

'USING GOD'S NAME TO SELL ARTICLES ILLEGAL'

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Judiciary in India: its Structure, Organization & Functioning, Judges of SC & High Courts, Judgments and related Issues

The Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court has declared that advertisement of any article using the name of any God and claiming that it has supernatural qualities, is "illegal" and falls under the Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act.

A division bench of justices T.V. Nalawade and M.G. Sewlikar was hearing a petition filed by Rajendra Ambhore, a teacher, seeking a direction and injunction to prevent advertisements on television channels that promote the sale of articles like Hanuman Chalisa Yantra.

Mr. Ambhore said that in March 2015, he came across advertisements on TV claiming special, miraculous and supernatural properties/qualities in Hanuman Chalisa Yantra prepared by one Baba Mangalnath, who had achieved 'Siddhi' (supernatural powers) and was blessed by Lord Hanuman. The Yantra costs Rs. 4,900 and was said to be made of 24-carat gold. Singers and such other celebrities were shown in the ads talking about their experience, the plea said.

The court said telemarketers change the names of companies, Gods and Babas to show that each was a different Yantra. The court went on to say, "The objectives quoted in the Black Magic Act can be achieved mainly through education. Reformists like Mahatma Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar, who worked to remove evil practices and spread awareness against superstition, were born on this soil."

'Laws required'

It could safely be said that at least basic education was available to everybody in the State. But even highly educated people were attracted to mantra-tantra and black magic. In such a situation, the Black Magic Act was required to be enacted even in a progressive State like Maharashtra.

"The propagation for sale by advertisement of any article, naming it Yantra or otherwise, by attaching the name of any God to such an article, including Lord Hanuman or any Baba, with the representation that these articles have special, miraculous and supernatural properties and that they will help people to become happy, make progress in business, see advancement in career, show improved performance in education, recover from disease etc., is illegal," it held.

Such propagation and advertisement, falls under the Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, the court held. The court directed the State and Vigilance Officers to register such crimes, giving reports against persons who make such advertisements and sell such articles.

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