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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 29.11.2021

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THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN

W.P.NO.15425 OF 2015

AND

MP.NO.1 OF 2015

R.Govindasamy

... Petitioner

Vs

1. The Secretary to Government,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Home Department, Fort St.George,
Chennai - 600 009.
2. The District Collector,
Dharmapuri District
3. The Special Tahsildar,
Adi Dravidar Welfare Department,
Dharmapuri District
4. The Village Administrative Officer,
A.Reddyhalli Village,
Dharmapuri Taluk,
Dharmapuri District

... Respondents

PRAYER:- Writ Petition is filed under Article 226 of Constitution of India, praying to issue a Writ of Declaration declaring that the proceedings initiated under Land Acquisition Act, 1894 in respect of the petitioner's land measuring 1 acre in S.No.17/1, present S.No.17/9, A Reddyhalli Village, Dharmapuri Taluk and District stands lapsed by virtue of Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

For Petitioner : No Appearance

For Respondents : Mr.A.Selvendran,
Special Government Pleader



O R D E R

This writ petition is filed to issue a Writ of Declaration declaring that the proceedings initiated under Land Acquisition Act, 1894 in respect of the petitioner's land measuring 1 acre in S.No.17/1, present S.No.17/9, A Reddyhalli Village, Dharmapuri Taluk and District stands lapsed by virtue of Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

2. The petitioner challenged the acquisition proceedings in respect of the land measuring 1 acre in S.No.17/1, present S.No.17/9, A Reddyhalli Village, Dharmapuri Taluk and District under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 on the ground that the compensation has not been paid and the possession has not been taken over so far. The petitioner's father owned land measuring 1 acre comprised in survey no.17/1A at present 17/9 of A Reddyhalli Village, Dharmapuri. Out of 1.95 acres of dry land acquired under sale deed dated 07.04.1964 registered vide document No.1922 on the file of the Joint II Sub Registrar Office, Dharmapuri. While being so, the second respondent issued notice under Sections 9(1) and 10 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. However, the said acquisition proceedings was challenged by his father in WP.No.1314 of 1970 and the same was dismissed by this Court by order dated 24.04.1970 itself. After completion of all procedures, award was passed on 31.07.1969 in award No.4/1969-1970 by the third respondent. Thereafter, list of beneficiaries was prepared by the third respondent and also duly approved by the District Adidravidar and Tribal Welfare Officer, Dharmapuri. House site pattas were also distributed to all the beneficiaries. In fact, the petitioner filed suit in OS.No.120 of 2006 for seeking permanent injunction on the file of the District Munsif Court, Dharmapuri and the same was also dismissed against the respondents 2 and 3 herein. Insofar as the compensation is concerned, it was deposited before the District Court, Dharmapuri as BR.No.99 dated 12.09.1969 in OP.No.63 of 1969 also in Diary No.4061 dated 30.06.1969. Therefore, the grounds raised by the petitioner that the physical possession of the land was not taken and the compensation has not been paid are not available for the petitioner herein.

3. The grounds raised by the petitioner in this Writ Petition have already been settled by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the judgment reported in (2020) 8 SCC 129 in the case of Indore Development Authority Vs. Manoharlal and ors etc., which held as follows :-



"366. In view of the aforesaid discussion, we answer the questions as under:

1. Under the provisions of Section 24(1)(a) in case the award is not made as on 1.1.2014 the date of commencement of Act of 2013, there is no lapse of proceedings. Compensation has to be determined under the provisions of Act of 2013.

2. In case the award has been passed within the window period of five years excluding the period covered by an interim order of the court, then proceedings shall continue as provided under Section 24(1)(b) of the Act of 2013 under the Act of 1894 as if it has not been repealed.

3. The word or used in Section 24(2) between possession and compensation has to be read as nor or as and. The deemed lapse of land acquisition proceedings under Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 takes place where due to inaction of authorities for five years or more prior to commencement of the said Act, the possession of land has not been taken nor compensation has been paid. In other words, in case possession has been taken, compensation has not been paid then there is no lapse. Similarly, if compensation has been paid, possession has not been taken then there is no lapse.

4. The expression 'paid' in the main part of Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 does not include a deposit of compensation in court. The consequence of non-deposit is provided in proviso to Section 24(2) in case it has not been deposited with respect to majority of land holdings then all beneficiaries (landowners) as on the date of notification for land acquisition under Section 4 of the Act of 1894 shall be entitled to compensation in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 2013. In case the obligation under Section 31 of the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 has not been fulfilled, interest under Section 34 of the said Act can be granted. Non-deposit of compensation (in court) does not result in the lapse of land acquisition proceedings. In case of non-deposit with respect to the majority of holdings for five years or more, compensation under the Act of 2013 has to be paid to the "landowners" as on the date of notification for land acquisition under Section 4 of the Act of 1894.



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5. In case a person has been tendered the compensation as provided under Section 31(1) of the Act of 1894, it is not open to him to claim that acquisition has lapsed under Section 24(2) due to non-payment or non-deposit of compensation in court. The obligation to pay is complete by tendering the amount under Section 31(1). Land owners who had refused to accept compensation or who sought reference for higher compensation, cannot claim that the acquisition proceedings had lapsed under Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013.

6. The proviso to Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 is to be treated as part of Section 24(2) not part of Section 24(1) (b).

7. The mode of taking possession under the Act of 1894 and as contemplated under Section 24(2) is by drawing of inquest report/ memorandum. Once award has been passed on taking possession under Section 16 of the Act of 1894, the land vests in State there is no divesting provided under Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013, as once possession has been taken there is no lapse under Section 24(2).

8. The provisions of Section 24(2) providing for a deemed lapse of proceedings are applicable in case authorities have failed due to their inaction to take possession and pay compensation for five years or more before the Act of 2013 came into force, in a proceeding for land acquisition pending with concerned authority as on 1.1.2014. The period of subsistence of interim orders passed by court has to be excluded in the computation of five years.

9. Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 does not give rise to new cause of action to question the legality of concluded proceedings of land acquisition. Section 24 applies to a proceeding pending on the date of enforcement of the Act of 2013, i.e., 1.1.2014. It does not revive stale and time-barred claims and does not reopen concluded proceedings nor allow landowners to question the legality of mode of taking possession to reopen proceedings or mode of deposit of compensation in the treasury instead of court to invalidate acquisition."

4. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India settled all proposition of law in the above judgment including the grounds



raised by the petitioner. That apart, the acquisition proceedings have been completed and the subject land was taken over by the government and the same was handed over to the requisition body. Further the requisition body also deposited the compensation as awarded by the Land Acquisition Officer. Therefore, the petitioner failed to satisfy the twin requirements under Section 24 (2) of the New Act, i.e., the physical possession of the land was not taken and the compensation has not been paid/tendered/deposited in accordance with law. In view of the dictum laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the issues raised by the petitioner were settled and therefore, the acquisition proceedings have not been lapsed by operation of law under Section 24 (2) of the new Act i.e., Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. In view of the settled position of law, the writ petition is devoid of merits and liable to be dismissed.

5. In the result, the Writ Petition stands dismissed. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petition is closed. There shall be no order as to costs.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS-VIII)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

1. The Secretary to Government,
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Home Department, Fort St.George,
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Dharmapuri Taluk,
Dharmapuri District.
- +1cc to the Government Pleader, S.R.No.62595

W.P.No.15425 of 2015

SPD(CO)
RLP(16/12/2021)