
(2009) 06 JH CK 0015

In the Jharkhand High Court

Case No : Writ Petition (PIL) No. 803 of 2009

Mohammad Tahir

APPELLANT

Vs

The State of Jharkhand and Others

RESPONDENT

Date of Decision : 30-06-2009

Acts Referred:

Citation : (2009) 06 JH CK 0015

Hon'ble Judges : M.Y. Eqbal, J; Dilip kumar sinha, J

Bench : Division Bench

Advocate : Rajeev Kumar, for the Appellant; P.K. Prasad, A.G., for the Respondent

Judgement

1. We take judicial notice of the number of Public Interest Litigations filed in this Court complaining that Jharkhand State is flooded with different type of scams. One of those is Bitumen scam, for which the instant Public Interest Litigation has been filed. It has been brought to our notice that in the matter of procurement of Bitumen there is large scale of irregularities and embezzlement not less than 100 crores of Rupees by the Engineers, Contractors and other persons having vested interest. It is stated that the Chief Engineer of various Zones have found various irregularities in the matter of procurement of Bitumen.

2. In paragraph No. 11 of the Writ Petition various irregularities have been pointed out which reads as under:

That it is further stated that, the case of Kandra-Saraikela road and Adityapur-Kandra road is an eye opener to this Bitumen purchase scam, and the respondent No. 6 & 7 have found the following irregularities.

These two roads in Jamshedpur (industrial area) have been taken up by the State Govt. for widening and strengthening at the total cost of 36 crores but unfortunately maximum money has been looted by the contractor,- politicians-engineers of the State.

In fact the irregularities are serious in nature:

(a) It is found that, the contractors have utilized invoices for the purchase of Bitumen, has not at all issued to them by the engineers.

(b) It is found that the authority letter for lifting bitumen was issued only for 2,500 M.T. by the department and the estimate was only for 5000 M.T., but surprisingly the utilization was shown for the 5,18,34,21 M.T. much more than the estimate quantity.

(c) The excess utilization shown by the contractor-engineer is doubtful, fake and meant for embezzlement of money.

(d) The main source of embezzlement is utilization of invoices which is meant for Orissa has been shown to have been utilized in Jharkhand.

3. The petitioner has annexed a letter bearing Memo No. Finance/A.G. (L.P.)-29/07-215. dated 22.11.2008 issued by Secretary, Finance, Govt. of Jharkhand addressed to the Secretary Road Construction Department informing about the embezzlement of money.

The letter of the Secretary, Finance reads as under:

Presak,

Rajbala Verma, Sarkar Ke Sachib

Seva Me,

Sachiv, Path Nirman Bhivag, Jharkhand, Ranchi

Vishay: Path Nirman Ke liye Bitumen Procurement in Jalsaji, aniyamitata avam Rashi ka gaban.

Mahasay,

Mahalekhakar, (Lekha Pariksha) Ke dwara Procurement of Bitumen for Road works karya me vitya aniyamitata, rashi gaban avam Jalsaji sambandhi ek vistrut anekshan kandika ke madhyam se path nirman bhivag ko pratedan preshit kiya gaya hai. Eske mukhya bindu nimnankit hai:

1. In 15 divisions, Rs. 6.74 crore was paid as cost of bitumen against 308 invoice codes in support of purchase of 3,824.199 MT bitumen.

2. Rupees 36.66 lakh was paid to a contractor against 22 invoices bearing identical invoice code in support of purchase of 199.694 MT bitumen for utilization in two works executed under two divisions.

3. A contractor was paid Rs. 29.60 lakh against 17 fake invoices issued to another contractor. Further, the invoice code appearing on five copies were stated to be issued for sale of kerosene oil.

4. Two contractors under the same division, engaged in two works, were paid Rs.

26.16 lakh on submission of 16 invoices bearing identical invoice code. However, concerned oil company confirmed non-issue of invoice bearing that particular code.

5. In nine divisions, Rs. 2.26 crore was paid as cost of 10674.167 MT bitumen against 119 invoices bearing different alpha-numeric codes not consistent with coding system prevalent in IOCL

6. Rupees 6.15 crore was paid against reported procurement of 3296.94 MT bitumen against 352 invoices bearing customer and product codes different from those used by HPCL.

7. A contractor was paid Rs. 8.42 crore for procurement of 4898.08 MT bitumen against invoices issued in the name of another contractor. Further payment was also made against re-print and original copies of same invoices.

8. Transporter's assessee's, crossed, reprint and photo copies of invoices, though not admissible, were admitted by EEs and Rs. 15.02 crore was paid.

9. Departments did not develop a suitable internal control mechanism to monitor mandatory checks to be exercised at divisional level.

Bavdiya sahmat honge ki mahalekhakar ke prativedan me bahut hi gambhir vitya animitata prativedit ki gayi hai. Sambavtah bhivag ke dwara bishay vastu par mat gathit kar liya gaya hoga aur prathamik rup se vishay astu ki chan-bin, Janch bhi kar li gayi hogi. Is sambandh me nimnankit karwai awasyak hai:

1. Pradivedit animitatyon, Jalsaji, rasi gavan ke liye doshi bayaktiyo ke virudh kanuni karwai. Eske liye nigrani janch shreskar hogi.

2. Dosi bayaktiyo ke virudh anusasantamak karwai ke liye nimyamanusar prasasinik karwai, vibhagiye karwai adee.

3. Is prakar ke Jalsaji, vitya animitata rokne ke liye Corrective measures ke liye vibhag dwara Modus Operandi ke sambandh me vistrut vivechana kar aspasta disha-nirdesh avam paripatra nirgat kiya Jana avam sabhi pramandalo ko mahalekhakar ke dwara prativedih Bitumen sambandhi Jalsaji, vitya animititya ke alok me suchit kar diya Jay.

Viswasbhajan

Sd/- (Rajbala Verma) Sarkar Ke Sachib.

4. In paragraph No. 17 it is stated that the Bitumen scam was brought to the notice of the Principal Secretary to the Rural Works Department by the Deputy Secretary, Road Construction Department in December, 2008 but nothing was done.

5. The respondents have filed a perfunctory counter-affidavit and surprisingly affidavit was sworn by the Junior most Officer i.e. the Under Secretary, Road Construction Department. The allegations made in various paragraph of the Writ

Petition has neither been denied or disputed nor any legal action has been taken. The only statement made in the counter affidavit is that Principal Secretary to the Rural Works Department was requested to look into the irregularities pertaining to division under his charge so that names of the officers in these irregularities are spot out for taking appropriate action by the Road Construction Department. But the fact remains that no action has been taken.

6. After having learned Counsel for the parties and considering the materials on record particularly letter of the Finance Secretary to the Road Construction Department, we come to the conclusion that materials does disclose a prima facie case calling for an investigation by C.B.I. or any other similar agency. We further found that the respondents are not serious in the matter and it is a fit case where C.B.I. is directed to enquire into the matter.

7. It has not been disputed by the learned Counsel for the State that the roads being a National High Way or the roads maintained by the Road Construction Department, the condition of the roads are very worst and in most of the places, there is no road at all. For this not only the contractor but also public officers are responsible. It has become necessary to find out who are responsible for the precarious condition of the roads in the State of Jharkhand.

8. Having come to a prima facie conclusion of mis-appropriation and embezzlement of public money we direct the Central Bureau of investigation to enquire and investigate into the matter fixing responsibility upon the persons and submit a report within a period of three months from today.

9. Let a copy of this order be handed over to the counsel appearing for the C.B.I.