

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
BENCH AT AURANGABAD**

WRIT PETITION NO.1528 OF 2021

Bhalchandra Sonu Wani

Age: 80 years, Occu: Agriculturist,
R/o. Bazarpeth, Near Rath Chowk,
Parola, Tq. Parola, Dist. Jalgaon

... Petitioner

Versus

1. The State of Maharashtra
Through its District Collector,
Jalgaon, Dist. Jalgaon.

2. The Special Land Acquisition Officer-(1),
Uppar Tapi Project (Hatnoor),
Jalgaon, Tq. & Dist. Jalgaon.

... Respondents

...

Mr. V. B. Patil, Advocate for the Petitioner

Mrs. G. L. Deshpande, AGP for Respondent Nos.1 & 2

...

CORAM : NITIN B. SURYAWANSHI, J.

DATE : 14th JULY, 2022

ORAL JUDGMENT :

1. **RULE.** Rule made returnable forthwith. Heard finally with the consent of the parties.

2. This petition filed under Article 226 and 227 of the Constitution of India, impugns the judgment and order dated 21.02.2012 passed by the learned Joint Civil Judge, Senior Division, Jalgaon, in Land Acquisition Reference No.3/1996, thereby

dismissing the land acquisition reference, as the petitioner failed to adduce evidence.

3. Indisputably the issue involved in this petition is already covered by the judgment of this Court (Coram: V.K. Jadhav, J.) in Writ Petition No.12795 of 2019 and connected writ petitions, wherein this Court has held that the reference has to be decided on merits. Since, in those matters, references were rejected due to failure on the part of the petitioners therein to adduce evidence, this Court has held that the reference Court did not decide the references on merits and therefore set aside the orders passed by the reference Court and restored the references and directed to decide the references on merits.

4. Admittedly, in the present case also the reference is not decided on merits and the same is dismissed solely on the ground that the petitioner failed to adduce evidence. The present case is therefore squarely covered by the above-referred decision. Hence, the following order:-

ORDER

- (I) The writ petition is allowed.
- (II) The impugned judgment and order dated 21.02.2012 passed by the learned Joint Civil Judge, Senior Division, Jalgaon, in Land

Acquisition Reference No.3/1996 is hereby quashed and set aside.

- (III) The matter is relegated back to the concerned reference Court for decision on merits, after giving an opportunity to the respective parties.
- (IV) The reference Court shall expedite the hearing of the matter and decide the same within a period of six months from the date of receipt of this order. Parties to co-operate.
- (V) Rule is made absolute in above terms. No costs.

[NITIN B. SURYAWANSHI, J.]