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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 25.10.2021

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN

W.P.NOS.28236 AND 28237 OF 2016

AND

W.M.P.NOS.24381 AND 24382 OF 2016

WP.No.28236 of 2016

1. Muthusamy
2. Palanisamy
3. Jayaraj
4. Thulasimani

...Petitioners

Vs.

1. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by its Secretary to Government,
Housing and Urban Development Department,
Fort St.George,
Chennai - 9.
2. The Revenue Divisional Officer (Land Acquisition),
Muthampalayam Housing Scheme,
Erode Housing Unit,
Brough Road,
Erode - 638 001.
3. The Executive Engineer,
Erode Housing Unit,
Tamil Nadu Housing Board,
Surampatti Naal Road,
Erode - 638 001.

...Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a writ of declaration declaring that the land acquisition proceedings in respect S.F.No.17/3 of Muthampalayam Village, Erode Taluk, Erode District, measuring to an extent of 1.27.5 hectares of the property as having lapsed by virtue of Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.



WP.No.28237 of 2016

1. Chinnappa Gounder
2. Muthusamy Gounder
3. Chinnappa Gounder
4. Ramasamy

...Petitioners

Vs.

1. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by its Secretary to Government,
Housing and Urban Development Department,
Fort St.George,
Chennai - 9.
2. The Revenue Divisional Officer (Land Acquisition),
Muthampalayam Housing Scheme,
Erode Housing Unit,
Brough Road,
Erode - 638 001.
3. The Executive Engineer,
Erode Housing Unit,
Tamil Nadu Housing Board,
Surampatti Naal Road,
Erode - 638 001.

...Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a writ of declaration, declaring that the land acquisition proceedings in respect S.F.No.18/1 of Muthampalayam Village, Erode Taluk, Erode District, measuring to an extent of 1.57.5 hectares of the property as having lapsed by virtue of Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

For Petitioners
in both W.Ps

: Mr.S.Saravanan

For R1 & R2
in both W.Ps

: Mr.M.R.Gokul Krishnan,
Government Advocate

For R3 in both W.Ps

: Mr.I.Sathish,
Standing Counsel



COMMON ORDER

The writ petitions are filed to issue a Writ of Declaration declaring that the land acquisition proceedings initiated by the respondents under Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (hereinafter called as 'the Act') in respect of the petitioners' respective lands in Muthampalayam Village in Erode Taluk and District to an extent of 2 acres stand 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).

2. The case of the petitioners are that they owned their respective lands situated in Muthampalayam Village, Erode. All the lands are 'punja' lands and they are doing cultivation by raising crops. These entire properties to an extent of 153 acres were acquired under the Act for the purpose of neighbourhood scheme by the Tamil Nadu Housing Board. Notification under Section 4(1) of the Act was issued in GO.Ms.Nos.675 and 676 Housing and Urban Development Department dated 16.04.1991. Subsequently, declaration notice was issued under Section 6 of the Act in GO.Ms.Nos.291 and 292 dated 04.06.1992. Thereafter, award was also passed in Award Nos.3 and 4 of 1994 on 10.06.1994.

3. The learned counsel for the petitioners would submit that after passing award, the compensation amount has not been even deposited in the civil court or in revenue deposit. Insofar as possession of the entire land is concerned, it has not been taken over even till today. All the petitioners are in possession and enjoyment of their respective lands and they are continuously doing cultivation. Though the Association called Farmers Association have filed writ petition in the year 1993 and obtained interim orders, subsequently on 16.11.2001, all the writ petitions came to be dismissed by this Court. However, the respondents did not deposit the compensation amount and has not taken over possession of the entire land.

4. The second respondent filed counter and revealed that on the request of the Tamilnadu Housing Board, Erode proposed to acquire the lands admeasuring 436.54.0 hectares in Muthampalayam and Surampatti villages in Erode. The land acquisition proposals were approved by the Board dated 30.07.1987. Subsequently, the extent of the above land acquisition proposals have been reduced to the total extent of 319.51.5 hectares at Muthampalayam due to ayacut areas as per the Board resolution No.24 dated 04.04.1990. All the petitioners' lands covered in the land acquisition proceedings are as follows:

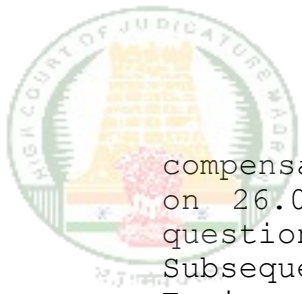


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Survey Numbers of the petitioners	Extent of the land of the petitioners covered under the LA Act
17/3 and 18/1	1.27.5 and 1.57.5 hectares

in SF.No.11/1 to 4, 12/2 to 4, 13/2B, 13/3B, 13/4, 14/1 to 6, 15/2 to 4, 16/1,2,4, 17/1 to 5 and 18/1,2,4,6,7,8,19/1,2 and 20/2 to 4 etc. 3/1 to 5, 4/1 to 4, 6/9,10,7/1 to 3, 8/1 to 4, 9/1, 9/2A, 2B, 2C, 10/1 to 6 in Muthampalayam Village in Erode Taluk.

5. The notification under Section 4(1) of the Act was approved by the Government in GO.Ms.Nos.675 and 676 Housing and Urban Development Department dated 16.04.1991. Thereafter, notices were issued to the land owners and also to the interested persons as contemplated under Section 5-A of the Act and the enquiry was conducted on 19.08.1981. During the enquiry held on 19.08.1981, the petitioners and the interested persons appeared and stated that some of the land owners filed writ petition in WP.No.17514 of 1993 challenging the acquisition proceedings and obtained interim orders. Thereafter, award has been passed on 10.06.1994 in Award Nos.3 and 4 of 1994. Thereafter, award amount has been handed over by the requisition body to the acquisition officer. However, due to the pendency of the writ petitions filed by the association, the requisition body requested to return the amount. Accordingly, the entire award amount has been returned to the requisition body by the acquisition officer. Therefore, award amount has not been deposited in the civil court as contemplated under Section 30 of the Act. The possession of the lands covered under the Act was also not taken over due to existence of the order of this Court. However, the award amount again returned by the Revenue Divisional Officer to the requisition body by the letter dated 04.07.1994. After dismissal of the writ petitions dated 16.11.2001, the requisition body deposited the entire award amount in the account of the Revenue Divisional Officer, Erode. In the meantime, the Office of the Special Tahsildhar, Land Acquisition, Erode was disbanded w.e.f. 30.06.2005. Therefore, the Revenue Divisional Officer, Erode is not able to maintain amounts which was deposited in his name by the requisition body for the acquisition of the lands as per the award Nos.3 and 4 of 1994 covered to an extent of 153 acres. In fact, the Revenue Divisional Officer also requested the Government to appoint Special Tahsildar for follow up action in this regard. Counter also revealed that after disposal of the writ petition, the authority prayed before the Sub Court, Erode to keep the deposit in the name of the land owners towards deposit amount of



compensation. Further, the Sub Court, Erode returned the cheques on 26.03.2016 questioning the deposit being belated and also questioned about the pendency of the writ petitions. Subsequently, the cheques were returned to the Executive Engineer & Administrative Officer, Tamil Nadu Housing Board by way of cheque on 15.04.2016.

6. Therefore, admittedly the entire award amount now returned to the requisition body i.e. Tamil Nadu Housing Board and the award amount has not been deposited in any civil court or revenue deposit. Insofar as possession of the respective properties of the petitioners are concerned, they are still in possession and enjoyment of their respective lands and doing cultivation. There is no record to show that the physical possession of the property has been taken over by the respondents. That apart, insofar as the total extent of the land admeasuring 153 acres are concerned, the respondents did not take any steps to execute the neighbourhood scheme at Muthampalayam. In fact, some of the land owners have already laid out the entire land and converted into house plots. Further Erode Taluk Small Farmers Association, Muthampalayam of Erode filed writ petitions in WP.Nos.17514 of 1993, 14230 of 2000 and obtained interim order as against the acquisition proceedings. All the writ petitions were dismissed by this Court on 16.11.2001. However, after dismissal of the writ petitions, the respondents did not take any steps to deposit the award amount before the Sub Court or in the revenue deposit. Insofar as the possession of the land also is concerned, no land has been taken over to implement the neighbourhood scheme. Thereafter, after period of many years, the present writ petitions have been filed by the individual land owners and obtained interim order. Both these writ petitions have been filed challenging the land acquisition proceedings under Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 as lapsed for the reason that the award amount has not been deposited and no land has been taken over. Therefore, all the petitioners have made out their case and admittedly no award amount has been deposited even till today before the civil court or in revenue deposit. All the petitioners are in possession and enjoyment of their respective lands which were acquired by the respondents and even till today they are doing cultivation. Therefore, the entire land acquisition proceedings have been lapsed.

7. Accordingly, both the writ petitions are allowed. The Tahsildar, Erode is directed to restore the revenue records in the name of the respective petitioners for their respective lands within a period of six weeks from the date of receipt of



copy of this order. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petitions are closed. No order as to costs.

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Sd/-
Assistant Registrar (CS VII)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

1. The Secretary to Government,
Housing and Urban Development Department,
Fort St.George,
Chennai - 9.
2. The Revenue Divisional Officer (Land Acquisition),
Muthampalayam Housing Scheme,
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Brough Road,
Erode - 638 001.
3. The Executive Engineer,
Erode Housing Unit,
Tamil Nadu Housing Board,
Surampatti Naal Road,
Erode - 638 001.
4. The Tahsildar,
Erode.

+1CC to Mr.S.Saravanan, Advocate, Sr.No.55005
+1CC to Mr.Government Pleader, Sr.No.55084

W.P.Nos.28236 and 28237 of 2016

SJ (CO)
K.RK. (22.11.2021)