

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS
DATED : 29.04.2019

CORAM
THE HONOURABLE Mrs. JUSTICE PUSHPA SATHYANARAYANA

W.P.No.12229 of 2019
and
W.M.P.No.12513 of 2019

G.S.Pillay & Sons Charitable and Educational
Trust rep. by its Secretary
S.Paramesvaran
47, Perumal Sannathi Street,
Nagapattinam-611 001
Established and Administering
E.G.S.Pillay Engineering College (Autonomous)

.. Petitioner

Vs.

1. The Member Secretary,
All India Council for Technical Education,
Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj,
New Delhi-110 070.
2. The Chairman,
Standing Appeal Committee,
All India Council for Technical Education,
Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj,
New Delhi-110 070.
3. The Regional Officer,
Southern Regional Office,
AICTE, Shastri Bhavan, 1st Floor,
Nungambakkam,
Chennai-600 006.
4. The Principal Secretary,
Housing and Urban Development [UDA(3)]
Department, Fort St. George,
Chennai-600 009.
5. The Director of Town and Country Planning,
807, Anna Salai,
Chennai-600 002.
6. The Deputy Director of Town and Country
Planning,
33, 4th Rajappa Nagar, 1st Street,
Medical College Road, Thanjavur-613 007.

7. Thethi Village Panchayat
rep. by its Special Officer,
Nagapattinam District.

.. Respondents

* * *

Prayer : Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for a Writ of Mandamus directing the respondents 1 to 3/ AICTE to grant approval to the petitioner for merger of course/institution with the existing petitioner college from the academic year 2019-20 without insisting on DTCP approval, by accepting the approval granted by the Panchayat to the petitioner in accordance with law.

* * *

For Petitioner : Mr.D.Prabhu Mukunth Arunkumar

For Respondents: Mr.B.Rabu Manohar,
Senior Central Govt. Counsel
for RR1 to 3

Mr.N.Inbanathan,
Additional Govt. Pleader for RR 4-7

O R D E R

The petitioner is an educational trust running four colleges, which includes Engineering Colleges and Arts and Science Colleges. The petitioner trust started E.G.S. Pillay Engineering College in the year 1995-96, after obtaining appropriate approvals from the authorities and also affiliation from the University. The permanent affiliation for certain courses was also granted by the Anna University. The All India Council for Technical Education (in short, "AICTE")/the first and second respondents also granted provisional affiliation year after year till date.

2. It is stated that the petitioner Trust had also established E.G.S. Pillay Engineering College (MBA Programme), a standalone MBA College, from the academic year 2000-01, which was also duly approved and affiliated by the concerned body (AICTE) and the University. Subsequently, from the next academic year, i.e., 2001-02, E.G.S. Pillay Engineering College (MCA Programme), a standalone MCA College, was started after obtaining due approval and affiliation. Permanent affiliation for these two courses was granted by the Anna University in 2014. The petitioner trust has also been running E.G.S.Pillay Arts and Science College, which along with other courses, offers MBA Post Graduate course, by obtaining approval from the AICTE and Bharathidasan University.

3. It is stated that the petitioner trust obtained building plan approvals for these colleges from the Thethi Village

Panchayat on various dates, such as 18.12.1996, 15.03.2006 and 15.12.2008. In so far as said the approvals granted by the Village Panchayat are concerned, where the colleges are functioning, the college, during September, 2018 itself, had applied to the Directorate of Town and Country Planning (DTCP), for concurrence as per G.O.Ms.No.76, Housing and Urban Development [UD4(3)] Department, dated 14.06.2018 and also remitted the requisite fees.

4. While so, the petitioner trust decided to merge the two standalone MBA and MCA colleges and the MBA Course offered by the E.G.S. Pillay Arts and Science College with E.G.S. Pillay Engineering College. The petitioner college had applied to the AICTE for approval and permission for the said merger for the academic year 2019-20 vide application dated 21.02.2019. The Scrutiny Committee reports dated 13.03.2019 and 23.03.2019 had shown the deficiency only with respect to the building plan not being approved by the DTCP. The petitioner trust was asked to appear before the Standing Appeal Committee (SAC) Meeting held on 22.04.2019 and the report of the said meeting is placed before this Court today, wherein also, the only deficiency pointed out is that the "DTCP approval is pending, however, application has been filed."

5. As stated already, the petitioner Trust had applied under G.O.Ms.No.76 for concurrence with the DTCP and the same is pending and the petitioner cannot be faulted with and the AICTE cannot insist on approval from the DTCP for buildings constructed prior to 01.01.2011. G.O.Ms.No.76, dated 14.06.2018 required the educational buildings in non-planning areas constructed prior to 01.01.2011, which is the date of coming into force of Section 47-A of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971 to obtain concurrence, if it was not obtained so far. The said G.O.Ms.No.76 was later quashed by this Court on 01.12.2018. However, it was clarified that any application, which was made during the relevant period, i.e., before the expiry of three months, the DTCP was directed to consider the same and pass orders.

6. It is also now stated that that portion of the order is under challenge in Writ Appeal. It is argued by the learned counsel for the petitioner that it is settled position of law that buildings, which are constructed in a panchayat area after 1994 do not require to get approval from the DTCP and for approval, the application has to be filed with the Executive Authority of the Village Panchayat and the Executive Authority before giving approval has to get concurrence with the DTCP.

7. At this juncture, it is also relevant to advert to the following directions issued by a Division Bench of this Court in the judgment in Tamil Nadu Unaided Polytechnic Management

"46. In cases, which may include the petitioners herein, where the Executive Authority of the Panchayat might not have consulted either the Joint Director or the Deputy Director of Town and Country Planning before granting permission for construction of public buildings, this Court declares:

(a) In all such cases, the Executive Authority is directed to forward the papers to the Town Planning Authority, who may now consider them, and if required visit the premises in question, and offer his advice if the constructions have complied with all necessary statutory Rules and Regulations, and the latter shall forward his views or opinions to the Executive Authority. If opinions offered are positive, in that if the constructions are found to have complied with the Rules and Regulations and such other legal requirements, then the Executive Authority shall issue an order ratifying his earlier order granting his permission. This will apply only to those public buildings in the Panchayat area constructed after the coming into force of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Building Rules, 1997 till today, the date of this Order, and not to any future application for constructions.

(b) Where any permission has been granted by the Executive Authority of the Panchayat without consulting the joint or Deputy Director of Panchayat in terms of Proviso to Rule 25, but no construction has yet commenced, it shall not be commenced, till opinion of the Town Planning Authority is obtained. If the opinion is not negative, then the earlier permission granted shall, subject to other provisions of law, remain in force. If the opinion of the Town Planning Authority is negative, the Executive Authority of the Panchayat shall forthwith cancel the permission earlier granted after following the due process of law.

(c) In cases of partially constructed buildings, no completion certificate or other amenities be provided unless a favourable opinion is given by the Town Planning Authority.

(d) In all cases falling under (a) and (c), if the opinion of the Town Planning Authority is negative, then such authorities as are empowered to initiate action for illegal constructions shall initiate appropriate actions as per law. The power to grant sanction for construction by the Panchayat is no answer to a builder or a developer violating

Rules and Regulations pertaining to construction activities."

8. Though the judgment of the Division Bench was passed on 06.07.2018, the G.O.Ms.No.76, dated 14.06.2018 issued by the Government was not brought to the notice of the Division Bench. However, the Division Bench in the aforesaid judgment gave certain directions emphasizing that a procedure has to be adopted while obtaining DTCP approval, hence, the petitioner has to follow the same. The Division Bench also made it clear that there should be single window system through which, either past or future approvals could be done.

9. The learned counsel for the petitioner pointed out that the "Approval Process Handbook 2019-20" of the AICTE is a legal document as per the All India Council for Technical Education Act, 1987 and other various acts, including the University Grants Commission Act. Annexure XVI provides for answers to frequent queries. 14.4. says "if an Institution intends to utilise a Building constructed earlier, the Building approvals obtained from the then authorities shall be produced, else the approval for the same shall be obtained from the current approving authorities."

10. Going by the above clarification, as issued by the respondents 1 to 3/ AICTE, learned counsel for the petitioner argued that the original approvals granted by the Thethi Village Panchayat before 2011 are sufficient for the AICTE to consider their application. However, in view of the subsequent development, namely, issuance of G.O.Ms.No.76 and the directions issued by the Division Bench, as stated supra, the petitioner is bound to follow the same.

11. Learned counsel for the AICTE also pointed out that the Handbook is applicable for each of the States all over India and when there is a specific direction given by this Court, particularly, for the State of Tamil Nadu, even the AICTE is bound to follow the said procedure and consequently, without any doubt, the petitioner is also bound to satisfy the authorities by producing the DTCP approval.

12. The Division Bench in the aforesaid judgment has given certain directions, since time-frame for each of the authorities is not prescribed therein and the approval of the AICTE is to be granted by 30th April of each year, the petitioner as well as similarly placed institutions find it difficult to get the order of approval within time.

13. The learned counsel for the petitioner contended that since the cut-off date for obtaining the approval of the AICTE is on or before 30th April of each year, the anxiety of the petitioner is that the approval should not be rejected for want

of certification from the DTCP authorities.

14. In such circumstances, the petitioner is permitted to submit the duly self-attested copies of the plan documents to the seventh respondent within a period of one week from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. On receipt of the same, the seventh respondent is directed to forward the copies of the papers, either available with them or as submitted by the petitioner, with due endorsement to the concerned DTCP authorities/sixth respondent within a period of two weeks thereafter.

15. The respondents 5 and 6 thereafter, have to follow the procedure mandated in paragraph 46 of the judgment of the Division Bench in Tamil Nadu Unaided Polytechnic Management Association case (cited supra) and complete the said exercise within a period of four weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of the papers pertaining to the petitioner institution.

16. However, during hearing, learned counsel for the petitioner produced the report of the SAC dated 22.04.2019, from which, it is seen that the approval is not granted for want of DTCP approval and also NOC from the State Government. The rejection order is not yet communicated to the petitioner, as informed by the learned counsel.

17. Since the application submitted by the petitioner trust for merger is considered by the respondents 1 to 3/AICTE and certain requirements were pointed out, the said authorities are directed to reconsider the application of the petitioner trust as sought in their application, forthwith and pass appropriate orders on or before 30.04.2019, without reference to DTCP approval, if otherwise all the other norms and conditions are complied with. In the event of the AICTE acceding to the request of the petitioner trust, it is open to the AICTE to indicate in the said order that the same would be subject to the production of the approval of the DTCP, immediately upon receipt of the same from the DTCP authorities, as directed above.

18. With the above directions, this writ petition is disposed of. There shall be no order as to costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petition is closed.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar(CS III)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

1. The Member Secretary,
All India Council for Technical Education,
Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj,
New Delhi-110 070.
2. The Chairman,
Standing Appeal Committee,
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Chennai-600 009.
5. The Director of Town and Country Planning,
807, Anna Salai, Chennai-600 002.
6. The Assistant Director of Town and Country
Planning (In-charge),
33, 4th Rajappa Nagar, 1st Street,
Medical College Road, Thanjavur - 613007.
7. The Special Officer,
Thethi Village Panchayat,
Nagapattinam District.

+1cc to Mr.D.Prabhu Mukunth, Advocate, S.R.No.41726
+1cc to Mr.B.Rabu Manokar, Advocate, S.R.No.42330

W.P.No.12229 of 2019

RRS (31/05/2019)

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