

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.18098 of 2022

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Bipin Kumar Son of Sohan Yadav resident of Village and P.O.- Kathdumar,
P.S. Simri Bakhtiyarpur, District- Saharsa.

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The State of Bihar through the Principal Secretary Department of Panchayati Raj Bihar.
2. Principal Secretary Department of Panchayati Raj Bihar.
3. District Magistrate Saharsa.
4. District Panchayati Raj Officer Saharsa.
5. Block Development Officer, Simri Bakhtiyarpur District Saharsa.
6. Mukhiya Gram Panchayat Raj Kathdumar P.S. Simri Bakhtiyarpur District Saharsa.
7. Panchayat Secretary Gram Panchayat Raj Kathdumar P.S. Simri Bakhtiyarpur District Saharsa.

... .. Respondent/s

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Appearance :

For the Petitioner/s	:	Mr.Diwakar Prasad Singh
For the Respondent/s	:	Mr.Ajay (Ga 5)

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CORAM: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
and
HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE PARTHA SARTHY

ORAL JUDGMENT

(Per: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE)

(The proceedings of the Court are being conducted by Hon'ble the Chief Justice/ Hon'ble Judges through Video Conferencing from their residential offices/residences. Also, the Advocates and the Staffs joined the proceedings through Video Conferencing from their residences/offices.)

Date : 20-01-2023

Heard learned counsel for the parties.

Petitioner has prayed for the following relief(s):-



1. That the petitioner a whistleblower seeks to present an application in Public Interest with a prayer to Direct the District Magistrate Saharsa to investigate the affairs of Panchayat Sachiv Kathdumar who was under suspension in a Case of defalcation & misappropriation of Public Funds & whereas the Suspension was vacated without recovery of amount defalcated & now posted in Gram Panchayat Kathdumar & again started illegal acts by which the Panchayat Sachiv Kathdumar illegally selected a "**Ward Sabha Secretary**" without any meeting of "**ward Sabha**" as provided under Sub Rule-4 to Rule-3 of **Bihar ward Sabha & ward Implantation & Management Committee Conduct of business Rules 2017** as such present application is being filed in public interest with prayer for issuance of appropriate writ order or direction of writ in the nature of mandamus commanding the respondents for following main relief:-

(i) That for issuance of appropriate writ, order or direction commanding the respondent Block Development officer to select the "**Ward Sabha Secretary**" by convening a Public meeting of "**ward Sabha**" as provided by **Bihar ward**

Sabha & ward Implantation & Management Committee Conduct of business Rules 2017 since on the meeting of "**ward Sabha Concerning ward No.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6**" fixed on 19.02.2022 fixed by Memo No.144-2 dated 31.01.2022 & all the ward Member of **ward No.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6** intentionally absented themselves while Nodal officer appointed by Memo No.144-2 dated 31.01.2022 remain present & reported in writing in which



the Nodal officer & members of "**ward Sabha**" signed the minutes of proceeding & handed over to observer appointed by Memo No.144-2 dated 31.01.2022 namely Sri Nawal Kishore Rai but subsequently the Panchayat Sachiv & ward Member to ward No.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 in connivance with each other fraudulently reported the Block development officer that the "**Ward Sabha Secretary**" was selected with a sole purpose to select their own blue eye baby in contravention of selection in "**ward Sabha**" following the provisions of Bihar ward Sabha & ward Implantation & Management Committee Conduct of business Rules 2017 as such direct the block development officer to select the "**Ward Sabha Secretary**" in duly "**ward Sabha**" following the provisions as prescribe under Bihar ward Sabha & ward Implantation & Management Committee Conduct of business Rules 2017.

- (ii) That for issuance of appropriate writ, order or direction commanding the respondent Block Development officer to act in terms of Bihar ward Sabha & ward Implantation & Management Committee Conduct of business

Rules 2017 & Convene a Meeting of "**ward Sabha**" since 19.02.22 was date fixed for selection of "**Ward Sabha Secretary**" fixed by Memo No.144-2 dated 31.01.22 issued under the signature of block development officer itself while the ward members to ward No.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 absented themselves & the ward Member & Panchayat Secretary fraudulently reported about selection of "**Ward**



Sabha Secretary" which is wholly an attempt to bring a pocket person in the office in order to damage the interest of Panchayat & to defalcate & misappropriate the Funds as such independent **"Ward Sabha Secretary"** is require to be appointed/selected by the public as such the block development officer Simribakhtiyarpur under District Saharsa be directed to fixed a date of Meeting of **"ward Sabha"** as earlier fixed by Memo No.144-2 dated 31.01.22 fixed by the Block Development Officer.

- (iii) That for issuance of appropriate writ, order or direction commanding the respondent to register FIR against those who fraudulently tried to Report selection of **"Ward Sabha Secretary"** concerning ward No.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 with a sole purpose to misappropriate & defalcate the public fund in connivance with Pocket **"Ward Sabha Secretary"**, ward Member & Panchayat Secretary.
- (iv) That for grant of any other relief or relief's to which the petitioner be found entitled in law be granted to them.

Learned counsel for the State opposes the petition stating that the petition is misconceived; raises disputed question of fact; is not in public interest; and that the issue can be best resolved at the local level by the appropriate authorities.

After the matter was heard for some time, finding the Bench not to be in favour with the submissions made across the Bar, learned counsel for the petitioner, under instructions, states that petitioner shall be content if a direction is issued to



the authority concerned to consider and decide the representation which the petitioner shall be filing within a period of four weeks from today for redressal of the grievance(s).

Learned counsel for the respondents states that if such a representation is filed by the petitioner, the authority concerned shall consider and dispose it of expeditiously and preferably within a period of four months from the date of its filing along with a copy of this order.

Statement accepted and taken on record.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *D. N. Jeevaraj Vs. Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka & Ors, (2016) 2 SCC 653*, paragraphs 34 to 38 observed as under:-

“34. The learned counsel for the parties addressed us on the question of the bona fides of Nagalaxmi Bai in filing a public interest litigation. We leave this question open and do not express any opinion on the correctness or otherwise of the decision of the High Court in this regard.

35. However, we note that generally speaking, procedural technicalities ought to take a back seat in public interest litigation. This Court held in *Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of U.P.* [*Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of U.P.*, 1989 Supp (1) SCC 504] to this effect as follows: (SCC p. 515, para 16)

“16. The writ petitions before us are not inter parties disputes and have been raised by way of public interest litigation and the controversy before the court is as to whether for social safety and for creating a hazardless environment for the people to live in, mining in the area should be permitted or stopped. We may not be taken to



have said that for public interest litigations, procedural laws do not apply. At the same time it has to be remembered that every technicality in the procedural law is not available as a defence when a matter of grave public importance is for consideration before the court.”

36. A considerable amount has been said about public interest litigation in *R&M Trust [R&M Trust v. Koramangala Residents Vigilance Group, (2005) 3 SCC 91]* and it is not necessary for us to dwell any further on this except to say that in issues pertaining to good governance, the courts ought to be somewhat more liberal in entertaining public interest litigation. However, in matters that may not be of moment or a litigation essentially directed against one organisation or individual (such as the present litigation which was directed only against Sadananda Gowda and later Jeevaraj was impleaded) ought not to be entertained or should be rarely entertained. Other remedies are also available to public spirited litigants and they should be encouraged to avail of such remedies.

37. In such cases, that might not strictly fall in the category of public interest litigation and for which other remedies are available, insofar as the issuance of a writ of mandamus is concerned, this Court held in *Union of India v. S.B. Vohra [Union of India v. S.B. Vohra, (2004) 2 SCC 150: 2004 SCC (L&S) 363]* that: (SCC p. 160, paras 12-13)

“**12.** Mandamus literally means a command. The essence of mandamus in England was that it was a royal command issued by the King's Bench (now Queen's Bench) directing performance of a public legal duty.

13. A writ of mandamus is issued in favour of a person who establishes a legal right in himself. A writ of mandamus is issued against a person who has a legal duty to perform but has failed and/or neglected to do so. Such a legal duty emanates from either in discharge of a public duty or by operation of law. The writ of mandamus is of a most extensive remedial nature. The object of mandamus is to prevent disorder from a failure of justice and is required to be granted in all cases where law has established no specific remedy and whether justice despite demanded has not been granted.”

38. A salutary principle or a well-recognised rule that needs to be kept in mind before issuing a



writ of mandamus was stated in *Saraswati Industrial Syndicate Ltd. v. Union of India* [*Saraswati Industrial Syndicate Ltd. v. Union of India*, (1974) 2 SCC 630] in the following words: (SCC pp. 641-42, paras 24-25)

“24. ... The powers of the High Court under Article 226 are not strictly confined to the limits to which proceedings for prerogative writs are subject in English practice. Nevertheless, the well-recognised rule that no writ or order in the nature of a mandamus would issue when there is no failure to perform a mandatory duty applies in this country as well. Even in cases of alleged breaches of mandatory duties, the salutary general rule, which is subject to certain exceptions, applied by us, as it is in England, when a writ of mandamus is asked for, could be stated as we find it set out in *Halsbury's Laws of England* (3rd Edn.), Vol. 11, p. 106:

‘198. *Demand for performance must precede application.*—As a general rule the order will not be granted unless the party complained of has known what it was he was required to do, so that he had the means of considering whether or not he should comply, and it must be shown by evidence that there was a distinct demand of that which the party seeking the mandamus desires to enforce, and that that demand was met by a refusal.’

25. In the cases before us there was no such demand or refusal. Thus, no ground whatsoever is shown here for the issue of any writ, order, or direction under Article 226 of the Constitution.”

As such, petition stands disposed of on the following terms:-

(a) Petitioner shall approach the authority concerned
i.e. Respondent No. 3, namely, District Magistrate Saharsa
within a period of four weeks from today by filing a



representation for redressal of the grievance(s);

(b) The said authority shall consider and dispose it of expeditiously by passing a reasoned and speaking order preferably within a period of four months from the date of its filing along with a copy of this order;

(c) The order assigning reasons shall be communicated to the petitioner;

(d) Needless to add, while considering such representation, principles of natural justice shall be followed and due opportunity of hearing afforded to the parties;

(e) Also, opportunity to place on record all relevant materials/documents shall be granted to the parties;

(f) Equally, liberty is reserved to the petitioner to take recourse to such alternative remedies as are otherwise available in accordance with law;

(g) We are hopeful that as and when petitioner takes recourse to such remedies, as are otherwise available in law, before the appropriate forum, the same shall be dealt with, in accordance with law and with reasonable dispatch;

(h) Also, liberty reserved to the petitioner to approach the Court, should the need so arise subsequently on the same and subsequent cause of action;



(i) We have not expressed any opinion on merits. All issues are left open;

(j) The proceedings shall be conducted through digital mode, unless the parties otherwise mutually agree to meet in person i.e. physical mode.

The petition stands disposed of in the aforesaid terms.

Interlocutory Application(s), if any, shall stand disposed of.

(Sanjay Karol, CJ)

(Partha Sarthy, J)

Sanjay/-PKP

AFR/NAFR	NAFR
CAV DATE	NA
Uploading Date	25.01.2023
Transmission Date	NA

