

SEDITION LAW: SC SEEKS CENTRE'S RESPONSE

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The Supreme Court on Friday sought response from the Centre on a plea challenging the Constitutional validity of sedition law.

A bench Justice U.U. Lalit, Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice K. M. Joseph were hearing a plea challenging section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, which penalises the crime of sedition.

The plea, filed by two journalists — Kishorechandra Wangkhemcha and Kanhaiya Lal Shukla — working in Manipur and Chhattisgarh respectively, have urged the court to declare Section 124-A as unconstitutional.

The petition claimed that Section 124-A infringes the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression, guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

The petitioners claimed that they have been raising questions against their respective state governments and central government, and have been charged with sedition under section 124A of IPC in various FIRs for comments and cartoons shared by them on the social networking website Facebook.

There is frequent phenomenon of misuse, misapplication and abuse of Section 124-A since 1962, the petition said, adding that the abuse of a law, in itself, may not bear on the validity of the law but clearly points to the vagueness and uncertainty of the current law.

The sections of sedition have been repealed in comparative post-colonial democratic jurisdictions around the world, it said.

END

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