

**108 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

CRWP-7771-2022

Date of decision: 17.08.2022

Angrej Masih

.....Petitioner

versus

State of Punjab and others

.....Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NAMIT KUMAR

Present: Mr. Amandeep Singh Gulati, Advocate
for the petitioner.

NAMIT KUMAR, J. (ORAL)

The instant petition has been filed by the petitioner under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking issuance of a writ in the nature of habeas corpus to release the detenues mentioned in para 4 of the petition from the illegal custody of respondent No.4.

Heard.

Notice of motion to respondents No.1 to 3-State only at this stage.

Mr. Ramandeep Sandhu, Sr. DAG, Punjab puts in appearance and accepts notice on behalf of respondents No.1 to 3-State.

I have heard learned counsel for the petitioner and the

learned State counsel.

Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court in 'LPA No. 32 of 2013 titled Murti vs. The State of Punjab and others', decided on 11.01.2013, observed as under:-

“It may be mentioned here that the allegations of the appellant in the writ petition are that the alleged detenues mentioned in para No.3 of the writ petition who are working as labourers at the brick kiln of respondent Nos.4 & 5 are being kept as bonded labours. There can indeed be no doubt that if a labourer has been detained as bonded labour, it amounts to an offence under Sections 16 & 17 of the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, 1976. We, however, clarify that the aforesaid observation does not mean that the allegations levelled by the appellant have been accepted. Suffice it to observe that under the Act, the District Magistrate is under statutory obligation to hold a fact finding enquiry as and when a complaint alleging violation of the provisions of Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, 1976 is received. Since the appellant in the instant case has specifically averred that the persons mentioned in para No.3 of the writ petition have been detained as bonded labourers, we allow this appeal and set aside /modify the order dated 9.1.2013 passed by the learned Single Judge to the extent that the petitioner's writ petition is disposed of with a direction to the District Magistrate, Sangrur, to treat this writ petition as a complaint under the 1976 Act and take immediate action in accordance with law, within a period of one week from the date of receiving a certified copy of this order along with a copy of the writ petition.”

In view of the above noticed judicial precedent, the present petition is disposed of with a direction to respondent No.2-The District Magistrate, Ferozepur, to treat this petition as a complaint under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 and take immediate action in accordance with law within a period of one week from the date of receipt of this order along with copy of the writ petition.

A copy of this order be supplied to learned State counsel and be also sent to respondent No.2-The District Magistrate, Ferozepur for ensuring requisite compliance.

17.08.2022*Neha***(NAMIT KUMAR)
JUDGE**

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No