

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 01.04.2019

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE DR. JUSTICE ANITA SUMANTH

W.P. Nos.9575 of 2019 and
W.M.P.No.10191 of 2019

Bharani Pictures, A partnership firm
Rep. by its Partner, Mr.Bharani R.Paluvai,
No.33/10, Vaidyarama Street,
T.Nagar, Chennai 600 017. Petitioner

.Vs.

1.The Commissioner,
Corporation of Chennai, Rippon Buildings,
E.V.R.Periyar Salai, Chennai 600 003.

2.Zonal Officer-Zone X (Kodambakkam)
Greater Chennai Corporation,
No.64, NSK Salai, Kodambakkam,
Chennai 600 024.

3.The Assistant Revenue Officer,
Revenue Department, Zonal Office - X,
Greater Chennai Corporation,
Chennai 600 021. Respondents

PRAYER :- Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the
Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Certiorari,
calling for the records of the 1st respondent in Demand Notice
No.1 dated 08.10.2018 bearing E/1/18-19/574637 and quash the
same.

For Petitioner : Mr.D.Ferdinand

For Respondents: Mr.T.C.Gopalakrishnan
Standing counsel

O R D E R

Mr.D.Ferdinand, learned counsel for the petitioner has
raised a challenge on behalf of the petitioner to Demand Notice
No.1 dated 08.10.2018 bearing E/1/18-19/574637, revising the
property tax assessment for the first half of 2018-19 as against
which objections have been filed by the petitioner belatedly on

04.02.2019 and 25.02.2019, beyond a period of fifteen (15) days. The grievance of the petitioner is that the objection filed by the petitioner has not been considered till date and no orders have been passed by the respondents.

2.Mr.T.C.Gopalakrishnan, learned standing counsel takes notice for respondents. At request and by consent of both counsel, the Writ Petition is taken up for final disposal at the stage of admission.

3. I may refer to my order dated 07.02.2019 passed in W.P.No.3645 of 2019 wherein I have considered a case similar to the present one. The property in question is situated No.57 (Old No.24), Arcot Salai, Saligramam, Chennai. Order dated 04.02.2019 passed in W.P.No.3248 of 2019 (N.Krishnan V. The Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu) reads thus:-

'3. The main contentions advanced by the learned counsel for the petitioner are that no show cause notice has been issued by the respondents prior to the issuance of the impugned notice and that no break up of the amount has been set out in the notice itself. The revision thus is contrary to G.O.(Ms) 73, Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MA.IV) Department dated 19.07.2018, which provides for a revision upto only 100% of the existing tax.

4. Per contra, learned Standing Counsel appearing for the Corporation states that the impugned document is only a provisional notice and a final demand would be raised after consideration of the objections of the assessee/petitioner.

5. The notice, on the face of it, states 'Within 15 days of receipt of this Notice, appeal if any, may be preferred to the concerned Regional Deputy Commissioner, Greater Chennai Corporation as per the delegation provided, or else it will be assumed that the Half Yearly Tax is accepted.'

6. A Division Bench of this Court in the case of Sanjai Gupta V. The Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai (2009(2)CTC465) has considered a similar case holding that an occasion to file an appeal would arise only after a final order has been passed. The decision of the Bench reads as follows:

'1.

2. This Appeal arises out of an interlocutory order passed by the learned Single Judge in W.P.No.4237 of 2009. By consent of both the counsel, the Writ Petition itself is taken in the causelist of the Division Bench. Both the counsel are heard.

3. The submission of Mr.K.V.Babu, learned counsel for the appellant/petitioner is that the Municipal Corporation sent a notice dated 25.4.2007 to the appellant asking him to show cause as to why the property tax should not be revised in the manner indicated in that notice. The notice was supposed to be replied within 15 days. The appellant received that notice on 16.6.2007 and sent a reply to the same on 23.6.2007 pointing out amongst others that there was no alteration or addition in any manner in the building in which the appellant was running a lodging house. That apart, the grievance in the Writ Petition is that without deciding the objections, a subsequent order/notice dated 28.1.2009 has been issued calling upon the appellant/petitioner to pay the balance amount, as per the calculation of the respondents, to the tune of Rs.20,69,393/-. Being aggrieved by this order, the Writ Petition has been filed, wherein the learned Single Judge has directed the deposit of Rs.11 lakhs for granting a stay.

4. Mr.K.V.Babu, learned counsel submits that the demand notice, dated 28.1.2009 is not based on any order passed by the Commissioner and, therefore, the order of the learned Single Judge, asking the appellant to deposit an amount of Rs.11 lakhs for granting a stay, is unjustified.

5. Mr.L.N.Praghasam, learned counsel appearing for the Municipal Corporation submits that the appellant has a remedy to go to the Taxation Appellate Tribunal under Part V of the

Taxation Rules read with Section 138 of the Chennai City Municipal Corporation Act, 1919.

6. In our opinion, this submission is misconceived. The occasion to file an Appeal will arise only after an order is passed and based thereon a demand is made. In the present case, the appellant having filed the objections, they were expected to be decided. Without deciding the same, this levy has been calculated and the balance amount of Rs.20,69,393/- has been demanded.

7. In the circumstances, we set aside the order passed by the learned Single Judge. The demand notice dated 28.1.2009, which is impugned in the Writ Petition is also set aside. The Writ Appeal as well as Writ Petition are allowed. Consequently, the connected M.Ps. are closed. There shall be no order as to costs.'

4. The observations and conclusions of this Court in the aforesaid matter are equally applicable in the present case as well and may be read as part and parcel of the present order. The petitioner in the present case has a variety of objections to the enhancement, that enhancement is more than 200% of the existing tax, which is in contravention of G.O.(Ms)No.73 dated 19.07.2018, which stipulates only 100% increase; that no computation sheet has been provided which will give the break up of the impugned demand; that there is a discrepancy between the demand raised and the tax that the petitioner is liable to pay as per the calculator provided on the website of the Chennai Corporation, among others. He further states that a portion of the property has been demolished and the usage of the property has been changed from commercial to residential.

5. In any event, the petitioner has rightly filed its objections to the Demand Notice dated 08.10.2018, on 04.02.2019 & 25.02.2019. However, since the objections have been filed beyond the period provided for an appeal, I am of the view that the petitioner should be put to terms, if he is to be entitled to the benefit of the order passed in W.P. No.3248 of 2019, extracted above.

6. The petitioner, in the present case shall appear before the third respondent at the first instance on 25.04.2019 at 10.30 a.m. for a personal hearing along with the objections dated 04.02.2019 & 25.02.2019 and proof of remittance of: (i) admitted tax and (ii) tax of 100% of existing tax as per G.O.Ms.No.76, Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MA.IV) Department, dated 26.07.2018 and (iii) 15% of the excess thereof. No further notice will be issued in this regard. The Officer shall furnish the petitioner with a working / computation sheet setting out the break-up of the demand raised under the impugned notice. The facts stated by the petitioner will have to be verified by the respondent, after inspection in the presence of the petitioner. Upon satisfaction that the amounts as set out in (i), (ii) and (iii) aforesaid have been remitted, the Officer shall, after affording full opportunity to the petitioner, pass orders of assessment de novo, within a period of four (4) weeks from the date of conclusion of inspection and personal hearing.

7. The demand raised in the impugned notice, in excess of the remittance stipulated in paragraph 5 above, shall be kept in abeyance till such time orders are passed by the Assessing Authority. It is also made clear that the amounts remitted under (ii) and (iii) in paragraph (5) above shall be received without prejudice to the objections of the petitioner and subject to a final determination of the demand in assessment.

8. The Writ Petition is disposed of in the above terms. No costs. Connected Miscellaneous Petitions are closed.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

1.The Commissioner,
Corporation of Chennai,
Rippon Buildings,
E.V.R.Periyar Salai,
Chennai 600 003.

2.Zonal Officer-Zone X (Kodambakkam)
Greater Chennai Corporation,
No.64, NSK Salai, Kodambakkam,
Chennai 600 024.

3.The Assistant Revenue Officer,
Revenue Department,
Zonal Office - X,
Greater Chennai Corporation,
Chennai 600 021.

+2cc to M/S.BFS Legal Advocate Sr.31241
+1cc to Mr.T.C.Gopalakrishnan, Advocate Sr.30951

W.P. Nos.9575 of 2019

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srg 29/05/2019



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