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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

WRIT PETITION NO. 16116 OF 2023

Sonali Ashok More & Ors.

...Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors.

...Respondents

Mr. Chetan Patil (Thr. V.C.), Advocate for the Petitioners.

Mr. A.R. Deolekar, AGP for the Respondent/State.

Mr. Vishwanath Patil, Advocate for Respondent No.4.

CORAM : RAVINDRA V. GHUGE
&
ABHAY J. MANTRI, JJ.

DATE : 3rd FEBRUARY, 2026

P.C. :-

1. In this case, we find that the State is taking too many liberties with this Court. For more than two years, an affidavit in reply is not filed. On 6th November, 2025, the hearing in this matter progressed to some length. The hearing had to be stopped since the learned AGP desired to take instructions. The matter was treated as part-heard and adjourned to 19th November, 2025.

2. Again on 19th November, 2025, the State sought one more chance and a last chance was granted. Thereafter, the matter

appeared on board on 7th January, 2026. By a speaking order, we again granted an opportunity to the learned AGP. On 8th January, 2026, since we noticed that the affidavit in reply in this matter was necessary, we granted further time for filing of the affidavit in reply by 21st January, 2026. Rejoinder was to be filed on 30th January, 2026.

3. Today, the learned AGP submits that the affidavit in reply has not been filed.

4. Considering the above conduct of the Department, it amounts to interference in the dispensation of justice, since this matter could not proceed without the reply of the State. Our earlier orders speak volumes about the opportunities granted to the State.

5. We could have issued contempt notice to the concerned Department. But that would not advance the case of the Petitioners and would also not enable us to decide this case.

6. In view of the above and in the light of the peculiar facts, we direct Respondent No.3, Deputy Director of Education,

Pune Division, Mr. Ganpat Shankarrao More, to deposit cost of Rs.2500/- (Rs. Two Thousand Five hundred only) for having obstructed this Court by not filing a reply. The amount of cost shall be deposited from his salary account and the affidavit in reply shall be filed, on or before 12th February, 2026. The rejoinder affidavit shall be filed on or before 20th February, 2026.

7. This matter be listed on **25th February, 2026**, in the ‘Urgent Supplementary Board’.

(ABHAY J. MANTRI, J.)

(RAVINDRA V. GHUGE, J.)