



न्यायालय मुख्य आयुक्त दिव्यांगजन

COURT OF THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)

दिव्यांगजन सशक्तिकरण विभाग/Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

सामाजिक न्याय और अधिकारिता मंत्रालय/Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment

भारत सरकार/Government of India

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Case No. 13844/1041/2023

In the Matter of

Miranda Tomkinson

....Complainant

Versus

The Chairman,

University Grants Commission (UGC)

.....Respondent No. 1

Senior Director (NET),

National Testing Agency (NTA)

.....Respondent No. 2

1. Gist of Complaint:

1.1 Shri Miranda Tomkinson, a person with 90% multiple disabilities (deaf-blindness), filed a complaint on 09.01.2023 seeking the UGC NET December 2022 exam question paper transcribed in braille. Despite holding three postgraduate degrees, he cannot use a scribe due to his disability and requires a braille questionnaire to read independently. Multiple requests to the UGC for this accommodation were unsuccessful, and the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Persons with Disabilities referred his case to this Court as the UGC falls under the Central Government.

2. Notice Issued to the Respondents:

2.1. A notice dated 17.03.2023 was issued by this Court under Sections 75 and 77 of the RPwD Act, 2016, directing the Respondents to furnish their comments on the complaint and place on record supporting documents and justifications, if any.

3. Reply of the Respondents:

3.1 UGC (Respondent No.1) did not address the complaint on merit but forwarded it to the National Testing Agency (NTA) for comments. The NTA (Respondent No.2) failed to respond despite repeated reminders from both the Court and the UGC. UGC subsequently reiterated its request to NTA for comments, but no response was received from NTA.

4. Rejoinder:

4.1 No rejoinder was filed by the Complainant.

5. Hearing Details:

5.1 At hearings held on 04.09.2023 and 18.02.2025, the Complainant emphasised the need for accessible exams for persons with deaf-blindness, stating that only a braille-transcribed paper would suffice. The NTA explained that no technical mechanism exists for braille support in computer-based tests. At the same time, the UGC and NTA expressed willingness to comply with any updated instructions from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD). The Court recognised the importance of the issue and the need for central guidelines on the issue. As such, it directed the formation of a committee under the DEPwD to address such accessibility challenges.

6. Observations and Recommendations:

6.1 The Court commended the Complainant's efforts, highlighted the unique challenges faced by those with multiple disabilities, and cited existing guidelines requiring exam bodies to offer accessible formats, including braille. It recommended that DEPwD strengthen current guidelines to ensure independent access for candidates with multiple disabilities, involve stakeholders in formulating new instructions, and submit an action taken report to the Court within three months. The case was disposed of with these recommendations.

(Rajesh Aggarwal)
Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities