

SC seeks views on guidelines for abortion

The Supreme Court has sought a response from the government on framing of guidelines for setting up a permanent mechanism for termination of pregnancy beyond 20 weeks in exceptional cases.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra issued notices to the Ministries of Health, Women and Child Development and the Medical Council Of India and sought their reply in four weeks.

No amendment

The court, however, refused to amend the 1971 Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act which prohibits termination of pregnancy beyond 20 weeks, saying that the issue fell within the legislative domain. "On a perusal of the reliefs sought, we find that as far as the prayer is concerned, that is in legislative realm, hence we are not inclined to address the said prayer.

"Issue notice, fixing a returnable date within four weeks," the bench told the government.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Karnataka-based Anusha Ravindra seeking amendment of the 1971 Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act for abortion of fetuses older than 20 weeks involving rape survivors and women with abnormal foetus.

The plea, filed through advocate Abhinav Ramkrishna, also sought constitution of a committee for setting up a permanent mechanism for expedient termination of such pregnancies under safe medical facilities with adequate inputs from an association of professionals and experts.

END

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