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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 13.09.2021

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN

W.P.NO.10518 OF 2018

Pichiammal
Rep. by her Power Agent
Pavalayee

... Petitioner

-Vs-

1. The Special Tahsildar (LA)
Neighbourhood Scheme,
Salem - 8.
2. The Executive Engineer and
Administrative Officer,
Salem Housing Unit,
Tamil Nadu Housing Board,
Salem - 8.

... Respondents

Prayer :-

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for the issuance of a Writ of Declaration, declaring that the land acquisition proceedings initiated under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, in respect of the land, more fully described in the schedule to the petitioner, situated at Kondichettypatty Village, Namakkal Taluk and District, as lapsed in view of the Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Act 30 of 2013).

For Petitioner : Mr.R.Prabhakaran

For Respondents

For R1 : Mr.Richardson Wilson
Government Advocate.

For R2 : Mr.I.Sathish



ORDER

The Writ Petition has been filed to declare that the land acquisition proceedings initiated under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, in respect of the land, more fully described in the schedule to the petitioner, situated at Kondichettypatty Village, Namakkal Taluk and District, as lapsed in view of the Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Act 30 of 2013) (herein after called as "the New Act").

2. Heard Mr.R.Prabhakaran, learned counsel appearing for the petitioner, Mr.Richardson Wilson, learned Government Advocate appearing for the first respondent and Mr.I.Sathish, learned Standing Counsel appearing for the second respondent.

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



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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.

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



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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 subject land was acquired for Housing Board Neighbourhood Scheme. The acquisition proceedings have been completed and the subject land was taken over by the government and the possession was handed over to the Tamil Nadu Housing Board, Salem on 17.10.1986. Thereafter, all the revenue records are mutated in the name of the Housing Board ie., the second respondent herein. Further as per Section 28A of the old Act, re-determination amount was also deposited into Sub Court, Namakkal in L.A.O.P.No.2 of 2013 and the same was withdrawn by the petitioner as per Lok Adalat settlement dated 12.04.2014 itself.

5. 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.

6. In the result, the Writ Petition stands dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS II)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

rts

To

1. The Special Tahsildar (LA)
Neighbourhood Scheme,
Salem - 8.
2. The Executive Engineer and
Administrative Officer,
Salem Housing Unit,
Tamil Nadu Housing Board,
Salem - 8.

+lcc to the Government Pleader, S.R.No.46466
+lcc to Mr.I.Sathish, Advocate, S.R.No.46451

W.P.No.10518 of 2018

PA (CO)
PM/07/10/2021