

Registered practitioners in siddha, ayurveda, homeopathy and unani are eligible to practice surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, anaesthesiology, ENT, ophthalmology, etc - Madras High Court Verdict

CHENNAI: The Madras high court has said registered practitioners in siddha, ayurveda, homeopathy and unani are eligible to practise surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, anaesthesiology, ENT, ophthalmology, etc.

Justice F M Ibrahim Kalifulla, passing orders on a contempt of court petition filed by the Tamil Nadu Siddha Medical Graduates Association, also said penal action against such practitioners who dabbled in allopathy should be "dropped forthwith."

The ruling runs contrary to a recent order delivered by another judge on a petition filed by two unani practitioners who sought similar relief. In February this year, Justice K K Sasidharan had held that practitioners of Indian system of medicines should not practise allopathy, and that there was nothing wrong if police take action against those who attempt to practice allopathy without valid qualification.

While passing orders on Thursday, Justice Kalifulla took note of a June 29 circular of the government, which, citing section 17(3)B of the Indian Medicine Central Council Act 1970, said institutionally qualified practitioners of siddha, ayurveda, unani and homeopathy are eligible to practise the respective system with modern scientific medicine "including surgery and obstetrics and gynaecology, anaesthesiology, ENT, etc. based on the training and teaching."

The government's latest stand on the issue smacks of ambiguity while dealing with alternative systems of medicine which it seeks to promote even while claiming to check illegal practitioners.

The recent crackdown had seen several traditional practitioners being booked for prescribing allopathic drugs

Recording the details, Justice Kalifulla said: "It is imperative that no proceedings can be initiated against any of those registered practitioners in siddha, ayurveda, homeopathy and unani, who are eligible to practise the respective system along with modern scientific medicine including surgery, gynaecology and obstetrics, anaesthesiology, ENT, ophthalmology, etc.

If any action had been taken against such medical practitioners, it is needless to state that such action should be dropped forthwith..."

Reacting to the latest order, state health secretary VK Subburaj said they were just making use of the provisions in the Act. "But this is allowed only for those who attended colleges and underwent training for surgeries.

Source : Times of India July 30 2010