

Staff can't resist biometric attendance, says Madras HC

Move To Raise Efficiency, Says Court

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Chennai: Teachers and non-teaching staff of government schools cannot oppose the advanced Aadhaar-based biometric attendance system that the government thought fit to introduce to ensure fool-proof attendance in the state's public services, the Madras high court has said.

Justice S M Subramaniam, dismissing a petition filed by R Annal, a teacher in government high school at Vembanoor in Nagercoil, pointed out that there were several allegations in the public domain in respect of the con-

duct, efficiency level, negligence and dereliction of duty on the part of teachers in government schools across the state. The judge ordered expeditious implementation of biometric attendance, merit-cum-seniority based promotions and asset verifications and vigilance proceedings for teaching and non-teaching faculty at government schools.

Growing indiscipline among public servants prompted the state government to introduce such technology for the purpose of improving the efficiency level in public administration, Justice Subramaniam said.

"The Aadhaar-enabled biometric attendance system is systematically being implemented by the government of India, high courts and other public institutions across the country. When the government thought it fit to

introduce such an advanced system for ensuring fool-proof attendance system in public services, it cannot be objected to by a teacher, who is expected to be a role model for young children," the judge added.

Rejecting Annal's contention that she did not have an Aadhaar number and that insisting on her using biometric scheme would be violative of her fundamental right to privacy, Justice Subramaniam said: "If the petitioner is willing to continue as a public servant, then she is bound to abide by the service conditions. If she is not willing to undergo such system, which has been introduced by the government in the public interest, then she has to take a decision whether to continue in service or to leave the service."

Fundamental Rights en-

sured under Part III of the Constitution are subject to certain reasonable restrictions and no fundamental right is absolute, the judge said. "The State can impose certain reasonable restrictions in order to protect the rights of all citizens," he added.

Comparing the performance of government school teachers to that of their counterparts in private schools, Justice Subramaniam said a number of private schools were highly successful despite the fact that teachers in such private schools were receiving far lower salaries than those being paid to teachers in government schools.

It is in this context that the judge said assessment of performance and merit in teaching capacity and work performances must be the criteria for granting further promotions and other benefits.