are paramount. Despite her



representations, no response or remedial action has been forthcoming from the Respondents, necessitating urgent intervention.

2. The unhygienic conditions in the washrooms directly effects the safety and health of the female lawyers using these facilities. The failure to provide clean, functional, and safe washrooms—particularly in an environment as vital as the District Courts— demands immediate attention of all stakeholders. Thus, necessary steps must be taken by the Respondents to rectify the current situation and ensure that these facilities meet a basic standard of hygiene.

3. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the Court hereby appoints Ms. Harshita Nathrani, Advocate, as Court Commissioner to conduct a thorough inspection of the female washrooms located at the Lawyers Chamber Block, Saket, and to extend this inspection to the female washrooms at other District Courts as well. Ms. Nathrani shall prepare a comprehensive report documenting the conditions of the washrooms, identifying deficiencies, and providing photographic evidence of her findings. The report shall also outline steps taken by the Respondents to rectify the situation. This report is to be submitted to the Court before the next date of hearing.

4. In light of the above, the Public Works Department,¹ Respondent No. 2, is directed to immediately address the issues raised by the Petitioner. PWD shall take corrective measures to ensure that all male and female washroom facilities are restored to a functional and sanitary condition. A compliance report detailing the actions taken, including the restoration of

¹ “PWD”



water supply and repair of washroom doors, shall be submitted within a period of two weeks from today. Furthermore, PWD is directed to put in place a regular maintenance schedule to prevent future deterioration of these essential facilities.

5. In the opinion of the Court, this issue warrants inspection of washroom facilities all District Courts in Delhi. Accordingly, the Principal District and Sessions Judges of all District Courts are directed to take cognizance of the matter to ensure that similar inspections of all washroom facilities—both for men and women—are carried out within their respective jurisdictions. These inspections should focus on the functionality, hygiene, and safety of the washroom facilities, and a compliance report indicating any necessary repairs or improvements shall be filed before this Court within a period of two weeks from today.

6. This Court reiterates that access to clean, functional, and secure washroom facilities is a basic necessity, especially for female members of the Bar. The safety, privacy, and health of female lawyers must be safeguarded, and the Respondents are expected to treat this matter with the seriousness it warrants. The PWD and other civic agencies shall extend full cooperation and coordinate with other stakeholders to ensure compliance of this order.

7. Registry is directed to dispatch this order to all Principal District and Sessions Judges.

8. Re-notify on 05th December, 2024.

SANJEEV NARULA, J

OCTOBER 16, 2024/ab