

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA

Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.18762 of 2015

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Sheopujan Mehta, S/o Ram Rup Mehta, R/o Village Devkali, P.S. Obra, District Aurangabad.

.... Petitioner

Versus

1. The State of Bihar
2. The Bihar State Food & Civil Corporation Limited its M.D., Bihar at Patna.
3. The District Manager, Bihar State Food & Civil Corporation Limited, Aurangabad, District Aurangabad.
4. The District Certificate officer, Aurangabad, District Aurangabad.

.... Respondents

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Appearance :

For the Petitioner : Mr. Ashok Kumar Singh
Mr. Abhishek Kumar Singh, Advocates

For the State : Mr. Prabhat Kumar Singh- SC12

For the BSFC : Mr. Rama Shankar Pradhan, Sr. Advocate
Mr. Amrendra Narayan Rai, Advocate

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CORAM: HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE VIKASH JAIN

ORAL JUDGMENT

Date: 08-12-2015

Heard learned counsel for the petitioner, learned counsel for the State and learned counsel for the respondent-Bihar State Food & Civil Supplies Corporation.

2. This writ petition has been filed for quashing the entire certificate proceeding initiated against the petitioner in Certificate Case No. 11 of 2014-15 and for connected reliefs.

3. It is submitted on behalf of the petitioner that the notice under Section 7 issued in Form No.3 of Schedule II of the Bihar & Orissa Public Demands Recovery Act (for short, "the Act") does not meet with the statutory requirements. A copy of the certificate enclosed with the notice under Section 7 of the Act discloses that the

same has been signed by the District Manager, Bihar State Food & Civil Supplies Corporation, Aurangabad (for short, “the BSFC”). The mere fact that the certificate has also been signed by the Certificate Officer, will not clothe it with validity.

4. Learned counsel for the respondents on the other hand submits that the certificate is valid inasmuch as it has been signed also by the Certificate Officer.

5. This Court finds considerable force in the submissions of learned counsel for the petitioner. Issuance under the signature of the District Manager, BSFC, Aurangabad who is not the Certificate Officer denudes the certificate of its validity. Under Section 5 of the Act, the District Manager could only have written and sent a requisition in Form No.2 to the Certificate Officer and there could have been no occasion for him at all to have signed a certificate issued in Form No.1. The Certificate, no doubt, also contains the signature of the Certificate Officer below that of the District Manager, but that is all the more indicative of the lack of independent application of mind by the Certificate Officer. Section 6 of the Act requires the Certificate Officer to be satisfied that the demand is recoverable before he signs the certificate. In the present case, it is clear that he has merely signed the certificate mechanically below the signature of the District Manager.

6. In the above circumstances, the certificate issued in Form No.1 signed by the District Manager of the BSFC and the Certificate Officer in the manner aforesaid is held to be invalid and is hereby quashed along with the notice under Section 7 of the Act issued in pursuance thereof. The matter is remitted to the Certificate Officer, Aurangabad for issuance of a fresh certificate as well as the notice under Section 7 of the Act and thereafter to proceed in the matter in accordance with law.

7. It is made clear that in the meantime, the Certificate Officer, Aurangabad, shall not resort to any coercive action for recovery of the dues against the petitioner in Certificate Case No. 11 of 2014-15.

8. The writ petition stands disposed of.

(Vikash Jain, J)

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