

## **PIL Claims Stigma Attached to Transgender Community Worsened Post Lockdown; Bombay HC Directs Social Justice Dept to Address Concerns [Read Order]**

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The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the Principal Secretary to the State Social Justice and Special Assistance Department to consider and dispose of within a fortnight, concerns expressed by an activist working for the transgender community, regarding plight of the members specially after the lockdown and seeking directions for formulation of a welfare scheme for the 40,000 members of the community in the State.

Division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice MS Karnik were hearing via video conferencing a PIL filed by Vikram Shinde who expressed concerns regarding lack of medical and essential supplies for the community pointing out that members of the community suffered financially after the nationwide lockdown was imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Advocate Aditi Saxena appeared on behalf of the petitioner and submitted that majority of the members of the community are sex workers and beggars, therefore the lockdown led to a complete end to their livelihood as social distancing became the new norm.

Moreover, due to the stigma attached to the community, members were refused basic healthcare and protective kits. Their sources of income had dried up but on top of that, they did not have access to free ration provided during the lockdown as they did not have a ration or Aadhar card, the PIL contended.

Court observed-

"We are of the considered opinion that instead of keeping this PIL petition pending, the same should be disposed of at this stage with appropriate directions."

Thus, the bench granted liberty to the petitioner to file a comprehensive representation, incorporating all the concerns of the said community, within a week from date addressed before the Principal Secretary to the Social Justice and Special Assistance Department, Government of Maharashtra.

Moreover, the Principal Secretary was directed to consider and dispose of the concerns expressed therein in accordance with law and by passing an appropriate order within a fortnight and asked him to communicate the ultimate decision to the petitioner immediately.