

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.11469 of 2022

1. Puneet Pushkar Son of Late Gautam Singh, Resident of Wards No. 12, Nagar Panchayat Maharajganj, Village - Pasnauli, P.S. Maharajganj, District - Siwan.
2. Dharmendra Gupta Son of Late Dharmnath Prasad, Resident of Wards No. 05, Nagar Panchayat Maharajganj, P.S. Maharajganj, District - Siwan.

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The State of Bihar through the Chief Secretary, General Administration, Government of Bihar, Patna.
2. The Principal Secretary, Urban Development and Housing Department, Bihar, Patna.
3. The State Election Commission, Bihar, Patna.
4. The Secretary, State Election Commission, Bihar, Patna.
5. The District Magistrate, Siwan.
6. The Chairman, Nagar Panchayat Maharajganj, Siwan.
7. The Chief Executive Officer, Nagar Panchayat, Maharajganj, Siwan.

... .. Respondent/s

Appearance :

For the Petitioner/s	:	Mr.Surendra Kishore Thakur, Advocate
For the Respondent/s	:	Mr.Yogendra Pd. Sinha (Aag7)

CORAM: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
and
HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE S. KUMAR

ORAL JUDGMENT

(Per: HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE S. KUMAR)

(The proceedings of the Court are being conducted through Video Conferencing and the Advocates joined the proceedings through Video Conferencing from their residence.)

Date : 12-08-2022

Heard learned counsel for the parties.

Petitioners have prayed for following reliefs:-

(i) For issuance of writ in the appropriate nature commanding and directing the Respondent Principal Secretary, Urban Development & Housing Department, Bihar, Patna and other Respondent authorities to take steps for reconstitution of Wards under Maharajganj Nagar Panchayat, Siwan in view of Census, 2011 in the interest of the public at large in terms of Section 13 of the Bihar Municipal Act, 2007.

(ii) For further direction to the Respondent Principal Secretary, Urban Development & Housing Department, Bihar, Patna to dispose of representation of the petitioner by reasoned and speaking order taking final decision with regard to reconstitution of the Wards s under

the Nagar Panchayat Maharajganj as in the State of Bihar in different districts the reconstitution of Wards or new constitution of Municipalities has been made.

(iii) For further direction to the Respondent authorities to make afresh notification after reconstitution of the Wards s after taking report from the concerned Officer so that the peoples who are residing under the Nagar Panchayat Maharajganj and two of the villages namely Dhanchhuha and Jagdishpur who

will be benefitted after reconstitution of the Wards as the said village neither under the Gram Panchayat nor under the Nagar Panchayat resulting the peoples at large of the said villages have been debarred from the different schemes of the State Government as well as Central Government.

(iv) And for any other relief/reliefs for which the petitioners are found to be entitled in the eye of law.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *D. N. Jeevaraj Vs. Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka & Ors*, (2016) 2 SCC

653, paragraphs 34 to 38 observed as under:-

“34. The learned counsel for the parties addressed us on the question of the bona fides of Nagalaxmi Bai in filing a public interest litigation. We leave this question open and do not express any opinion on the correctness or otherwise of the decision of the High Court in this regard.

35. However, we note that generally speaking, procedural technicalities ought to take a back seat in public interest litigation. This Court held in *Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of U.P.* [*Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of U.P.*, 1989 Supp (1) SCC 504] to this effect as follows: (SCC p. 515, para 16)

“16. The writ petitions before us are not inter parties disputes and have been raised by way of public interest litigation and the controversy before the court is as to whether for social safety and for creating a hazardless environment for the people to live in, mining in the area should be permitted or stopped. We may not be taken to have said that for public interest litigations, procedural laws do not apply. At the same time it has to be remembered that every technicality in the procedural law is not available as a defence when a matter of grave public importance is for consideration before the court.”

36. A considerable amount has been said about public interest litigation in *R&M Trust* [*R&M Trust v. Koramangala Residents Vigilance Group*, (2005) 3 SCC 91] and it is not necessary for us to dwell any further on this except to say that in issues pertaining to good governance, the courts ought to be somewhat more liberal in entertaining public interest litigation. However, in matters that may not be of moment or a litigation essentially directed against one organisation or individual (such

as the present litigation which was directed only against Sadananda Gowda and later Jeevaraj was impleaded) ought not to be entertained or should be rarely entertained. Other remedies are also available to public spirited litigants and they should be encouraged to avail of such remedies.

37. In such cases, that might not strictly fall in the category of public interest litigation and for which other remedies are available, insofar as the issuance of a writ of mandamus is concerned, this Court held in *Union of India v. S.B. Vohra* [*Union of India v. S.B. Vohra*, (2004) 2 SCC 150: 2004 SCC (L&S) 363] that: (SCC p. 160, paras 12-13)

“12. Mandamus literally means a command. The essence of mandamus in England was that it was a royal command issued by the King's Bench (now Queen's Bench) directing performance of a public legal duty.

13. A writ of mandamus is issued in favour of a person who establishes a legal right in himself. A writ of mandamus is issued against a person who has a legal duty to perform but has failed and/or neglected to do so. Such a legal duty emanates from either in discharge of a public duty or by operation of law. The writ of mandamus is of a most extensive remedial nature. The object of mandamus is to prevent disorder from a failure of justice and is required to be granted in all cases where law has established no specific remedy and whether justice despite demanded has not been granted.”

38. A salutary principle or a well-recognised rule that needs to be kept in mind before issuing a writ of mandamus was stated in *Saraswati Industrial Syndicate Ltd. v. Union of India* [*Saraswati Industrial Syndicate Ltd. v. Union of India*, (1974) 2 SCC 630] in the following words: (SCC pp. 641-42, paras 24-25) 38. A salutary principle or a well-recognised rule that needs to be kept in mind before issuing a writ of mandamus was stated in *Saraswati Industrial Syndicate Ltd. v. Union of India* [*Saraswati Industrial Syndicate Ltd. v. Union of India*, (1974) 2 SCC 630] in the following words: (SCC pp. 641-42, paras 24-25)

“24. ... The powers of the High Court under Article 226 are not strictly confined to the limits to which proceedings for prerogative writs are subject in English practice. Nevertheless, the well-recognised rule that no writ or order in the nature of a mandamus would issue when there is no failure to perform a mandatory duty applies in this country as well. Even in cases of alleged breaches of mandatory duties, the salutary general rule,

which is subject to certain exceptions, applied by us, as it is in England, when a writ of mandamus is asked for, could be stated as we find it set out in *Halsbury's Laws of England* (3rd Edn.), Vol. 11, p. 106:

‘198. *Demand for performance must precede application.*—As a general rule the order will not be granted unless the party complained of has known what it was he was required to do, so that he had the means of considering whether or not he should comply, and it must be shown by evidence that there was a distinct demand of that which the party seeking the mandamus desires to enforce, and that that demand was met by a refusal.’

25. In the cases before us there was no such demand or refusal. Thus, no ground whatsoever is shown here for the issue of any writ, order, or direction under Article 226 of the Constitution.”

After the matter was heard for some time, learned counsel for the petitioners, under instructions, states that petitioners shall be content if a direction is issued to the respondent **no.2, The Principal Secretary, Urban Development and Housing Department, Bihar, Patna** to consider and decide the representation which the petitioners shall be filing within a period of four weeks from today for redressal of the grievance(s).

Learned counsel for the respondents states that if such a representation is filed by the petitioners, the authority concerned shall consider and dispose it of expeditiously and preferably within a period of four months from the date of its filing along with a copy of this order.

Statement accepted and taken on record.

As such, petition stands disposed of on the following terms:-

(a) Petitioners shall approach the authority concerned within a period of four weeks from today by filing a representation for redressal of the grievance(s);

(b) The authority concerned shall consider and dispose it of expeditiously by a reasoned and speaking order preferably within a period of four months from the date of its filing along with a copy of this order;

(c) The order assigning reasons shall be communicated to the petitioner;

(d) Needless to add, while considering such representation, principles of natural justice shall be followed and due opportunity of hearing afforded to the parties;

(e) Also, opportunity to place on record all relevant materials/documents shall be granted to the parties;

(f) Equally, liberty is reserved to the petitioners to take recourse to such alternative remedies as are otherwise available in accordance with law;

(g) We are hopeful that as and when petitioners take recourse to such remedies, as are otherwise available in law, before the appropriate forum, the same shall be dealt with, in

accordance with law and with reasonable dispatch;

(h) Liberty reserved to the petitioners to approach the appropriate forum/Court, should the need so arise subsequently on the same and subsequent cause of action;

(i) We have not expressed any opinion on merits. All issues are left open;

The petition stands disposed of in the aforesaid terms.

Interlocutory Application(s), if any, stands disposed of.

(Sanjay Karol, CJ)

(S. Kumar, J)

Sanjay/-

AFR/NAFR	NAFR
CAV DATE	NA
Uploading Date	16.08.2022
Transmission Date	NA