

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS
DATED : 18.07.2019
CORAM
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE M.DHANDAPANI
W.P.No. 27182 of 2003
and
W.P.M.P.No. 33225 of 2003

N.V.Sampath

...Petitioner

Vs.

- 1.Tamil Nadu Electricity Board
rep. by its Chairman,
Anna Salai,
Chennai - 2.
2. The Superintending Engineer,
Tamil Nadu Electricity Board,
CEDC Central,
Chennai - 34.
3. M/s.R.Srinivasan & Brothers
rep. by partner,
Mr.R.Krishnan
26, 18th Avenue,
80th Street,
Ashoknagar,
Chennai - 83.

.... Respondents

Prayer: The writ petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, to call for the entire records relating to the impugned order in Lr.No.SE/CEDC/C/AEE/GL/T1/F.Doc./D 2263/03 dated 12.09.2003 on the file of the 2nd Respondent and quash the same as illegal, arbitrary and without jurisdiction and consequently forbear the Respondents 1 and 2 from taking coercive steps to disconnect power supply at No.74, Arya Gowda Road, Chennai - 33.

For Petitioner : Mr.P.B.Balaji
For Respondents: Mr.P.R.Dhilipkumar

O R D E R

The petitioner filed this Writ Petition, to issue a writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, to call for the entire records relating

to the impugned order in Lr.No.SE/CEDC/C/AEE/GL/T1/F.Doc./D 2263/03 dated 12.09.2003 on the file of the 2nd respondent and quash the same as illegal, arbitrary and without jurisdiction and consequently forbear the Respondents 1 and 2 from taking coercive steps to disconnect power supply at No.74, Arya Gowda Road, Chennai - 33.

2. The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner would submit that there is a Civil Liability imposed on the Petitioner apart from compounding charges. Hence, the petitioner may be permitted to pay the balance amount without BPSC and penal interest.

3. The learned counsel appearing for the respondent Board admitted the fact that the petitioner has paid some portion of the amount and this court may pass appropriate orders.

4. The said issue has been squarely covered by the decision of the Division Bench of this Court in batch of cases in W.A.Nos.1808, 1811 of 2009, W.P.Nos.29882 of 2004 and 3013 of 2014 and W.P.No. (MD) Nos.2360 and 2361 of 2008, as follows:

" 28. It was also stated that Section 185 of the Act, 2003 cannot come to the rescue of the Electricity Board, as the action has been initiated only after the Act, 2003 came into existence and no proceedings initiated under the Old provisions / Repealed Act cannot be continued. Further, the Board cannot initiate proceedings under Clause 8.01 and 8.02 of the Terms and Conditions of Supply of Electricity (Electricity Supply Act 1948) with regard to theft of energy, as those clauses are no longer in vogue as on the date of initiation of proceedings, the Old Act got repealed and the Act 2003 had come into force. Clause 8.01 and 8.02 of the Terms and Conditions of Supply of Electricity (Electricity Supply Act 1948) in the repealed Act reads as follows:

8.00 Theft of Energy and Extra Levy:

8.01 Any consumer who dishonestly abstracts or uses energy shall be deemed to have committed theft within the meaning of Indian Electricity Act, 1910 as amended by the Tamil Nadu Government and the Indian Penal Code and the existence of artificial means for such abstractions shall be prima facie evidence of such dishonest abstraction. Illegal restoration of supply to a

disconnected service connection will fail under this category.

8.02 Extra levy for theft of energy by tampering of meters / meter seals will be made at the rates given below:

- (a) for a period of twelve months; or
- (b) for a period from the date of prior inspection if any by the APTS or MRT wing to the date of detection; or
- (c) for a period from the date of replacement of meter to the date of detection; or
- (d) for a period from the date of service connection to the date of detection whichever period of the above is less.

For other cases of theft of energy, the extra levy will be made for a period of twelve months or from the date of service connection to the date of detection whichever period is less at the same rates given below:

(i) For Energy:

(a) Low Tension Service Connection : Highest Low Tension tariff rate x3: The charges arrived at will be rounded off to the next higher rupees.

(b) High Tension Service Connection: Highest High Tension Tariff rate x 4 the charges arrived at will be rounded off to the next higher rupee

(ii) For maximum demand: (In High Tension Service Connection): Highest High Tension tariff rate for maximum demand x 4.

Extra levy for illegal restoration of supply to a disconnected service connection will be made for a period of twelve months, immediately preceding the date of detection of the violation or for the period from the date of disconnection of the service connection to the date of detection of the illegal restoration, whichever period is less, at the rates given above..”

29. The above submission made by the learned Senior Counsel for the petitioners cannot be accepted, because once there is a saving clause provided under the New Act, then there is no impediment or bar for the Department to proceed under the Old Act in the absence of proof that it is inconsistent with the provisions of the Act, 2003. More so, quoting a wrong provision of the Act will not entitle a wrong doer to escape from the clutches of law, especially when Section 126 of the Act, 2003 extends power to the Department / Board / Authorities to ensure that the electricity consumed unauthorisedly is calculated and necessary charges are paid by the defaulter. In the decision, Hitech Mineral Industries (P) Ltd., Salem V.TNERC, Chennai, reported in 2010 (3) MLJ 697, it is inter alia, observed that the persons who steal energy or use energy unauthorisedly have to be punished.

41. This Bench, while dealing with an issue falling under the purview of Electricity Act in the case of M/s.Sri Radhakrishna Multiple Industries (P) Ltd., Madurai Vs. The Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission, Chennai [W.P.No. 14924 of 2008] decided on 26.03.2019, has made a passing remark that the Special Court has the power to prosecute under Section 135 of the Act, 2003 and proceed further with regard to determination of civil liability, in case it comes to the conclusion that offence is made out by the accused. Further, it went on to add that in the event of acquittal from the criminal case, it will not preclude the Electricity Board from invoking Section 126 of the Act, 2003."

5. In view of the decision held by the Division Bench of this Court and also considering that the petitioner has accepted the Provisional Assessment Order and he has also paid substantial amount and agreed to pay the remaining amount without BPSC and penal interest, this Court is inclined to direct the petitioner to deposit the entire due after adjusting the amount already paid by him within a period of six weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.

6. With the above direction, this writ petition stands disposed of. No costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petition if any is closed.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS V)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

kmm

To

1. Tamil Nadu Electricity Board
rep. by its Chairman,
Anna Salai,
Chennai - 2.
2. The Superintending Engineer,
Tamil Nadu Electricity Board,
CEDC Central,
Chennai - 34.

+1cc to Mr.P.B.Ramanujam, Advocate sr.61098
+1cc to Mr.P.R.Dhilipkumar, Advocate sr.61183

W.P.No. 27182 of 2003

spd(co)
nr 24/10/2019

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