

Gita not religious, can be taught in schools?

Bhopal, January 28: Holding that Gita contained philosophy and not religious teachings, the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Friday dismissed a petition challenging introduction of 'Gita Sar' (essence of Gita) in school curriculum.

When the Catholic Bishop's Council filed the PIL in August last year, the court gave the petitioner's counsel two months to read the holy book in entirety and make up his mind.

Filed through council's spokesman Fr Anand Muttungal, the PIL had not per se opposed Gita but wanted the MP government to teach a summary of all religions, instead of one particular religion.

The PIL had also argued that most government schemes drew their names from Hindu mythology and that the state had failed to project a secular image. Ladli Laxmi, Balram Tal and Kapil Dhara were among the schemes cited along with practices like 'Bhoomi Pujan' in government functions, which promote just one religion.

When the matter came up for hearing before the Division Bench of Justices Ajit Singh and Sanjay Yadav on Friday, they asked petitioner's counsel Rajesh Chand, who had been given two months time on August 6, whether he had read Gita.

Additional Advocate General Prashant Singh told The Indian Express that the Bench asked a few more questions and were not satisfied with the answers. The court held that Gita was essentially Indian philosophy and not a religion.

After the primary arguments, lasting for barely 10 minutes, the Bench dismissed the petition. Fr Muttungal said the council would take a decision on challenging the order after reading the complete order.

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