

COMPLAINT OF SHRI MADHAV CHHETTRI, FATHER OF KUM. SARGAM
CHHETTRI, A STUDENT OF LORETO COLLEGE, KOLKATA

On 18.02.15, a complaint was filed by Sri Madhav Chhettri, father of Kum. Sargam Chhettri, (a student of B.A. First Year with Hons. in Education) stating as follows:-

“That Loreto College kindly admitted my daughter knowing fully well about her vision problem. But after one month of her admission the college authorities started pressurizing her for taking a writer for appearing in college as well as in university exams. Also please note that she has attained this stage of her life with vision problem and she did not take the help of a writer in the previous two board exams.

The Principal of the college did not allow her to sit in the Selection Test held on 16.02.2015 as no writer was with her. I personally met the Principal and gave her a letter (a Xerox copy of the letter is enclosed) and only then the Principal allowed her to sit in the exam test.

The head of the ophthalmic dept. of Calcutta National Medical College gave a certificate in his personal writing pad that writer is not required for my daughter. A Xerox copy of the certificate is also enclosed herewith. Your kind action is earnestly requested in this matter.”

The Commission taking cognizance of the case noted as follows:-

“The doctor’s certificate does not prescribe a writer. Decision whether to take a writer or not is a basic human right which can be exercised only by the student when required. Call for a report from the Principal Secretary, Higher Education Department by 25.03.2015.”

Shri Vivek Kumar, IAS, Principal Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal filed his report before the Commission on 18.03.2015 wherein it has been stated – “the Principal of Loreto College, Kolkata has submitted report to this Department dated 12th March, 2015, in which the Principal has categorically said that “using a writer for a student with visual disability is the prerogative of the student and the college has always supported the student in all possible ways so that the student fares well in her examination. Refusal of assistance of such a writer by the student is the decision the student for which the College can at no point of time be responsible. Whatever was stated to the student and / or her parent was in the form of suggestion for the betterment of the student which has now been made to look like an adverse act of the College in the letter of complaint of the parent. The College has at at no point of time disallowed and/ or stopped the student from appearing in any examination. In fact, we have allowed her extra time keeping in mind her disability. I hope the above explanation is satisfactory and I once more reiterate that the College at no point of time has forced the student to use a writer but has only suggested to her to use a writer for her betterment and welfare.”

The student Kumari Sargam Chhettri and her parent were called to the Department for a hearing. It is learnt from them that Kumari Sargam Chhettri has congenital eye-related problems and she has undergone surgery in both eyes seven times since her birth. Now she has vision only in her right eye and that she reads books / papers, etc. from a distance of 3 inches. However, she does not feel comfortable in taking help of a writer for writing the examination. She has passed both ICSE (class X) and ISC (XII) with good marks without having a writer and she wants to write examination papers including University examination all by herself. Her father Shri Madhav Chhettri has submitted an appeal

in writing wherein he has said that her daughter is not willing to take a writer and their appeal is that the situation should normalize fast.”

A copy of the report sent by the Principal of Loreto College, Kolkata dated 12th March, 2015 was enclosed with the report. In the report dated 12th March, 2015 as submitted by Sr. Christine Coutinho, Principal, Loreto College, Kolkata has stated as follows: -

- The College was aware of the visual disability of Sargam Chhettri at the time of admission. She was given admission along with another student with similar disability in July 2014 in B.A. Education Honours. In the light of this, special mentoring was arranged for both the students by the College. These sessions were taken thrice a week by a Loretor Sister and personal attention was given to both the students.
- After the correction of the answer papers of the Mid-Term Examination held from October 31, 2014 to November 8, 2014, the parents of both students were called to the college. Sargam Chhettri and her parents came to the College in December 2014 as her performance in the examination could have been better. A writer was recommended as the student is intelligent and, in the opinion of the College, a writer would help the student fare better and realise her potential. This was done in the normal course of activities undertaken by the College.
- **No communication from the student nor the parent was received** by the College after the meeting held in December 2014 (suggesting a writer) – neither in writing nor verbally. **This silence**

was maintained by the student and parent till the 1st day of the Selection Examination (February 16, 2015).

- The student started writing the Selection Examination on February 16, 2015 without a writer which caused confusion. Due to **no communication** being received from the student nor her parent, a clarification was sought from the parent on February 16, 2015. The father came to the office on February 16, 2015 and misbehaved with the college authorities leaving no place for any discussion. It is pertinent to mention here that keeping in mind the difficulty the student might face without a writer, she was given extra time to complete the examination (the answer script is the College).
- The father and daughter gave an undertaking on February 16, 2015 that no writer would be needed by the student for any examination. The student has not been approached regarding a writer since then. All Selection Examinations have been taken by the student without a writer.
- A copy of the **doctor's certificate dated January 20, 2015** was **first seen** by the College when sent as a scanned copy by e-mail on March 09, 2015 by Mr. Subhra Dey. A hard copy had not been received by the College prior to his date; it was sent from the office of the DPI on March 09, 2015 and by the Additional Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal, by fax on March 11, 2015. **It is unfortunate that neither the student nor the parent handed a copy of the said medical certificate to the college prior to the commencement of the Selection Examination, i.e February 16, 2015.**

- Using a writer for a student with visual disability is the prerogative of the student and the College has always supported the student in all possible ways so that the student fares well in her examination. Refusal of assistance of such a writer by the student is the decision of the student for which the College can at no point of time be responsible. Whatever was stated to the student and / or her parent was in the form of suggestion for the betterment of the student which has now been made to look like an adverse act of the College in the letter of complaint of the parent. The College has at no point of time disallowed and / or stopped the student from appearing in any examination. In fact, we have allowed her extra time keeping in mind her disability.

I hope the above explanation is satisfactory and I **once more reiterate** that the College at no point of time has forced the student to use a writer but has only suggested to her to use a writer for her betterment and welfare.

The Commission being satisfied with the report has sent a letter of appreciation to Sri Vivek Kumar for his good work and sensitive response in a case of this nature.

Accordingly, the Commission has been pleased to file this matter at this stage.

Sd/-
Shampa Dutt (Paul)
Registrar,
WBHRC