

### **Note on I.A. on Journalist Deaths and Relief**

Free medical assistance to Media Persons covering COVID-19 is an urgent and immediate need. There have been over 455 journalist deaths reported, with 4 journalist deaths a day in April-May 2021 as per the latest data.

The Director of the Institute of Perception Studies, New Delhi, and its media initiative, Rate the Debate, Dr. Kota Neelima has approached the Hon'ble Supreme Court by filing an Intervention Application in the Suo Motu Writ Petition for urgent relief measures for journalists and also families of journalists who had died due to COVID-19. The application will be argued by Senior Advocate Mr. Salman Khurshid and has been filed by Lubna Naaz, AOR.

The petition seeks relief of free treatment, compensatory support, walk in registration, etc. Most of the existing schemes of central and state governments do not address unaccredited journalists, technical, managerial, supervisory staff, freelancers and stringers. Highlighting the urgency of the Petition, Dr. Kota Neelima said, 'Media is essential in the fight against COVID-19. People' right to information is served by journalists, which has helped in saving and protecting lives, and therefore supported the responsibilities of the state.'

The petition quotes research by Institute of Perception Studies, which states most journalists deaths had taken place among unaccredited journalists and in the age group of 41-50 years hailing from predominantly non-metro areas of India. The prayer seeks free medical facilities in Government and Private Hospitals to Journalists and their families infected with COVID-19 and reimbursement of their bills irrespective of their accreditation status or any other such divides during the pandemic. The application also requests the court to direct Governments to provided compensatory support to the immediate families of deceased journalists in form of ex-gratia and/or employment support as is applicable.

Research Findings of the Institute on Journalist Deaths due to COVID-19 as on May 21, 2021

- 253 Verified and 93 Unverified Journalist Deaths between April 2020 and May 2021.
- 41 deaths per 10 days in April – May 19, 2021.
- 66 % (167) of the deaths occurred in Non-Metro regions.
- 54 % of Journalist Deaths are from Print Media across India.
- 30% Journalist Deaths are in the age group of 41-50 Years which is the highest.

- Journalist Deaths – Accreditation Status (Sample) : Accredited: 43% ; Journalists without Accreditation : 57%.
- The data is being updated on a regular basis as it is an ongoing research.

For further details please visit: [www.ipsdelhi.org.in](http://www.ipsdelhi.org.in)

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Date: May 31, 2021

Place: New Delhi