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| CNR No.MHNG130009252023  | Filed on | : | 04/06/2004 |
| | Registered on | : | 10/02/2005 |
| | Decided on | : | 30/03/2026 |
| | Duration | : | Yrs, Mon, Days |
| | | | |

IN THE COURT OF CIVIL JUDGE SENIOR DIVISION, RAMTEK.
(Presided over by Shri. S.M. Sarode)

L.A.C.No. 94/2005

Exhibit No. 61

1. Mallavarapu Sesharatnam Ramchandraro,
Aged about 68 years, Occupation-Agriculturist,
2. Venketlaxmi W/o. Apparao,
Aged about 49 years, Occupation-Agriculturist,
Both R/o. Nandgaon Dumari,
Tahsil-Parseoni, District-Nagpur.

... Applicants

//Versus//

1. The Chairman M. S. E. B. Department,
Mumbai -32.
2. The State Of Maharashtra,
through Collector,
Nagpur, Collectorate Building, Nagpur.
3. The Special Land Acquisition Officer
(General), Collectorate Building, Nagpur.
4. Maharashtra State Power Generation
Company Limited, Through
its Executive Engineer(Civil),
Thermal Power Station, Khaperkheda,
Tahsil-Saoner, District-Nagpur.

... Non-applicants

Learned Advocate Shri. Kushwaha for the applicants.
Learned Advocate Shri. Mohril for the non-applicant No.1& 4.
Learned Advocate Shri.Talgote for the non-applicant No.2 and 3.

(J U D G M E N T)

(Delivered on this 30th day of March, 2026)

This reference has been forwarded to the court by the Special Land Acquisition Officer, Nagpur under section 18 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 seeking adjudication upon the applicant's claim for enhancement of compensation in respect of the acquired land.

02] The alleged facts giving rise to the present reference can be narrated as under:

That the applicants were the owners of agricultural land bearing survey No.64/1 an area admeasuring 1.26 HR., situated at village- Nandgaon, Tahsil Parseoni, District Nagpur.

03] The non-applicants acquired aforesaid total land i.e. an area admeasuring 1.26 HR (hereinafter referred to as the suit property) out of survey no. 64/1 for the purpose of government use vide Land Acquisition Case No. 2/A-65/96-97, For the purpose of acquisition of suit property, a notification under Section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act was published on 23/02/2000. After completion of the acquisition proceedings, an award under Section 11 of Land Acquisition Act was passed on 26/03/2002. The notice under Section 12(2) of Land Acquisition Act was duly served upon the applicants on 10/03/2003. The applicants, having accepted compensation amount under protest, filed the present reference seeking enhancement. Consequently, reference was sent to the District Court under Section 18 of Land Acquisition Act, 1894.

04] The applicants have contended that the compensation awarded by the land acquisition officer at the rate of Rs. 1,05,750/- per Hectare for irrigated land was grossly inadequate and unjustified. It is further contended that, the compensation ought to have been granted to the tune of Rs.2,50,000/- per hectare.

05] The applicants have claimed enhancement of compensation on the following grounds-

(a) That, the acquired land was fertile, irrigated and capable of yielding 2 to 3 crops annually, namely Soyabean, Tur, Cotton and Groundnut.

(b) That, the land was cultivated by adopting modern agricultural practices.

(c) That, the applicant was earning net income exceeding Rs. 30,000/- per acre, which has not been considered.

(d) That, due to acquisition, the applicant has been rendered landless and deprived of his sole source of livelihood.

(e) That, the non-agricultural potential of the land owing to its location and development has been ignored.

(f) That, the Special Land Acquisition Officer failed to properly assess the value for acquired land.

(g) That, the compensation awarded has been accepted under protest as it does not reflect the true market value.

(h) That, the valuation is based on non-comparable sale instances and outdated revenue records.

(i) That, no proper enquiry was conducted and no adequate opportunity was given to adduce evidence.

(j) That, the land is situated about 38 kms from Nagpur and 3.6 km. from Tahsil Parseoni, having road access, electricity and other facilities, thereby possessing both agricultural utility and non-agricultural potential.

(k) That, the compensation awarded is grossly inadequate and contrary to settled principles of valuation.

06] The particulars of claim as put forth by the applicants are as follows-

(a) Land admeasuring 3.113 acres @ Rs. 1,00,000/- per acre – Rs.3,11,300/-,

Total – Rs. 3,11,300/-,

Compensation was awarded – Rs.1,32,712/-,

Enhanced compensation is claimed – Rs.1,78,588/-.

07] The applicants have further claimed statutory benefits, namely solatium @ 30%, additional component @ 12% per annum, and interest @ 18% per annum from the date of award till realization, along with costs of the proceedings.

08] On the other hand, the non-applicant no.1 and 4 have filed their written statement at Exh.8 and it is stated that, the present reference arises out of the award dated 26.03.2002 passed by the Land

Acquisition Officer (General), Nagpur in Land Acquisition Case No. 2/A-65/1996-97 pertaining to Mouza Nandgaon, Tahsil Parseoni, District Nagpur. The acquisition was undertaken for a public purpose, namely construction of Ash Bund for Khaperkheda Thermal Power Station of the non-applicant. It is not in dispute that notifications under Sections 4 and 6 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 were duly issued and published, and that possession of the acquired land was taken after payment of compensation to the applicant.

09] The non-applicant has raised a preliminary objection that the reference under Section 18 of the Land Acquisition Act is barred by limitation, as the same was not filed within the prescribed period. It is further contended that the applicant had participated in the acquisition proceedings, was duly represented, and had accepted the compensation without lodging any proper protest. On this ground alone, it is urged that the reference deserves to be rejected.

10] On merits, it is submitted that the acquired land is situated in a remote village lacking significant development or commercial potential, and therefore does not command high market value. The contention of the applicant regarding proximity to Nagpur, fertility of land, and high income generation is specifically denied. It is further contended that the land was not of superior quality, being largely murum and not capable of yielding crops to the extent claimed. No cogent documentary evidence has been placed on record by the

applicant to substantiate claims of higher yield, multiple cropping, or enhanced valuation.

11] The non-applicants further submit that the Land Acquisition Officer has determined the market value after due inquiry, taking into consideration all relevant factors, including comparable sale instances and prevailing market conditions at the time of issuance of notification under Section 4. The award passed is stated to be just, proper, and more than adequate. Allegations regarding improper valuation, lack of inquiry, or non-consideration of relevant material are specifically denied as baseless and unsupported by evidence.

12] The non-applicant no.2 and 3 have failed to file their written statement.

13] Heard learned counsel appearing for the applicants and non-applicant no.1 and 4.

14] The issues, framed at Exh.11 are reproduced below along with my findings thereon for the reasons given hereunder-

| ISSUES | | FINDINGS |
|--------|---|---------------------|
| (1) | Whether the applicants prove that the compensation awarded by the Special Land Acquisition Officer, is inadequate and not just and proper ? | In the affirmative. |
| (2) | Whether the reference is within limitation? | In the affirmative. |

| ISSUES | | FINDINGS |
|--------|--|--------------------|
| (3) | Whether the applicants are entitled to enhanced compensation ? If yes, what should be the amount ? | Partly affirmative |
| (4) | What order and award ? | Partly allowed |

REASONS

15] In support of the reference, the applicants have examined applicant no.2 namely Venketlaxmi (CW-1), who has deposed on behalf of all the applicants and has tendered her evidence at Exhibit 34. Thereafter, the applicants have closed their oral evidence by filing pursis at Exhibit 37.

16] In order to substantiate their claim, the applicants have placed on record several documents, including the certified copy of the award at Exhibit 36, xerox copy of sale deed at Exh.35 and 7/12 extract of the suit property at Exhibit 41.

17] Per contra, non-applicant Nos. 1 and 4 have examined their witness, namely Murlidhar Tembhare (NA-1), at Exhibit 54. The non-applicants have also produced documentary evidence on record, particularly the village map at Exhibit 55, xerox copies of judgments passed in LAC Nos. 204/2003 and 205/2003 at Exhibits 57 and 58 respectively, a xerox copy of the judgment passed in LAC No. 203/2003 at Exhibit 56, and xerox copy of authority letter at Exhibit 59. The said

non-applicants have thereafter closed their evidence by filing pursis at Exhibit 60.

AS TO ISSUE NO. 2 -

18] In order to determine whether the present reference has been filed within the prescribed period of limitation, it is necessary to examine the provisions contained in Section 18(2) of the Land Acquisition Act, which reads thus:

“The application shall state the grounds on which objection to the award is taken:

Provided that every such application shall be made-

(a) if the person making it was present or represented before the Collector at the time when the award was made, within six weeks from the date of the Collector’s award; or

(b) in other cases, within six weeks of the receipt of notice from the Collector under Section 12(2), or within six months from the date of the Collector’s award, whichever period expires first.”

19] The applicants have asserted that they received notice under Section 12(2) of the Land Acquisition Act on 10/03/2003. There is no material on record to establish that the applicants were either present or duly represented at the time of passing of the award. Furthermore, this fact has not been disputed or challenged in the cross-examination conducted by the non-applicants. The non-applicants have

also failed to produce any document to demonstrate the actual date on which notices were served upon the applicants.

20] It is pertinent to note that, the copy of reference letter is not attached to the present file therefore, it can not be determined as to when the reference was made by the applicants. However, considering the reference letter attached to other cases particularly LAC case No.78/2005 which pertains to the same notification, same village and date of service of notice under section 12(2) was also same, I am inclined to hold that, present reference was made on 21/04/2003. Consequently, the limitation prescribed under Section 18(2)(b) of the Land Acquisition Act would govern the present case. Considering the date of receipt of notice under Section 12(2), the reference has been filed well within the prescribed period of six weeks. Thus, the reference is within limitation.

21] In view of the aforesaid discussion, it is evident that the reference petition has been filed within the prescribed period of limitation. Hence, Issue No. 2 is answered in the affirmative.

AS TO ISSUE NOS. 1 AND 3 -

22] Since Issue Nos. 1 and 3 are intrinsically interconnected and arise out of the same factual matrix, they are taken up together for adjudication on the basis of a common line of reasoning. Before

embarking upon the determination of these issues, it would be appropriate to consider the prevailing legal position.

(i) In *Narendra and Others vs. State of Uttar Pradesh and Others*, reported in (2017) 9 SCC 426, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has observed:

“In land acquisition matters, it must be borne in mind that the landowners, particularly agriculturists, whose lands are acquired for a public purpose, are entitled to fair compensation. In such cases, strict rules of pleadings should not be rigidly applied, and the paramount consideration must be to render substantial justice to the parties. Land acquisition being a welfare legislation, it is just and proper to award fair market value keeping in view the object and purpose of the Act.”

(ii) In *State of Maharashtra vs. Parashram Jagannath Aute*, AIR 2007 Bom 167, the Hon'ble Bombay High Court has held:

“There cannot be any rigid or universal formula for determination of compensation. Each case must be decided on its own facts, and common sense is the best and most reliable guide.”

23] It is well-settled that the Court cannot rely upon the material considered by the Land Acquisition Officer in the award unless such material is duly produced and proved before the Court. The

reference proceedings are to be treated as original proceedings, and the Court is required to determine the market value afresh on the basis of evidence adduced before it. It is equally settled that the burden to establish that the compensation awarded is inadequate lies upon the applicants, who must discharge the same by leading cogent and reliable evidence.

24] In the present case, the contention of the applicants is that the Land Acquisition Officer has awarded inadequate and unjust compensation without considering relevant and material factors while determining the market value of the acquired land. In support of this contention, the applicant's witness namely Venketlaxmi (CW-1) has deposed in accordance with the pleadings in the reference petition.

25] The said witness has further deposed that the Land Acquisition Officer failed to consider that the applicants were cultivating crops such as soybean, tur, cotton, and groundnut on the acquired land, and that they were earning approximately Rs. 30,000/- per acre from such cultivation. However, the applicants have failed to substantiate the said claim by leading any cogent oral or documentary evidence.

26] It is to be noted here that, 7/12 extract of suit property filed at Exh.41 indicate that, the applicants were taking Rabbi and Kharif crops and the source of water was canal. The applicant's witness

has denied in her cross-examination that, acquired land was non-irrigated land. The evidence placed on record establishes that, the acquired land was fertile land. Additionally, the non-applicant's witness namely Murlidhar (NA-1) has admitted in cross-examination that some lands had canal irrigation facilities while others had well irrigation. This admission substantiates that the acquired land was irrigated and fertile.

27] The applicant's witness has stated that the market value of the land at the relevant time was Rs. 1,00,000/- per acre. However, the applicants have not produced any documentary or corroborative evidence to establish that the market value at the relevant time was indeed Rs.1,00,000/- per acre.

28] It is significant to note that the applicants have produced xerox copy of sale-deed on record at Exh.35. However, this sale-deed is incomplete as all the requisite pages were not attached to it, and hence, it is not considered.

29] Instead, the applicants have relied upon judgments rendered in LAC Nos. 203/2003 and 204/2003 (Exhibits 56 and 57 respectively) and have claimed parity on the ground that the facts of the present case are identical. It is contended that, in addition to parity, an enhancement is warranted on account of the availability of a water source.

30] It is well settled that similarly situated landowners are

entitled to equal treatment, and the principle of parity is required to be duly maintained while determining compensation. However, such parity cannot be applied in a rigid or mechanical manner so as to defeat the ends of justice. The Court, while ensuring parity with comparable cases, is not precluded from awarding higher compensation where the evidence on record discloses additional advantages or factors enhancing the value of the acquired land. Having regard to the fact that the Land Acquisition Act is a beneficial legislation intended to secure just, fair and reasonable compensation to landowners, it is just and proper that appropriate enhancement be granted, wherever warranted, so as to ensure that landholders are not deprived of legitimate and equitable benefits.

31] The record reveals that the present case and LAC Nos. 203/2003 and 204/2003 arise from the same acquisition notification and pertain to lands situated in the same village. In the said judgments, the market value was determined at Rs.80,000/- per hectare for dry land and Rs.1,20,000/- per hectare for irrigated land.

32] It is further evident that the said judgments have not been challenged by the non-applicants, as no material has been placed on record to show any appeal or stay against the same. Moreover, the non-applicants have failed to distinguish the present case from the said judgments.

33] However, the evidence on record indicates that the acquired land in the present case had the advantage of a permanent source of irrigation through a canal, thereby enhancing its productivity and income potential. This distinguishing feature is not shown to have been considered in the earlier judgments relied upon for parity.

34] In such circumstances, while applying the principle of parity, the additional advantage of irrigation warrants a reasonable enhancement over and above the rate determined in LAC Nos. 203/2003 and 204/2003. Accordingly, the applicants are entitled to compensation at the rate of Rs.1,30,000/- per hectare to the irrigated land as on the date of notification under Section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act.

35] Hence, Issue No. 1 is answered in the affirmative and Issue No. 3 is answered partly in the affirmative.

AS TO ISSUE NO. 4 -

36] Apart from the enhanced compensation, the applicants are entitled to an additional amount at the rate of 12% per annum on the enhanced compensation for the period commencing from the date of publication of notification under Section 4(1) till the date of the award of the Collector or the date of taking possession, whichever is earlier. The applicants are also entitled to solatium at the rate of 30% on the enhanced compensation under Section 23(2) of the Act.

37] The applicants have further claimed interest on the entire compensation amount inclusive of the additional component and solatium. In *Sunder vs. Union of India* (2001), the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that compensation includes all components under Section 23. Thus, the expression "awarded amount" encompasses the entire compensation including solatium and additional amount.

38] Accordingly, the applicants are entitled to interest on the enhanced compensation, inclusive of additional component and solatium, at the rate of 9% per annum for the first year from the date of the award and thereafter at the rate of 15% per annum till realization, in terms of Section 28 of the Act. It is further noted that the applicants have already received certain compensation under protest, which shall be deducted from the enhanced compensation.

ORDER

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| (1) | The reference petition is partly allowed. |
| (2) | The non-applicants are directed to pay jointly and severally the enhanced compensation of Rs. 1,30,000/- per hectare to the applicants, after deducting the compensation already paid, in accordance with Section 23(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. |
| (3) | The non-applicants shall further pay jointly and severally an additional component at the rate of 12% per annum on the enhanced compensation from the date of publication of notification under Section 4(1) till the date of the award, as per Section 23(1A) of the |

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|-----|---|
| | Land Acquisition Act, 1894, after deducting any amount already paid. |
| (4) | The non-applicants shall pay jointly and severally solatium at the rate of 30% on the enhanced compensation to the applicants as per Section 23(2) of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, after deducting the amount already paid. |
| (5) | The non-applicants shall also pay jointly and severally interest on the aforesaid enhanced compensation (inclusive of additional component and solatium) at the rate of 9% per annum for the first year from the date of the award, and thereafter, at the rate of 15% per annum until realization of the entire amount, as per Section 28 of the Land Acquisition Act. |
| (6) | The non-applicants shall also pay jointly and severally the cost of the claim petition to the applicants in accordance with Section 27(2) of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. |
| (7) | The remaining claims of the applicants stand rejected. |
| (8) | Award be drawn up accordingly. |

Ramtek.
Date: 30.03.2026.

[S. M. Sarode]
Civil Judge Senior Division,
Ramtek.

Endorsement

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|--------------------------------|---|------------|
| Case argued on | : | 24.03.2026 |
| Judgment dictated on | : | 30.03.2026 |
| Transcription ready on | : | 30.03.2026 |
| Judgment checked and signed on | : | 30.03.2026 |

CERTIFICATE

I affirm that the contents of this P.D.F. file of judgment are same word to word as per original judgment.

Name of Stenographer : R. J. Khobragade (Gr.- II)