

Aadhaar card not mandatory on CoWIN portal for Covid vaccination-Centre to SC

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New Delhi: The Centre Monday told the Supreme Court that the Aadhaar card is not mandatory for registration on the CoWIN portal for COVID-19 vaccination.

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Surya Kant was informed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that one of the nine identity documents including passport, Driving Licence, PAN card, Voter's Card, Ration card can be produced for vaccination.

The apex court took note of the submission and disposed of a plea filed by Siddharthshankar Sharma who claimed that the Aadhaar card was being mandatorily insisted upon for administering COVID-19 vaccination on the CoWIN portal.

The apex court had on October 1, 2021, issued notice to the Centre on the PIL.

"Pursuant to this court's order dated October 1, 2021, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has filed an affidavit which records that Aadhaar card is not mandatory for registration on CoWIN portal and one of the nine identity documents can be produced... It is also recorded in the affidavit that a provision has been made for other category of persons who may not have identity cards in their possession like prison inmates, inmates at mental health institutions etc," the bench said.

"Counsel for Union submits that about 87 lakh people without ID cards have been vaccinated. The grievance of the petitioner that he was denied vaccination for non production of Aadhaar card has also been dealt in the affidavit. The Health ministry addressed a letter to Principal Secretary, Health in Maharashtra to take action against the concerned private vaccination centre which denied vaccination to the petitioner despite production of valid passport ID. The grievance of the petitioner is duly met. All concerned authorities to act in accordance with the policy of the government," it said.

The plea had sought effective and non-discriminative enforcement of the already notified rules/policies in the entire country in a uniform manner, for the protection of the right to vaccination granted to citizen of India which is dangerously endangered on account of denial of vaccination due to non-submission of Aadhaar details to the concerned authority.

"Such actions are in blatant violation of right to life under Article 21 read with right to equality under Article 14 of the Constitution and hence, the petitioner urges sympathetic indulgence of this court by way of issuing appropriate directions to direct the concerned authority to set aside the mandatory pre-condition of production of Aadhaar details from enabling administration of vaccination..., the plea said.

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