

Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka is a landmark case in Indian constitutional law that deals with the issue of the right to education as a fundamental right under the Indian Constitution. The case was decided by the Supreme Court of India in 1992 and has significant implications for the understanding of the right to education in India.

Facts of the Case:

Mohini Jain, the petitioner, was a student who sought admission to a medical college in Karnataka. She was denied admission because she could not afford the high fees charged by the college. Mohini Jain challenged the denial of admission on the grounds that her inability to pay the high fees violated her fundamental right to education.

Key Legal Issues:

Whether the right to education is a fundamental right under the Indian Constitution.
Whether private educational institutions that receive aid from the government can charge exorbitant fees that may make education inaccessible to economically weaker sections of society.

Key Arguments and Decision:

The primary argument made by Mohini Jain was that the right to education was a fundamental right implicit in the right to life under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The State of Karnataka argued that the right to education was not a fundamental right, and private educational institutions had the right to charge fees as they saw fit.

The Supreme Court's Decision:

The Supreme Court, in a landmark judgment, held that the right to education is indeed a fundamental right under the Indian Constitution. The court stated that the right to life under Article 21 includes the right to education. The court held that while private educational institutions have a certain degree of autonomy, they cannot charge exorbitant fees that would deny access to education to economically weaker sections of society. The court also held that the State had an obligation to ensure that education is accessible to all, and this includes regulating the fees charged by private educational institutions.

Significance of the Case:

The case reaffirmed the right to education as a fundamental right in India, emphasizing the importance of education for personal and societal development. It highlighted the role of the State in ensuring that education is accessible to all and in regulating private educational institutions, particularly those that receive government aid. Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka has had a lasting impact on education policy and regulation in India, leading to various government measures to make education more affordable and accessible.

This case set an important precedent for subsequent cases and government policies related to education in India, and it remains a cornerstone in the jurisprudence surrounding the right to education.