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W.P.No.14987 of 2024

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATUE AT MADRAS

DATED: 09.08.2024

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN

W.P.No.14987 of 2024

P.Kumaraswamy

.. Petitioner

Vs

1.The Revenue Divisional Officer cum Presiding Officer,
The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior
Citizens Act,
Office of South Coimbatore Revenue Divisional Office,
Coimbatore District.

2.Mrs.Kannammal @ Pongiyammal

3.The Sub-Registrar,
Sulur, Coimbatore District.

4.The Tahsildar,
Sulur Taluk,
Coimbatore District.

.. Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking for issuance of a writ of certiorari to call for the records of the impugned order Pa.Mu.3959/2020/A1, dated 06.06.2022 passed by the first respondent and quash the same.

For Petitioner

: Mr.S.Umapathy

For R1 & R4

: Mr.S.J.Mohamed Sathik, GA

For R2

: Mrs.Elizabeth Ravi

For R3

: Mr.S.Rajesh, GA



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ORDER

The writ petition has been filed challenging the order passed by the first respondent dated 06.06.2022 cancelling the settlement deed dated 04.11.2016 executed by the third respondent in favour of the petitioner, her son.

2. The petitioner is the son of the second respondent. The second respondent owned agricultural lands to an extent of 3 acres and 61 cents comprised in Survey Nos.184/1, 185, Selakarisal Village, Suler Taluk; Survey No.22/6B, Kallapalayam Village. The second respondent, out of her love and affection towards the petitioner, executed a settlement dated 04.11.2016 bearing Document No.11428/2016 on the file of Sub-Registrar Office, Suler, settling the above said properties in favour of the petitioner. Thereafter, the petitioner failed to maintain the second respondent and as such, she filed a complaint under Section 23(2) of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen Act, 2017 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”). After issuance of notice and after recording the statement from the petitioner as well as the second respondent, the first respondent allowed the complaint and cancelled the



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settlement deed dated 04.11.2016 executed in favour of the petitioner.

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3. The learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that in order to invoke the provision under Section 23(2) of the Act, one has to comply twin conditions, namely, (a) the documents should have been executed after coming into force of the Act; and (b) it should contain a clause imposing an obligation on the settlor or transferee to maintain settlor or transferee. In the absence of second clause, the complaint lodged by the second respondent is not maintainable under Section 23(2) of the Act.

4. On perusal of the records, it clear that the second respondent owned the subject properties and on compulsion and false promise, the second respondent executed a settlement deed dated 04.11.2016 executing the subject properties in favour of the petitioner. Thereafter, the petitioner failed to maintain the second respondent and she was also driven out from her residence. That apart, she was also constrained in a separate room and tortured by the petitioner.



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5. The issue on hand has already been dealt with by this Court in

Mohamed Dayan Vs. District Collector. (W.P.No.28190 of 2022, dated 08.09.2023). For better appreciation, relevant paragraphs of the said judgment are extracted hereunder:-

“33. Close reading of the principles considered by the various High Courts and the Supreme Court, there is no ambiguity with reference to the purpose and object sought to be achieved under the provisions of the Senior Citizen Act. Section 4(2) of the Act, unambiguously stipulates that the obligation of the children or the relative, as the case may be, to maintain a senior citizen extends to the needs of such citizen so that senior citizen may lead a normal life.

34. In the context of the adoption of the phrase “lead a normal life” Rule 20(2)(i) of the Maintenance of Senior Citizen Rules, enumerates that “it shall be the duty of the District Collector to ensure that life and property of senior citizens of the District are protected and they are able to live with security and dignity”. Therefore, normal life includes security and dignity. Thus the normal life as indicated under Section 4(2) of the Act, is not mere life, but a life with security and dignity. In the context of Article 21 of the Constitution of India, life includes decent medical facility, food, shelter with dignity and security. All such combined necessities of human life is falling under the term “Normal Life” emboldened under Section 4(2) of the Senior Citizen



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Act. Therefore, simply providing food and shelter would be insufficient. But life includes providing of decent medical facilities, food, shelter and other requirements with dignity in commensuration with the status of the family and taking into consideration of the living style of the senior citizen throughout.

35. Therefore, the children defending their case merely on the ground that they are willing to provide food and shelter, cannot be taken as a ground for the purpose of sustaining the Settlement Deed executed by the senior citizen. The requirement of the provisions are to be complied in its real spirit and in the event of an iota of doubt, the Authority Competent is empowered to cancel the Settlement Deed or Gift Deed, as the case may be, in order to protect the normal life of senior citizen.

36. Section 4(3) denotes, the obligation of the children to maintain his or her parent extends to the needs of such parent either father or mother or both, as the case may be, so that such parents may lead a normal life. Therefore, it is an obligation on the part of the children to maintain his or her parents and ensure the parents to lead a normal life. In the event of complaint, the Authorities Competent are expected to ensure that the senior citizen and their life and dignity are protected. The above provision is to be read in conjunction with the Rules framed under the Act.

37. Rule 20 of the Maintenance of Senior Citizen



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Rules, provide duties and powers of the District Collector. The District Collector is casted upon the duty to ensure that the life and property of citizens of the District are protected and other people to live with security and dignity. Therefore, it is the statutory duty on the part of the District Collector to protect the safety and security of senior citizens in his District. Thus the complaint filed by the senior citizen, cannot be treated lightly. Such complaints are to be enquired into in a pragmatic manner, so as to understand the real grievances of the senior citizen and accordingly, all appropriate actions are to be initiated to provide safety, security and to protect the dignity of the senior citizen.

38. The Kerala High Court observed in the case of Radhamani and Others (cited supra), Section 23(1) of the Senior Citizen Act, cannot be interpreted to the disadvantage of the senior citizen. Section 23(1) of the Act contemplates that “Where any senior citizen who, after the commencement of this Act, has by way of gift or otherwise, his property, subject to the condition that the transferee shall provide the basic amenities and basic physical needs to the transferor and such transferee refuses or fails to provide such amenities and physical needs, the said transfer of property shall be deemed to have been made by fraud or coercion or under undue influence and shall at the option of the transferor be declared void by the Tribunal”. The phrase “subject to the condition that the transferee shall provide the



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basic amenities” does not mean that the Gift or Settlement Deed should contain any such condition expressly. “Subject to the condition” as employed in Section 23(1), is to be holistically understood with reference to the subsequent phrase i.e., “deemed to have been made by fraud or coercion or undue influence”. Both the phrases would amplify that the deeming clause should be considered so as to form an opinion that the phrase “subject to condition” amounts to an implied condition to maintain the senior citizen and any violation would be sufficient for the purpose of invoking Section 23(1) of the Act, to cancel the Gift or Settlement Deed executed by the senior citizen.

39. To elaborate, the phrase “subject to condition” employed under Section 23(1) of the Act, is to be understood with reference to the love and affection by the senior citizen towards the person in favour of whom such Gift or Settlement Deed has been executed.

40. “Love and Affection” is an implied condition in the context of Section 23(1) of the Act, and therefore, there need not be any express condition in the Settlement Deed for the purpose of maintaining the senior citizen. Refusal of maintenance after executing the Settlement Deed or Gift Deed, is the ground for invoking the deemed ground of fraud or coercion or undue influence. When the deeming clause has been incorporated under the provisions of Section 23(1) of the Act, 'Love and Affection' to be construed as the



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consideration for executing the Gift or Settlement Deed. Thus the condition need not be expressly made in the document and the love and affection, which resulted in execution of the Deed by the senior citizen is to be construed as a condition for the purpose of invoking the deeming clause for declaring the document as fraud or coercion or undue influence.

41. The entire purpose and object of the Senior Citizens Act, is to consider the human conduct towards them. When the human conduct is indifferent towards senior citizen and their security and dignity are not protected, then the provisions of the Act, is to be pressed into service to safeguard the security and dignity of senior citizen. Therefore, the purposive interpretation of the provisions are of paramount importance and Section 23 of the Act, cannot be mis-utilised for the purpose of rejecting the complaint filed by the senior citizen on the ground that there is no express condition for maintaining the senior citizen. Even in the absence of any express condition in the document, “Love and Affection” being the consideration for execution of Gift or Settlement Deed, such love and affection becomes a deeming consideration and any violation is a ground to invoke Section 23(1) of the Act. Thus there is no infirmity in respect of the order passed by the second respondent in the present case.

42. The human conduct in the context of the senior



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citizen Act, is to be understood considering the relationship between the senior citizen and the beneficiaries of the Gift or Settlement Deed. Mostly the parents are executing the document in favour of their children. Since they may not be in a position to maintain the property at their old-age and more-so, they are intending to visibly express their love and affection towards their children by settling their properties. In some cases, the parents during their old-age are settling their property in order to avoid conflict between their children and to ensure that all children get equal share. If at all the parents decide to settle the property in favour of a son or daughter, then they are doing so, only with love and affection and with a fond hope that they will be taken care of by the son or daughter during their old-age. Thus love and affection, being the consideration and implied condition, within the meaning of Section 23(1) of the Act. The subsequent non-maintenance of senior citizen would attract Section 23(1) of the Act and the Authorities in such circumstances are empowered to declare the document as null and void.

43. Therefore, Section 23 is referable as a conduct of the transferee prior to and after execution of the Deed of Gift or Settlement, as the case may be. For all purposes, Section 23 is to be understood taking note of the conduct of the transferee and not with reference to the specific stipulation of condition in the Deed of Gift or Settlement.



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44. In respect of the judgment relied on by the petitioner in the case of Sudesh Chhikara vs. Ramti Devi and Another (cited supra), the Three Judges Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the case of S.Vanitha vs. Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Urban and District and Others (cited supra) is to be followed. There are several judgments to establish that the purpose and object of the Senior Citizens Act, is to be complied with in its letter and spirit in order to protect the life, security and dignity of senior citizens. Thus the judgment relied on by the petitioner is of no avail as far as the present facts and circumstances of the case on hand is concerned.”

The above judgment is squarely applicable to the case on hand.

6. In view of the above, this Court finds no error or illegality in the order passed by the first respondent and accordingly, the writ petition fails and it is dismissed as devoid of any merit. No Costs.

W.M.P.No.14987 of 2024 is closed.

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Index: yes/no

Neutral citation: yes/no

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