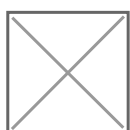


News

Karnataka High Court dismisses petition challenging election of CM Siddaramaiah from Varuna



A challenge to the 2023 election of Congress politician and current Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah from the Varuna constituency was denied by the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday [**K Shankara v. Sri Siddaramaiah**].

The ruling was delivered this afternoon by **Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav**.

A copy of the detailed judgment is awaited.

K Shankara, a voter from the Varuna constituency, filed the election petition, claiming that the five election guarantees included in the Indian National Congress's (INC) 2023 state election manifesto amounted to bribery and corrupt practices under the Representation of the People Act.

Shankara said that the promises amounted to satisfaction for the Varuna constituency's voters, persuading them to support the party, and that the manifesto was released with Siddaramaiah's approval.

Accordingly, Siddaramaiah had engaged in corrupt activities, he continued.

In addition to declaring Siddaramaiah's election invalid, the petitioner asked the court to prevent him from running for office for six years.

The petitioner's arguments were headed by **Senior Advocate Pramila Nesargi**, who claimed that the Congress' five guarantee system violated Article 14 of the Constitution's guarantee of equality and discriminated against men.

She said that because Siddaramaiah had engaged in unethical tactics including buying off voters before the election, his victory should be canceled.

The guarantee scheme that includes free trips for women, free electricity, rice distribution, financial assistance for women heads of households and unemployment allowances for graduates, were examples of such malpractice, Nesargi told the Court.

In July 2023, the Court requested Siddaramaiah's answer to the plea.

Leading the arguments for Siddaramaiah was **Senior Advocate Ravivarma Kumar**, who denied the petitioner's accusations.

Claims that the Congress electoral platform amounted to bribing voters are unsupported by evidence, he added. Additionally, he called the petition a "copy-paste" job, stating that it may be rejected for that reason alone.

Notably, in March 2024, **Justice S Vishwajith Shetty of the Karnataka High Court** rejected a challenge on identical grounds to the 2023 election of Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Rizwan Arshad from Shivajinagar.

Senior Advocate Kumar argued that the same pleadings were used in the case contesting the election of the Chief Minister.