

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS
DATED: 25.04.2019
CORAM
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE K.RAVICHANDRABAABU
W.P.No.10572 of 2015

V.I.George

...Petitioner

Vs.

1. The Chairman of the District Committee
and Collector of the Nilgiris,
Udhagamandalam.
2. The District Forest Officer,
Gudalur Division,
Gudalur.
3. The Executive Engineer (Agri Engineer)
Udhagai,
Nilagiris District.
4. The Tahsildar,
Gudalur Taluk,
Gudalur,
The Nilgiris.

...Respondents

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, to call for the records of the 1st respondent herein in D.Dis.A4/16776/2014 dated 19.01.2015 and quash the same and direct the 1st respondent to grant permission for sale of the petitioner's patta land to an extent of 5.65 Acres in S.Nos.476/12A, 476/10 and 476/9 of Sri Madurai Village, Gudalur Taluk, Nilgiris District, and Sub-Divided as 476/12A and 476/12B situated at Sri Madurai Village, Gudalur Taluk, Nilgiris District within the Sub Registration District of Gudalur and Registration District of Nilgiris.

For Petitioner : Mr.K.A.Ramakrishnan
For Respondents: Ms.Thangavadana Balakrishnan
Additional Government Pleader (Forest)
for R1 to R3
Mr.R.Govindasamy
Special Government Pleader for R4

O R D E R

The petitioner is aggrieved against the order of the first respondent dated 19.01.2015 in refusing permission to sell the petitioner's patta land, measuring an extent of 5.65 Acres in S.Nos.476/12A, 476/10 and 476/9 of Sri Madurai Village, Gudalur Taluk, Nilgiris District, and Sub-Divided as 476/12A and 476/12B situated at Sri Madurai Village, Gudalur Taluk, Nilgiris District within the Sub Registration District of Gudalur and Registration District of Nilgiris.

2. Heard both sides.

3. The petitioner claims to be the owner of the subject matter property, which falls under the purview and scope of the Tamil Nadu Preservation of Private Forests Act, 1949. The petitioner wanted to sell the property to a third party. Under the said Act, the owner of any forest, without previous sanction of the District Committee shall not sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise alienate the whole or any portion of the forest, as contemplated under Section 3 of the said Act. Therefore, the permission from the District Committee is required to sell the property. Consequently, the petitioner approached the first respondent and sought for such permission. The said request was rejected by passing the impugned order, only on the reason that the petitioner had sub-divided the land, without the prior permission of the District Committee.

4. Therefore, it is contended by the respondents that since the sub-division was made without permission, the petitioner is not entitled to get clearance from the District Committee for selling the land.

5. I am not able to agree with the above submissions made by the respondents for the simple reason that Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Preservation of Private Forests Act, 1949 only contemplates such permission in the event of selling, mortgaging, leasing or otherwise alienating the whole or any portion of the forest and not for sub-dividing the property. Assuming that the property after sub-division, vest in the hands of two different owners, still the respective owner has to get sanction from the District Committee, as contemplated under Section 3, when he contemplates to sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise alienate the whole or any portion of the property.

6. Therefore, the Act does not require any prior permission for sub-division of the property. Consequently, the reason stated in the impugned order for rejecting the request of the petitioner to sell, cannot be sustained. Accordingly, the writ

petition is allowed and the impugned order is set aside and the matter is remitted back to the first respondent to consider the claim of the petitioner and pass appropriate orders on merits and in accordance with law. More particularly, by following the procedures contemplated under the Tamil Nadu Preservation of Private Forests Act, 1949. Such exercise shall be done by the first respondent, within a period of eight weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. No costs.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

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Udhagai,
Nilagiris District.
4. The Tahsildar,
Gudalur Taluk,
Gudalur,
The Nilgiris.

+1cc Special Government Pleader sr.40232
+1cc to Mr.K.A.Ramakrishnan, Advocate sr.40038

W.P.No.10572 of 2015

nr 25/07/2019