

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.15491 of 2022

Priya Ranjan Kumar son of Shambhu Nath Singh resident of - Lal Pari,
Mandap gali, Brahampura, M.I.T., P.S.- Brahampura, District- Muzaffarpur.
... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The State of Bihar through The District Magistrate cum District Election Officer, Nagar Nigam, Muzaffarpur.
2. The Bihar State Election Commission, Bihar, Patna.
3. The Additional District Magistrate cum returning officer of Municipal Corporation, Muzaffarpur.
4. The Sub- Divisional Officer, East Muzaffarpur.
5. The 94 Muzaffarpur Bihar Bidhan Shabha, Booth level officer of booth No. 6, Muzaffarpur.
6. 94 Muzaffarpur Bihar Bidhan Shabha, Booth level officer of booth No. 8, Muzaffarpur.
7. 94 Muzaffarpur Bihar Bidhan Shabha, Booth level officer of booth No. 9, Muzaffarpur.
8. 94 Muzaffarpur Bihar Bidhan Shabha, Booth level officer of booth No. 10, Muzaffarpur.
9. 94 Muzaffarpur Bihar Bidhan Shabha, Booth level officer of booth No. 20, Muzaffarpur.
10. 94 Muzaffarpur Bihar Bidhan Shabha, Booth level officer of booth No. 21, Muzaffarpur.
11. 94 Muzaffarpur Bihar Bidhan Shabha, Booth level officer of booth No. 27, Muzaffarpur.

... .. Respondent/s

Appearance :

For the Petitioner/s	:	Mr. Yugal Kishore, Advocate
For the Respondent/s	:	Mr. Prashant Pratap, GP-2
		Mr. Awadhesh Kumar, Advocate
		Mr. Sanjeev Nikesh, Advocate

CORAM: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
and
HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE PARTHA SARTHY
ORAL JUDGMENT
(Per: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE)

(The proceedings of the Court are being conducted by Hon'ble the Chief Justice/ Hon'ble Judges through Video Conferencing from their residential offices/residences. Also, the Advocates and the Staffs joined the proceedings through Video Conferencing from their residences/offices.)



Date : 11-11-2022

Heard learned counsel for the parties.

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

“For issuance of an appropriate writ in the nature of Mandamus commanding and directing the respondents to correct the voter list

published in year 2022 of 94 Muzaffarpur Bihar Bidhan Sabha of ward no.- 06 of municipal election of Nagar Nigam, Muzaffarpur by which the voter of the ward no.- 6 has wrongly changed and name of some of the voter (i.e. 164 in number with evidence or more approx) of ward no.- 6 has wrongly entered in Ward no.- 3 and such act has done by the respondents without any change in Peri-siman area of ward no.- 6 or any other ward and like this wrongly the respondents have make entry of 92 or more than that people in voter list of Ward no.- 6 from ward no.- 5.

- (ii) For issuance of an appropriate writ in the nature of Mandamus, commanding and directing the respondents to make verification of the name of the voter of ward no.- 6 from 2017 voter list and there after correct the voter list of 2022 published by the respondents, as there is no change in Peri-siman area of ward and as such and there is gross negligence & wrong done by the respondents by shifting the voter from one ward to another and such act has done by the respondent on direction of one of the then ward councilor of ward no.-6 Nagar Nigam Muzaffarpur namely Javed Akhatar and also direct the respondents to make correction in voter list of ward no.- 6 after calling objection from the resident of the ward no.- 6.
- (iii) For issuance of direction to the respondents to verify the final voter list from provisional voter list published in year 2022 and thereafter correct the voter list of Ward no.- 6 as in provisional there is name of 5700 voters, but in final voter list total voter became 6400, which itself shows that how the respondents have changed the voter list of



ward no.- 6 and this will also be verified from voter list of 2017 itself and this clearly shows how the respondents have done wrong in voter list of ward no.- 6 along with connecting wards of the area of Municipal corporation of Muzaffarpur.

- (iv) For issuance of direction to the respondents to verify the voter of ward no.- 3, 5 & 6 as the area of these wards are connected to each other and as per pari-siman area of these wards name of the voters of these wards who have wrongly shifted from one ward to another, so direction should be given to respondents to re-list the name of voters in their original ward as per pari-siman area, as the voters of wards whose name has listed in another ward have no residential address of such other ward and they are still permanent resident of ward no.- 6, like this other voters whose name has transferred in ward no.- 6 have no resident in ward no.- 6, but their name has added in ward no.- 6, which is gross negligence done by the respondents and such illegality should be rectified by them as now in the light of order dated 04/10/22, passed in CWJC no.- 12514/2022 with other analogous cases, the election of the nagar nigam has suspended on certain grounds and directions have given to respondents in the writ, so there is ample time with the present respondents to modify/ correct the voter list of ward no.- 6.
- (v) For issuance of any other writ/writs /order/orders /direction / directions to the respondents to correct voter list published in year 2022 of ward no.- 6 as per law after calling objection from people of ward no.- 6 as well as ward no.- 5 & 3 and / or grant such reliefs for

which the petitioner is legally entitled for, in the fact and circumstances of the case.”

Learned counsel for the State opposes the petition stating that the petition is misconceived; raises disputed question of fact; is not in public interest; and that the issue can be best resolved at the local level by the appropriate authorities.

After the matter was heard for some time, finding the



Bench not to be in favour with the submissions made across the Bar, learned counsel for the petitioner, under instructions, states that petitioner shall be content if a direction is issued to the authority concerned 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.

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)

“**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.”

As such, petition stands disposed of on the following

terms:-



(a) Petitioner shall approach the authority concerned i.e. Respondent No. 3, namely the Additional District Magistrate cum returning officer of Municipal Corporation, Muzaffarpur within a period of four weeks from today by filing a representation for redressal of the grievance(s);

(b) The said authority shall consider and dispose it of expeditiously by passing 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 petitioner to take recourse to such alternative remedies as are otherwise available in accordance with law;

(g) 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;

(h) Also, liberty reserved to the petitioner to approach the 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;

(j) The proceedings 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, shall stand disposed of.

(Sanjay Karol, CJ)

(Partha Sarthy, J)

Amrendra/PKP

AFR/NAFR	
CAV DATE	
Uploading Date	14/11/2022
Transmission Date	

