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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 07.03.2022

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THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE P.D. AUDIKESAVALU

W.P. No. 5150 of 2022

and

W.M.P. Nos. 5248, 5250 and 5251 of 2022

C. Ranjani

...Petitioner

-vs-

1. The Principal Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu,
Department of School Education,
Fort St.George, Chennai- 600 009.
2. The Director of Elementary Education,
College Road, Chennai - 600 006.
3. The Chief Educational Officer,
Tiruchirapalli District.
4. The District Educational Officer,
Paramasivapuram,
Lalgudi, Tiruchirapalli District.
5. The Block Educational Officer,
Mannachanallur,
Tiruchirapalli District.
6. The Headmistress,
Panchayat Union Middle School,
Valmalpalayam,
Mannachanallur Block,
Tiruchirapalli.
7. The Headmistress,
Panchayat Union Primary School,
Pullambadi West, Pullambadi Block,
Tiruchirapalli District.

... Respondents

Prayer:- Writ Petitions filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, 1950, praying to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the records relating to the impugned orders passed by the Second Respondent in Na. Ka. No.



009736/E1/2021 dated 14.02.2022, the consequential proceedings issued by the Fourth Respondent District Educational Officer in Na. Ka. No. 134/AA2/2022 dated 24.02.2022 and proceedings of the Fifth Respondent in Na. Ka. No. 0074/A1/2022 dated 28.02.2022, quash the same and further direct the Fourth and Fifth Respondents to permit the Petitioner to continue as Secondary Grade Teacher in any one of the available vacancies in any other school in the particular Block namely, Mannachanallur Block in terms of the Clause 2 (a)(1)(vii) in G.O. Ms. No. 176 dated 17.12.2021.

For Petitioner : Ms. H.Mary Sowmi Rexi

For Respondents : Mr. Stalin Abhimanyu
Additional Government Pleader (Edn)

O R D E R

Heard Ms. H.Mary Sowmi Rexi, Learned Counsel for the Petitioner and Mr. Stalin Abhimanyu, Learned Government Pleader (Education), who takes notice for the Respondents, and perused the materials placed on record, apart from the pleadings of the parties.

2. The Writ Petition has been filed challenging the Order in Na. Ka.No. 009736/E1/2021 dated 14.02.2022 passed by the Second Respondent and the consequential Proceedings in Na. Ka. No. 134/AA2/2022 dated 24.02.2022 issued by the Fourth Respondent and the Proceedings in Na. Ka. No. 0074/ A1/2022 dated 28.02.2022 issued by the Fifth Respondent and to consequently direct the Fourth and Fifth Respondents to permit the Petitioner to continue as Secondary Grade Teacher in any one of the available vacancies in any other school in the particular Block namely, Mannachanallur Block in terms of clause 2(a)(1)(vii) to G.O. Ms. No. 176 dated 17.12.2021.

3. It is not in dispute that the school of the Sixth Respondent in which the Petitioner is working is located within the territorial limits of jurisdiction of the Madurai Bench of this Court. The only reason stated for having approached the Principal Seat of this Court instead of approaching the Madurai Bench of this Court is that the office of the First and Second Respondents are situated at Chennai within the territorial limits of jurisdiction of the Principal Seat of this Court. There cannot be any doubt that the First and Second Respondents exercise powers for the whole of the State of Tamil Nadu, but that cannot be said to mean as if the cause of action arises within the territorial limits of jurisdiction of the Principal Seat of this Court.



4. In this context, reference may be made to the decision of the Division Bench of this Court in C.Ramesh -vs- Director General of Police, Chennai (Order dated 06.06.2013 in W.P. (MD) No. 8790 of 2013), in which it has been held as follows:-

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7. Exercise of jurisdiction is based on arising of the cause of action, either in whole or in part in any one of the said Revenue Districts. [See RAJASTHAN HIGH COURT ADVOCATES' ASSOCIATION Vs. UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS (2001 (2) SCC 294) and B.STALIN Vs. THE REGISTRAR, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA AND OTHERS (2012 (3) LW 489 (FB))].

8. It should be remembered that the part of cause of action must be substantial in nature. The territorial jurisdiction of the Court is linked with the place of accrual of cause of action. [See U.P. RASHTRIYA CHINI MILL ADHIKARI PARISHAD, LUCKNOW Vs. STATE OF U.P. AND OTHERS (1995 (4) SCC 738)].

9. Referring to KUSUM INGOTS & ALLOYS LTD. Vs. UNION OF INDIA (2004 (3) CTC 365), a Full Bench of this Court in SANJOS JEWELLERS Vs. SYNDICATE BANK, BANGALORE AND OTHERS (2007 (5) CTC 305), held as under:- "30. We must, however, remind ourselves that even if a small part of cause of action arises within the territorial jurisdiction of the High Court, the same by itself may not be considered to be a determinative factor compelling the High Court to decide the matter on merit. In appropriate cases, the Court may refuse to exercise its discretionary jurisdiction by invoking the Doctrine of forum conveniens. [See BHAGAT SINGH BUGGA Vs. DEWAN JAGBIR SAWHNEY, AIR 1941 CAL 670 : ILR (1941) 1 CAL 490; MADANLAL JALAN Vs. MADANLAL, 1945 (49) CWN 357: AIR 1949 CAL 495; BHARAT COKING COAL LTD. Vs. JHARIA TALKIES & COLD STORAGE (P) LTD., 1997 CWN 122; S.S.JAIN & CO. Vs. UNION OF INDIA, 1994 (1) CHN 445, and NEW HORIZONS LTD. Vs. UNION OF INDIA, AIR 1994 DEL 126].

10. Question of entertaining a lis disclosing a cause of action or part of cause of action is based on the averments contained in the affidavit etc. At that stage, the truth or otherwise of the averments need not be gone into. But, there must be necessary averments disclosing a cause of action, so that the Court can take cognizance of/entertaining the lis exposed in the petition for taking further action.



[See OIL AND NATURAL GAS COMMISSION Vs. UTPAL KUMAR BASU AND OTHERS (1994 (4) SCC 711)]

11. A Court cannot arrogate/assume/confer upon itself a jurisdiction- territorial jurisdiction, when it has no such jurisdiction. Lack of jurisdiction to entertain a matter goes to the root of the matter, otherwise whatever action taken or orders passed by the Court becomes a nullity, it is non est and of no consequence at all resulting in wasting of precious public time. Courts are barred from indulging in hypothetical and academic exercises."

Having regard to the aforesaid legal position, viz-a-viz, factual matrix of this case, the cause of action for the Writ Petition, viz., challenging the Order in Na. Ka. No. 009736/E1/2021 dated 14.02.2022 passed by the Second Respondent and the consequential Proceedings in Na. Ka. No. 134/AA2/2022 dated 24.02.2022 issued by the Fourth Respondent and the Proceedings in Na. Ka. No. 0074/ A1/2022 dated 28.02.2022 issued by the Fifth Respondent and to and seeking direction to the Fourth and Fifth Respondents to permit the Petitioner to continue as Secondary Grade Teacher in any one of the available vacancies in any other school in the particular Block namely, Mannachanallur Block in terms of clause 2(a)(1)(vii) to G.O. Ms. No. 176 dated 17.12.2021, would have to be necessarily construed as having arisen wholly within the territorial limits of jurisdiction of the Madurai Bench of this Court, notwithstanding that the office of the First and Second Respondents are located in Chennai.

5. When it is pointed out that the Writ Petition cannot be entertained in the Principal Seat of this Court in that backdrop, Learned Counsel for the Petitioner seeks permission of the Court to withdraw this Writ Petition with liberty to file fresh Writ Petition for the same relief before the Madurai Bench of this Court and she has made an endorsement to that effect in the court record.

In fine, the Writ Petition is dismissed as withdrawn granting such liberty. Consequently, the connected Miscellaneous Petitions are closed. No costs.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar(CS III)

/True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar



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To

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1. The Principal Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu,
Department of School Education,
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2. The Director of Elementary Education,
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W.P. No. 5150 of 2022

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NSK 09/05/2022