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IN THE HIGH COURT AT CALCUTTA
CONSTITUTIONAL WRIT JURISDICTION
APPELLATE SIDE

W.P.A. No. 8919 of 2022

Priti Ranjan Giri
-vs.-
The State of West Bengal & Ors.

Mr. Anindya Sundar Das,
Mr. Shaunak Ghosh
Ms. Avipsa Sarkar
...for the petitioner

Mr. Srijan Nayak,
Ms. Rituparna Maitra
...for the State

Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner submits that the impugned bill, annexed at page 15 of the writ petition, is palpably exorbitant, particularly in view of the fact that a substantial portion of the period for which the subject bill was raised, was covered by the Pandemic period, when such huge consumption, as indicated, could not have been made by the petitioner. That apart, it is submitted that the bill itself was sent to the petitioner on April 18, 2022, which was the last date for taking advantage of the rebate provided therein, thus making it impossible for the petitioner to take such advantage.

Learned counsel appearing for the Distribution Licensee submits that the petitioner has huge arrears in respect of the electric meter-in-question and unless such arrears are cleared off by the petitioner, it is open for the Distribution Licensee to take appropriate steps for non-payment of bill.

It is apparent from the tenor of the writ petition that the present dispute pertains to a billing dispute, which has to be adjudicated by the concerned Grievance Redressal Officer.

Although contradictory submissions have been made by the petitioner and the Distribution Licensee as regards the veracity of the bill and/or the arrears due on the part of the petitioner, the writ court is not the appropriate forum to go into such disputed factual issues on merits.

Accordingly, W.P.A. No. 8919 of 2022 is disposed of by granting liberty to the petitioner to approach the concerned Grievance Redressal Officer with the dispute as raised in the present writ petition in respect of the disputed bill.

If so approached, the concerned Grievance Redressal Officer shall decide the issue in accordance with law, upon giving adequate opportunity of hearing to all concerned, including the petitioner and the WBSEDCL, as expeditiously as possible, preferably

within six weeks after reference to the Grievance Redressal Officer.

There will be no order as to costs.

Urgent photostat certified copies of this order, if applied for, be made available to the parties upon compliance of all necessary formalities.

(Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya, J.)