

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.20616 of 2021

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Anil Kumar son of Late Brij Bihari Prasad, Resident of Village-
Mahammdpur, Kachnar, P.S. Ravilganj, District-Saran (Chapra).

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The Union of India through Chief General Manager, Nagar Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur, U.P.
2. General Manager, Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.
3. The Divisional Rail Manager, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
4. The Senior D.E.N. II Eastern Railway Varanasi (U.P.).
5. The Assistant Divisional Engineer, Eastern Railway Balia (U.P.).
6. The Section Engineer, North East Railway, Gorakhpur.
7. The State of Bihar through The District Magistrate, Siwan, Chapra.
8. The District Magistrate Saran and Chapra, Bihar.
9. The Circle Officer, Rivilganj, District-Chapra, Bihar.
10. The Block Development Officer, Rivilganj, District-Chapra.

... .. Respondent/s

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Appearance :

For the Petitioner/s : Mr.Sri Krishna Ranjan, Advocate
For the Respondent/s : Mr.Amit Prakash (Ga13)

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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 : 10-01-2022

Heard learned counsel for the parties.

Petitioner has prayed for the following relief(s):-

- (i) For issuance of an appropriate writ/writs, order/orders, direction/directions to the respondent authorities to set up an enquiry in the matter of Construction of railway underpass road bearing No. 55C situated between Chapra and Gautam Asthan Railway Station in Chapra Balia

rail section in which Construction of under pass has been made in contravention of approved map, Estimation and Standard just only for emblezment of the railway money which is adversely affecting its usefulness to the local habitants wing.

- (ii) For issuance of an appropriate writ/writs, order/orders, direction/directions to punish the errant official and contractor who are found guilty in enquiry for emblezment of railway money in the construction of under pass No. 55C.

- (iii) For issuance of an appropriate writ/writs, order/orders, direction/directions to the authorities of the railway to construct the under pass No. 55C in accordance with approved map, Estimate and Standard.

- (iv) For issuance of an appropriate writ/writs, order/orders, direction/directions to the authorities of railway trying their best to forcefully close the temporary road which is being used by the local habitants in their day to day routine work in view of the fact that so called duly constructed under pass road is of no use for communication.
- (v) For issuance of appropriate direction to the authorities to correct the course of the village drain which is draining on the land after crossing the road near the village on the western flank instead of eastern flank following the natural course in the river Sindhu as it was earlier draining since long.
- (vi) For any other relief/reliefs as your Lordships may deem fit and proper in the light of stated facts and circumstances.

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)

“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 petitioner, under instructions, states that petitioner shall be content if a direction is issued to the authority concerned, respondent no.10, the Block Development Officer, Rivilganj, District - Chapra or any of the

statutory authority to consider and decide the representation which the petitioner 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 petitioner, 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 in the following terms:-

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

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

(e) We are hopeful that as and when petitioner takes 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;

(f) Liberty reserved to the petitioner to approach the Court, if the need so arises subsequently on the same and subsequent cause of action;

(g) Liberty also reserved to the petitioner to make a mention for listing of the petition on priority basis. As and when any such mention is made, Registry shall take steps for listing the petition at the earliest.

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

(i) The proceedings, during the time of current Pandemic- Covid-19 shall be conducted through digital mode, unless the parties otherwise mutually agree to meet in person i.e. physical mode;

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	11.01.2022
Transmission Date	NA