

Kandenkutty and Others

Vs

State of Kerala and Others

SLP(C) No. 6173 of 1997

(K. Ramaswamy, G. T. Nanavati JJ)

10.03.1997

ORDER

1. This special leave petition arises from the judgment of the Division Bench of the Kerala High Court, made on 9-2-1996, in OP No. 5382 of 1983.
2. The admitted position is that the notification under Section 4(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (for short "the Act"), which is pari materia with Section 3 of the Kerala Land Acquisition Act, was published on 10-1-1981. The petitioner had initially challenged the scheme in OP No. 2436 of 1982 which was dismissed and was confirmed in Writ Appeal No. 223 of 1982 dated 23-4-1982. The petitioner filed another writ petition in the year 1993 and got the further proceedings stayed. The same has been dismissed by the High Court by the impugned order. Thus this special leave.
3. It is contended for the petitioner that when a notification under Section 48 of the Act withdrawing the earlier notification in respect of some of the lands was issued, the integrality of the notification stood disturbed and, therefore, the acquisition has become bad in law. In support thereof, a Shri Sukumaran, learned Senior Counsel, sought to place reliance on the judgments of the Andhra Pradesh High Court and the Kerala High Court which are inconsistent with each other. He states that as there is a conflict of opinions the conflict needs to be resolved. We find no force in the contention since the controversy has already been set at naught by this Court in Chandra Bansi Singh v. State of Bihar (1984) 4 SCC 316 : AIR 1984 SC 1767) and Special Land Acquisition Officer v. Godrej & Boyce ((1988) 1 SCC 50 : AIR 1987 SC 2421). Therefore, merely because some of the lands which formed part of the same notification were denotified in exercise of the power under Section 48 of the Act, the integrality of the notification for acquisition has not become bad in law.
4. It is then contended that due to the delay in the disposal of the matters the prices of the land have escalated and as a consequence, the acquisition has become bad in law. We find no force in the contention. In support of this contention, the learned counsel relied upon those judgments of this Court where equities have been worked out in directing payment of higher compensation from the date of the publication of the declaration under Section 6. In those cases the State was responsible for the delay. In this case it is not responsible for the delay in finalisation of the acquisition. On the other hand, the petitioner has himself put spokes at every stage and has had the matter delayed by agitating his right in judicial proceedings. The pendency of the judicial proceedings cannot be made a ground to say that in the process, due to escalation in the prices, the notification issued under Section 4(1) of the Act has become bad in law. Under these circumstances, we do not find any illegality in the judgment of the High Court warranting interference.
5. The special leave petition is dismissed accordingly.