IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CWP-PIL No. 14 of 2021 (O&M)
Date of decision:- 29.01.2021

Harmeet Singh .....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and others ...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RAVI SHANKER JHA, CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN PALLI, JUDGE.

Present:- Mr. Hardik Ahluwalia, Advocate, for the petitioner.
Mr. Vikas Mohan Gupta, Addl. Advocate General, Punjab, for the respondents.
(The aforesaid presence is being recorded through video conferencing since the proceedings are being conducted in virtual Court).

* * * *

RAVI SHANKER JHA, C.J. (ORAL)

This petition has been filed by the petitioner by way of public interest litigation seeking quashing of letter dated 27.01.2015 (Annexure P-1) whereby the revised felling policy for *Mustarka Malkan* land has been issued by the respondent-authorities. The petitioner has also raised several issues regarding un-workability of the aforesaid policy as well as the issues regarding misuse and abuse of the same by the Timber Mafia. The petitioner has also raised the issue that joint holders of the land from where the trees are cut are deprived of any benefit, which they are otherwise entitled to, from the sale of the timber felled by the respondent-authorities or the contractors from the land in question.

2. Learned Additional Advocate General appearing for the respondent-State of Punjab submits that the respondent-authorities are in the process of preparing a revised felling policy and all the aforesaid grievances of the petitioner would be considered by the respondent-authorities while framing the new felling policy for *Mustarka Malkan* land. Learned Additional Advocate General, Punjab further submits that the present felling policy is going to expire on 31.01.2021 and therefore, no permits, in any case, are going to be issued by the respondent-authorities after the said period. He further submits that in case any fresh representation is filed by the petitioner before the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, the same shall also be considered by the respondent-authorities while preparing the revised felling policy.

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3. In view of the aforesaid undertaking/statement given by learned Additional Advocate General, Punjab, the petition is disposed of with a direction to the respondent-authorities to treat the present petition as a representation and deal with the same and to also consider any representation, if any, filed by the petitioner or any other person before the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Department of Forest and Wildlife Preservation, Punjab, in respect of the objections and suggestions relating the felling policy for *Mustarka Malkan* land.

The petitioner or any other person would also be at liberty to approach the respondent-authorities by bringing to their notice any violation of the felling policy by the contractors or other persons, instances of over felling or illegal felling, imposing of fine etc. and taking other penal action, who violates the felling policy or the law. The individual persons, who are aggrieved by any kind of denial of right of benefit from the felling exercise, may also approach the respondent authorities.

With these observations and directions, the petition stands disposed of.

(RAVI SHANKER JHA)
CHIEF JUSTICE

(ARUN PALLI)
JUDGE

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Whether speaking/reasoned	Yes/No
Whether reportable	Yes/No

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