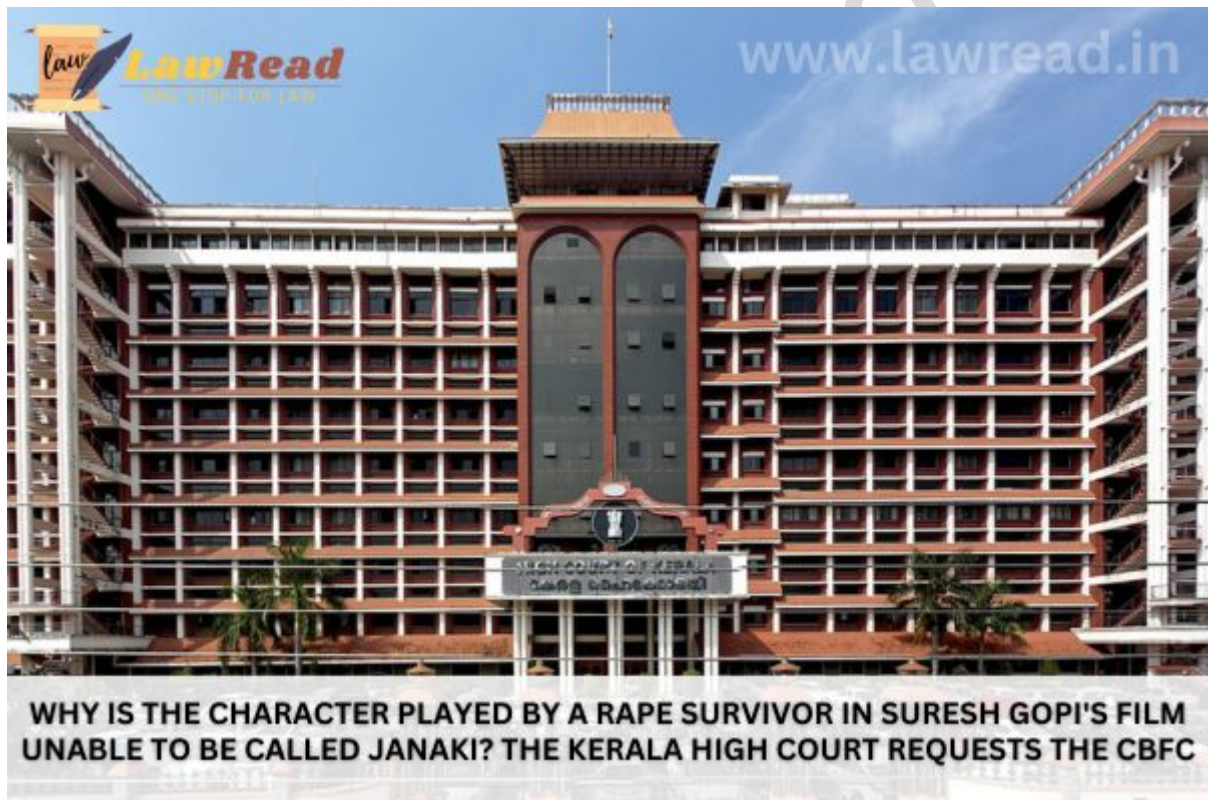


News

Why is the character played by a rape survivor in Suresh Gopi's film unable to be called Janaki? The Kerala High Court requests the CBFC



"I might be able to comprehend a rapist if their name is Rama, Krishna, or Janaki. Justice Nagaresh declared, "Here, she is a heroine fighting for the cause of justice."

The Central Board of Film Certification's (CBFC) objection to the name of the title character of the upcoming Malayalam film JSK: Janaki v. State of Kerala, which stars Union Minister Suresh Gopi, left the Kerala High Court perplexed on Monday **[M/s Cosmos Entertainments v. The Regional Officer]**.

Deputy Solicitor General of India (DSGI) **OM Shalina** informed the Court that the movie's use of the name Janaki, which alludes to the Hindu heroine Sita, violated the laws prohibiting names and themes that are disrespectful to faiths.

According to **Justice N Nagaresh**, he couldn't figure out why the character—a rape survivor striving for justice—shouldn't be called Janaki.

"Is she the victim? I might be able to comprehend a rapist if their name is Rama, Krishna, or Janaki. Justice Nagaresh said, "She is a heroine here, fighting for justice."

Additionally, the judge chastised the CBFC for allegedly interfering with the right to free speech and expression.

"Now you're going to tell filmmakers and artists what names to use and what stories to tell?" Why should the name be changed? What's the matter with Janaki? In what way is it disrespectful to a religion? That is the artists' freedom. You can't become involved with that. "You don't have a compelling reason, but it's not absolute," he said verbally.

M/s Cosmos Entertainments, the film's production firm, filed a petition with the court regarding the film's delayed censor certification. According to the petition, on June 12, the film certification application was made using the CBFC's e-cinepramaan portal. But as of yet, neither a certificate nor any official complaints have been made by the CBFC. Additionally, it was noted that the film's teaser trailer had already received a censor certificate from the CBFC.

The petitioner claims that informal objections to the movie's title and the character name "Janaki" are the reason for the CBFC's delay.

"Even though no official communication or show cause notice have been received from the respondents, from the newspaper reports, the petitioner came to know that the censor board had directed to change in the title as well as the name of the titular character of Janaki, by citing that it refers to the Hindu goddess 'Sita', which shows the inconsistency and arbitrariness in the stand now taken by the Censor Board in objecting to the same title and character name at the stage of certifying the full film, despite having previously granted certification for the teaser without raising any such concerns," stated the petition.

The suit claims that this delay violates the basic right to free speech protected by Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g) of the Indian Constitution, as the movie was supposed to be released globally on June 27.

It was also argued that the corporation will suffer irreversible financial losses as a result. As a

result, the firm asked the court to urge the CBFC to quickly provide a censor certificate for the movie.

Today, the Court ordered the DSGI to provide a statement or counter-affidavit outlining the rationale behind the CBFC's position.

Advocates Anand B. Menon, Haris Beeran, Azhar Assees, and Nabil Kahader are representing the production business.

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