

W.P.(MD).No.2267 of 2025

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

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DATED : 04.03.2025

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE VIVEK KUMAR SINGH

W.P.(MD)No.2267 of 2025

and

W.M.P.(MD)No.1626, 1627, 1629 to 1631 of 2025

S.Srinivasan

... Petitioner

-vs-

1. The Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services,
No.6, Annai Evr Maniammai Salai,
Egmore,
Chennai 600 008.

2. The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Palayamkottai,
Tirunelveli District.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus to call for the records pertaining to the impugned cancellation order passed by the 1st respondent dated 22.01.2025 and quash the same as illegal and consequently to direct the respondents to permit the petitioner to supply the raw materials to the 2nd respondent as per tender awarded by the 1st respondent in vide proceedings in No. Ma.C.Pa/ 42400/IC2/ 2023-38 dated 04.07.2024.



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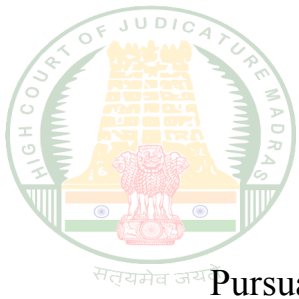
For Petitioner : Mr.Issac Mohanlal
Senior Counsel

For Respondents : Mr.M.Ajmal Khan
Additional Advocate General assisted by
Mr.K.S.Selvaganesan
Additional Government Pleader

ORDER

This writ petition has been filed challenging the impugned cancellation order passed by the 1st respondent dated 22.01.2025 with a consequential direction to the respondents to permit the petitioner to supply the raw materials to the 2nd respondent as per tender awarded by the 1st respondent in vide proceedings in No. Ma.C.Pa/ 42400/IC2/ 2023-38 dated 04.07.2024.

2. The case of the petitioner is that he is the successful tenderer in the tender conducted for supply of raw materials for prison industries for the year 2024-25 and the petitioner has been supplying the raw materials to the second respondent without any default and the tender period comes to an end on 31.03.2025. While being so, a case in Crime No.15 of 2024 registered by the Vigilance and Anti Corruption, Madurai Detachment against the petitioner and others for the offences under Sections 120-B, 467, 468, 471, 167, 409 of IPC and Section 13(2) r/w.13(1)(a) of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.



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Pursuant to that, the first respondent issued a show cause notice dated 26.12.2024, for which the petitioner also submitted his explanation on 31.12.2024. On consideration of the reply submitted by the petitioner, the petitioner was issued with the impugned order dated 22.01.2025 cancelling the tender.

3. When the matter is taken up for hearing, the learned Additional Advocate General appearing for the respondents relied upon the order passed by the Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court in the case of *Semalaiappan vs. The Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board and others* reported in **2010 (6) CTC 27**. The learned Additional Advocate General appearing for the respondents also filed a typed set of papers and also the counter affidavit filed by the respondents.

4. On perusal of the typed set of papers filed by the learned Additional Advocate General appearing for the respondents, it is seen that the Additional Director General of Police and Inspector General of Prisons, Chennai, issued proceedings dated 10.04.2017, banning the business dealings with the petitioner for a period of five years, for the delayed submission of samples and non supply of raw materials in time, which affected the production of

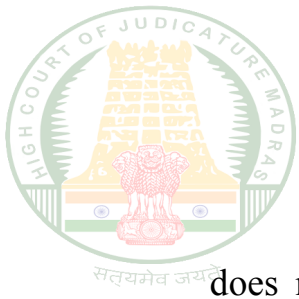


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prison industry. However, the petitioner being the successful bidder, the first respondent, issued the proceedings dated 04.07.2024. However, some malpractices have been done by the petitioner and others and hence, an FIR came to be registered in Crime No.15 of 2024, since the petitioner prepared certain bills as if having purchased cotton tape from KPM Textiles for the value of RS.9,51,542/- and also prepared for supply of card board, calico, white paper and other raw materials to Central Prison, Madurai. Pursuant to that, the first respondent issued a show cause notice dated 26.12.2024, for which the petitioner also submitted his explanation on 31.12.2024. On consideration of the reply sent by the petitioner, the petitioner was issued with the impugned order dated 22.01.2025 cancelling the tender, which was given to the petitioner.

5. On perusal of the counter affidavit, it is seen that the petitioner has involved in a criminal case with regard to supply of raw materials to prison industries and the respondents would state in the counter affidavit that the remedy open to the writ petitioner is to approach the competent civil Court. The contention of the petitioner is that he is only the tenderer for transport of raw materials to the Central Prison and he has no contractual obligation to maintain the records, which is not acceptable. Further, since the petitioner



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does not deserve for continuance of contract order and the petitioner is a proprietor of two firms, the impugned order is lawful and legally sustainable. The plea of the petitioner to supply of raw materials after involvement in a criminal case, is not feasible to be complied with. It is further stated in the counter affidavit that the payment to the raw materials supplied to the prison authorities by the petitioner is being settled by the second respondent subject to the availability of budget provisions.

6. A perusal of the order passed by the Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court in the case of ***Semalaiappan vs. The Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board and others*** reported in ***2010 (6) CTC 27***, and the relevant portion of the order is extracted hereunder:-

“14.It is a settled principle of law that a writ is not a remedy for enforcing contractual obligation. A writ under Article 226 of the Constitution of India is not a proper proceeding for adjudicating such dispute under the law. It is open to the parties to approach the Court of competent jurisdiction for proper relief and for breach of contract. When an alternative and equally efficacious remedy is open to the litigant, he should be required to pursue that remedy and not invoke the writ jurisdiction of this Court. The dispute relating to the contracts cannot be agitated under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. Therefore, the dispute with regard to interpretation of the terms of the agreement could not be agitated in



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a writ petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India.

15.A statute may expressly or impliedly confer power on a statutory body to enter into contracts in order to enable it to discharge its functions. Dispute arising out of the terms of such contracts or alleged breaches have to be settled by the ordinary principles of law of contract. The fact that one of the parties to the agreement is a statutory or public body will not by itself affect the principles to be applied. The dispute with regard to the meaning of a covenant in a contract or its enforceability have to be determined according to the usual principle of contract act. Further, a contract would not become statutory simply because it is for construction of a public utility and it has been awarded by a statutory body.

16.In the present case, the agreement cannot be termed as a statutory agreement. Therefore, a dispute relating to the interpretation of the terms and conditions of such a contract could not be agitated in a writ petition under Article 226 and the dispute is a matter for adjudication only by a civil Court or in arbitration proceedings, if provided in the contract. In the case on hand, in Clause 67 of the agreement, "competent court" means only a competent civil court. That being the case, when an alternative remedy is open to the litigant, he should be required to pursue that remedy and not invoke writ jurisdiction. Even though, the power under Article 226 of the Constitution of India are wide it cannot be said that such power could be invoked even in cases where disputed questions of fact arise for consideration and when contractual obligations and breaches thereof are involved. When there are disputed questions of fact, the competent court to decide the issues is only a civil court. Therefore, the issue with regard to the question of



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fact cannot be decided in a writ petition. The learned single judges rightly dismissed the writ petition as not maintainable.”

7. Thus, it is clear that a writ is not a remedy for enforcing contractual obligation. It is open to the parties to approach the competent forum for proper relief and for breach of contract. When an alternate and equal efficacious remedy is open to the litigant, he should be required to pursue that remedy and not invoke the writ jurisdiction of this Court. The dispute relating to the contracts cannot be agitated under Article 226 of the Constitution of India.

8. For the foregoing reasons, this writ petition is dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petitions are closed.

NCC : Yes/No
Index : Yes / No
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04.03.2025
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VIVEK KUMAR SINGH, J.

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TO:-

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Egmore,
Chennai 600 008.
2. The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Palayamkottai,
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