

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA AT BENGALURU
[HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA VS. THE STATE OF
KARNATAKA AND OTHERS]**

CJ & MGSKJ:
12.12.2023

ORDER

This Court takes *suo-motu* note of the news articles that have been published in Daily News Papers namely, 'Deccan Herald', Bengaluru edition, dated 12.12.2023 under the caption 'Woman beaten up, paraded naked after son elopes with girl'. A similar news article published in 'The Hindu' daily News paper, Bengaluru edition, dated 12.12.2023 publishes news under the caption 'Woman assaulted, tied to a pole after son elopes with girl' and the other most disturbing feature comes through the publication of news in Kannada News daily, 'Prajavani', Bengaluru edition dated 12.12.2023 under the caption "ಓಡ ಹೋದ ಪ್ರೇಮಿಗಳು ಮಹಿಳೆ ಬೆತ್ತಲೆಗೊಳಿಸಿ ಧಳಿತ" which news article carries a photograph.

2. The caption and contents of the aforesaid news articles not only shocks our conscience but makes us to put our head down with anguish and pain in our hearts. On one hand while this Country is celebrating 76th year of Independence as 'Azadi ka Amruthotsav', on the other hand, in the State of Karnataka which is known for all valid reasons as a progressive State and a pioneer State of

initiation of Social justice way back even when it was a Princely State of Mysore, faces this incident.

3. In the photographs published in the Kannada Daily 'Prajavani' it seems that one Hon'ble Minister Smt. Lakshmi Hebbalkar visited the victim and is consoling her. Though the print media has at least displayed some sensibility and sensitivity while publishing the photograph by blurring the image of the victim and her associates but the disturbing factor is the said photograph reveals that some persons apparently from the electronic media or its representatives are photographing and videographing the victim's reaction and narration. Thus, on one hand, where there is a reflection of sensibility, on the other hand there is stark contrast wherein the media persons are seem to be acting most irresponsible and insensitive manner.

4. In the aforesaid circumstances, if any media house or its representatives has videographed the above interview of the victim during the visit of the Hon'ble Minister or any such interaction by the victim, this Court hereby direct not to telecast such interview or interaction on any national or regional Channel. It is further made clear that if already such interview is displayed or telecasted in the electronic media, henceforth there shall not be any display or telecast of the same.

5. We also make it clear that this interim direction is only with an object to ensure the dignity of the victim is maintained and her identity is not disclosed or revealed. We further make it clear that this Court by this interim order is not even remotely prohibiting the media from covering the news as this Court maintains and accepts the concept of freedom of press.

6. We had requested the learned Advocate General to remain present in this court and accordingly learned Advocate General is personally present in this court. We apprised the learned Advocate General about the aforesaid news articles.

7. Learned Advocate General was fair enough to promptly respond to the concern of this Court and submitted before this Court that he will also take appropriate steps immediately so as to see that there is no undue, uncalled and unwanted coverage of the incident in electronic media.

8. We also directed the learned Advocate General to submit a status report of the incident to the Court on 14.12.2023.

9. The Registrar General, High Court of Karnataka, is directed to initiate *suo-motu* proceedings and take appropriate steps.

10. Authenticated copy of this order be forwarded to the Learned Advocate General.

**Sd/-
CHIEF JUSTICE**

**Sd/-
JUDGE**

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