



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRWP No.5928 of 2025
Date of Decision: 02.06.2025

Manoj

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and others

...Respondents

CORAM: *HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MEENAKSHI I. MEHTA*

Present:- Mr. Aditya Partap Singh, Advocate
for the petitioner.
(joined through Video-Conferencing)

MEENAKSHI I. MEHTA, J. (Oral)

By way of the instant petition, the petitioner seeks the indulgence of this Court for the issuance of a writ in the nature of habeas corpus for the release of the detenues, as detailed in para No.2 of this petition, from the illegal custody of respondents No.4 & 5, while averring that they (detenues) have been illegally detained by the said respondents to work in their brick-kiln without making payment of the full wages as per the agreed rate.

2. The Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court, in *LPA No.32 of 2013*, titled as '*Murti versus The State of Punjab and others*', has made the following observations:-

"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 Bounded 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 alongwith a copy of the writ petition.”

3. In the light of the above-cited observations, the present petition is hereby disposed of with a direction to respondent No.2-District Magistrate, Moga, to treat this petition as a complaint under the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, 1976 and to take immediate appropriate action in



accordance with law within a period of one week from the date of receipt of certified copy of this order along-with the copy of the instant Criminal Writ Petition.

02.06.2025

pooja

(MEENAKSHI I. MEHTA)

JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned: *Yes*

Whether Reportable: *No*