

S/L 22
14.01.2022
Court. No. 19
suwayan

WPA 18922 of 2021

Pashupati Das & Ors.
Vs.
The State of West Bengal & Ors.
(Through Video Conference)

Sk. Anwar Ali
Mr. Jayanta Kumar Das

...for the Petitioners

Mr. Subhojit Saha

... for respondent no.8

Mr. Supratim Dhar

...for the State

Affidavit of service filed in Court today be kept with the record.

The petitioners are some of the elected members of Usmanpur Gram Panchayat. The petitioners are aggrieved because the prescribed authority did not take any steps on the basis of the requisition dated November 8, 2021. The petitioners submit that the prescribed authority must be directed to convene a meeting on the basis of the requisition for removal of the Pradhan.

Mr. Dhar, learned Advocate appearing on behalf of the State/respondents and Mr. Saha learned Advocate appearing on behalf of the respondent no.8, submit that the requisition has lost its force. According to the learned Advocates, the requisition was brought on November 8, 2021 and the same cannot be revived after a period of two months when the law prescribed that the entire action must be taken

on the basis of the said requisition within the statutory period of thirty days under Section 12(10) of the West Bengal Panchyat Act, 1973.

Mr. Saha and Mr. Dhar both submit that the petitioners had levelled some allegations against the Pradhan which cannot be sustained in law, as a stigmatic requisition cannot be acted upon.

This Court finds that the petitioners do not want to proceed on the basis of the requisition which was stigmatic, but are seeking directions of this Court for reaching the requisition brought on November 8, 2021 to its logical conclusion.

Having considered the contentions of the parties, this Court is of the opinion that the requisition cannot be revived at this stage. The requisition has lost its force.

The Court does not find any reason as to why the prescribed authority did not call the meeting and allowed the statutory period to lapse.

It is the democratic right of the requisitionists, to seek the removal of their leader who has lost their confidence. They are entitled to enforce such right and any delay by the authorities will actually frustrate such right and destroy the democratic set up of the institution. These institutions must run on democratic principles. In democracy all persons heading public bodies can continue provided they enjoy the confidence of the persons who comprise such bodies. This

explains why this provision of no-confidence motion has been provided under the law.

In the decision of *Ujjwal Kumar Singha v. State of W.B.* reported in 2017 SCC Online Cal 4636, it was held that:

“The entire impugned judgment and order is supported with cogent reasons and there is no palpable infirmity noticed therein which would warrant any interference in an Intra-Court Mandamus Appeal. It appears that the appellant/writ petitioner resorted to taking shelter under the high prerogative jurisdiction of the High Court under Article 226 of the Constitution of India only for the purpose of thwarting the well-established democratic principles which govern the running of public institutions such as a Gram Panchayat, being at the lowest tier of self-governance at the village level in the three-tier Panchayati Raj System. In this context, one may take notice of the observations made by this Court in *Farida Bibi v. The State of West Bengal* reported in 2016 (5) CHN (Cal) 258, while following the observations made by the Supreme Court in *Usha Bharti v. State of U.P.* reported in (2014) 7 SCC 663 : AIR 2014 SC 1686, wherein it was observed to the effect that it is the fundamental right of democracy that those who have been elected can also be removed by expressing, ‘No Confidence Motion’ for the elected person. In an institution which runs on democratic principles, a person can continue to be its head so long he/she enjoys the confidence of the persons who comprised such a body. This is the essence of democratic republicanism which was taken note of by the Supreme Court in *Usha Bharti* (supra).

The appeal has no merit and is liable to be dismissed along with the application for stay with exemplary costs assessed at 500 G.Ms. which shall be deposited with the State Legal Services Authority for being earmarked for utilisation by the Mediation and Conciliation Committee of the High Court.”

As the outer limit of thirty days provided under Section 12(10) of the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973 has expired, the requisition dated November 8, 2021 as also subsequent actions, if any, are set aside and cancelled.

Under such circumstances, the requisitionists are granted liberty to bring a fresh requisition in accordance with law. If the said requisition is brought, the prescribed authority shall reach the requisition to its logical conclusion upon complying with the provisions of Sections 12(3) and 12(4) onwards of the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973, by strictly adhering to the time limit fixed by the statute under Section 12(10) of the said Act. The bar under Section 12(11) shall not apply as this is not a case that the requisition failed for want of quorum or could not be carried through.

It is further made clear that the prescribed authority shall be entitled to seek police protection and if such request is made, the police authority shall render all support without any delay and laches. It is also made clear that if the Pradhan tries to evade service of requisition then the requisitionists shall be entitled to serve the same in the office through the secretary or the office assistant and if, such service is not accepted, then the requisitionists will be entitled to paste the same at the office of the Pradhan in addition to sending the same by registered post to the residence of the Pradhan.

This writ petition is, thus, disposed of.

There will be no order as to costs.

All parties are to act on the basis of the server copy of this order.

(Shampa Sarkar, J.)