

Delhi HC rejects plea to ban distasteful anti-tobacco imagery in ads

TNN | Oct 4, 2023

NEW DELHI: The purpose of showing distasteful and gross anti-tobacco imagery in the health spots during film screenings in cinema halls and on television and OTT platforms is to make people aware of the ailments and ill-effects of consuming tobacco products, Delhi High Court recently said.

The court made the observation while dismissing a petition by a lawyer seeking directions to the central government to prohibit the display of such anti-tobacco health spots with graphic or gross images.

"Of late, this court is seeing that public interest litigation, which was actually a tool for providing a voice to the voiceless, is being used to achieve private gains and the present writ petition is also one such petition, which has been backed by the tobacco industry lobby to prevent the government from creating awareness against tobacco, which, as stated earlier, is the sole cause responsible for a number of ailments among men and women," Justice Subramaniam Prasad observed.

It is the duty of the state, the court said, to take steps to protect the health of citizens. Calling the petition a gross abuse of the process of law, it also referred to a Supreme Court judgment that recognised the increasing trend of abuse of PIL.

The plea had claimed that it was filed due to the incorporation and prevalence of distasteful, gross, graphic anti-tobacco imagery in the health spots played during the screening of movies and television programmes.

The court noted that the PIL "deserves to be dismissed with exemplary costs". But considering the young advocate's bright future, "this court restrains itself from making any comments on the petitioner," the judge said while warning the lawyer not to file such frivolous petitions in future.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/delhi-hc-rejects-plea-to-ban-distasteful-anti-tobacco-imagery-in-ads/articleshow/104151193.cms?from=mdr>