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**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION
PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION NO.78 OF 2015**

Arul Mozhi Selvan	... Petitioner
Versus	
Reserve Bank of India and Anr.	... Respondents

Mr. Arul M. Selvan Petitioner in person.
Mrs. Madhubala Kajle, AGP for the Respondent - State.

**CORAM : A.S. OKA &
A.A. SAYED, JJ.**

DATE : 27th JUNE, 2016

PC.

1 Heard the Petitioner appearing in person. The Petitioner claims to act *pro bono*. The Reserve Bank of India has issued “Handbook on Security Instructions”. Paragraph 17.2 of the instructions in the Handbook provided as under :-

“17.2. Except by special permission given to specific institutions and agencies on limited occasions, photography of the Bank's building complex by anybody is strictly prohibited. Any contravention thereof will render the exposed reel to be seized. The Security Manager and security staff deployed in banking hall should be given instructions to be vigilant to prevent the photographs from being taken, and the photographers should immediately be prevailed upon to hand over the film to the security staff.”

2 Thus, the Handbook on Security Instructions provide that except by special permission given to the specific institutions and agencies on limited occasions, photography of the Bank's building complex by anybody is strictly prohibited. The challenge in this PIL is to the said direction issued by the Reserve Bank of India. It is the case of the Petitioner that the Reserve Bank of India has no power to prevent citizens from taking photographs of the Reserve Bank of India building.

3 It will be necessary to make a reference to a letter dated 15th January, 2015 addressed by the Assistant Manager of the Reserve Bank of India to the Petitioner appearing in person. In paragraph 3 of the said letter, after referring to the aforesaid paragraph 17.2, the Assistant Manager of the Reserve Bank of India has observed that it is essential for the Reserve Bank of India to put in place measures considered necessary for the safety and security of its building, property and staff. It is stated that the importance of providing security measures is paramount for the Reserve Bank, being the central bank of the nation. In paragraph 4, it is stated that Central Office Building of the Reserve Bank at Mumbai is located on the land owned by Indian Government Mint and certain floors of the RBI building are occupied by the Mint, which is notified as “prohibited place”.

4 The prayer in this PIL is for a declaration that the Reserve Bank of India has no power to prevent people from taking photographs. We fail to understand as to how this prayer is in public interest. Restrictions have been imposed on taking photographs of the building of the Reserve Bank of India as a measure of safety and security of the said Bank which is the central bank of the nation. Paragraph 17.2 provides for grant of special permission to specific institutions and agencies on limited occasions to photograph the Bank's building.

5 We are of the view that grant of relief prayed for in this Petition will be in fact against the public interest. Therefore, there is no merit in the Petition. In normal course, this Court would have directed the Petitioner to pay costs. However, as notice to RBI has not been issued, we are refraining from issuing a direction to the Petitioner to pay costs. The Petition is accordingly dismissed.

(A.A. SAYED, J)

(A.S. OKA, J)