



W.P.No.11461 of 2014

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED :28.10.2022

CORAM:

THE HON'BLE **MR.JUSTICE N.SATHISH KUMAR**

W.P.No.11461 of 2014

N.Sitheswaran

... Petitioner

Vs.

1.Superintending Engineer
Gopichettipalayam Electricity Distribution Circle
TANGEDCO / TNEB
Gopichettipalayam

2.The Assistant Executive Engineer (Distribution)
TANGEDCO /TNEB
Bhavani (West)
Bhavani Taluk
Erode District

... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of Constitution of India praying for issuance of Writ of Certiorari, calling for the records of the 2nd respondent, Assistant Executive Engineer (O & M), West Bhavani, Co. in No.076, dated 13.06.2013 and quash the same.

For Petitioner : Mr.C.S.Krishnamoorthy

For Respondents : Mr.S.Silambannan, AAG
Assisted by Mr.M.Abdul Kalam, SC
and Mr.Babu Barneez, G.A.



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ORDER

Writ Petition has been filed under Article 226 of Constitution of India praying for issuance of Writ of Certiorari, calling for the records of the 2nd respondent, Assistant Executive Engineer (O & M), West Bhavani, Co. in No.076, dated 13.06.2013 and quash the same.

2.It is the contention of the learned counsel for the petitioner that his family is running a industry and manufacturing powder from coconut shell and also powder from stone in order to run the machineries of the plant, for which he has obtained electric service connection in S.C.Nos.329-007-1052, (2) 329-007-1053 and (3)329-007-613 (Tariff 1A) from the respondent Board in the individual name. On inspection on 25.03.2013, it is alleged that there was a theft of energy in the above service connection and compounding amount of Rs.3,20,000/- also paid by the petitioner and the respondents have levied penalty and passed final assessment order for a sum of Rs.32,15,799/-.



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3.It is also the contention of the learned counsel for the petitioner that only the Special Court under Section 153(5) of the Electricity Act, 2003, shall determine the civil liability for theft of energy, which shall not be less than an amount equivalent to two times of the tariff rate applicable for a period of twelve months preceding the date of detection of theft of energy or the exact period of theft if determined whichever is less and the amount of civil liability so determined shall be recovered as if it were a decree of Civil Court. Therefore, it is the contention of the learned counsel for the petitioner that having alleged that there is a theft of energy, only the Special Court can determine the liability against the consumer. Whereas, the petitioner is forced to pay the amount and the appeal is also dismissed. Therefore, sought quashment of the order and restoration of the connections.

4.Per contra, the learned counsel for the respondent Board would submit that the petitioner himself has admitted the theft of energy in the mahazar and he has also paid the compounding fee and now he cannot contend as if there is no theft of energy. The learned counsel further



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submitted that now the property has already been transferred to the 3rd parties and when the demand is raised for reconnection, the 3rd party purchaser challenged the same in the Writ Petition No.311 of 2022 and the said writ petition was allowed and ordered to restore the connection. Such view of the matter, the writ petition itself has become infructuous as the petitioner has admitted the theft and having sold the property, she cannot now seek for any relief in this writ petition.

5.No doubt, under Section 153 of the Electricity Act, 2003, when the prosecution is initiated under sub clause (6) of the Electricity Act, 2003, only the Special Court can determine the civil liability against the consumers. It is the submission of the learned counsel for the petitioner before this Court that the petitioner has paid the compounding fees, on a perusal of the records, the petitioner in fact admitted the alleged theft and also signed in the mahazar, based on which the assessment was made and penalty has been adjudicated and not stopping with that, he has also sold the property to the 3rd parties already. When the Court posed the question



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as to whether the property has been sold to the 3rd party, the same was not disputed by the writ petitioner.

6.Once the petitioner divested the property and impugned notice is issued, the challenge to the impugned notice has become academic and since the reconnection has already been ordered in W.P.No.311 of 2022 dated 22.06.2022 in favour of the subsequent purchaser, the question of reconnection of the domestic service connection to the petitioner does not arise at all, as the property has already been transferred and the subsequent purchaser has also filed a petition in W.P.No.311 of 2022 and obtained orders on 22.06.2022. The petitioner having paid the compounding fees. In the event the prosecution has been launched, the Special Court will decide the liability against the petitioner. In Such view of the matter, no further order is required in this writ petition.

7.Subject to the above, the Writ Petition stands disposed of. No costs.

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N.SATHISH KUMAR, J.

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To.

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2.The Assistant Executive Engineer (Distribution)
TANGEDCO /TNEB
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