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IN THE COURT OF CIVIL JUDGE, SENIOR DIVISION,
MAHAD
(Presiding Officer – Smt. H. R. Jadhav)

L.A.R. No.17/2006
Old L.A.R.No.44/2006
Exh.112/A

1. **Shri. Vasant Dhondu Pawar,**
Age – 42 years,
1. **Shri. Shashikant Dhondu Pawar,**
Age – 40 years,
3. **Shri. Suresh Dhondu Pawar (dead)**
through his legal representatives
- 3/1. **Smt. Jaishree Suresh Pawar,**
Age – Adult,
- 3/2. **Shri. Paresh Suresh Pawar,**
Age – 30 years,
Applicant Nos.3/1 and 3/2
R/o.Tarun Vikas Mandal,
Room No.4, Bhau Master Chawl,
Golibar Road, Ghatkopar(W),
Mumbai 86.

Dt.02.05.2026

3/3. **Smt. Pravina Umesh Sukum**
@ Pravina Suresh Pawar,
Age – 29 years,
R/o. Saphe tarfe Tudil,
Post – Ravdhal, Tal – Mahad,

3/4. **Smt. Lalita Abhishek Malusare,**
@ Lalita Suresh Pawar,
Age – 27 years,
R/o.Tarun Vikas Mandal,
Room No.4, Bhau Master Chawl,
Golibar Road, Ghatkopar(W),
Mumbai 86.

...Applicants

4. **Smt. Anandi Dhondu Pawar (dead)**
through her legal representative

4/1. **Smt. Mangala Mahadev Revale,**
Age – 74 years,
R/o. Ugavatkond, Tal – Mahad,
Dist – Raigad.

4/2. **Smt. Surekha Vijay Revale,**
Age – 58 years,
R/o. Deolwadi,
Tal – Mahad, Dist – Raigad.

Vs.

1. **The Special Land Acquisition Officer,**
Raigad – Alibag.

2. **The Collector,**

Alibag, Tal – Alibag, Dist – Raigad ...Respondents

3. **The Executive Engineer,**
Hetavane Kalva Vibhag,
Kamarli, Tal – Pen, Dist – Raigad

Reference :-Under Section 18 of Land Acquisition Act, 1894.

Advocates :-

- Mr. B. T. Navale** :- Advocate for the applicants.
Mr. Yogesh Tendulkar :- A.P. P. for the respondent Nos.1 and 2
Smt. Varsha Patil :- Advocate for the respondent No.3.

:: J U D G M E N T ::

(Delivered on 2nd May, 2026)

This is reference under section 18 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (hereinafter referred as L.A. Act) for enhancement of compensation arising out of award LA/S.R-98/2000/Bijghar/2001 dated 10.10.2001.

Reference can be summarized as under:-

02. The applicants had owned Survey No.23/3, area 0-18-0 (1800 Sq.meter) situated at village Bijghar, Taluka – Mahad, District – Raigad. Their land was acquired for “Nageshwari Dam” by the respondents. (hereinafter

referred to as “acquired land”). Notice under section 4 of Land Acquisition Act was published on 13.04.1999 and received by the applicants on 16.04.1999.

03. It is contention of the applicants that when they received notice under section 12(2) of L.A. Act, they learned about the award passed by the respondent No.1, the Special Land Acquisition Officer (hereinafter referred to as “S.L.A.O”). The applicants also learned that they were not awarded adequate compensation and that the S.L.A.O. neglected to consider the true market value of the land. They were granted meager compensation for the acquired land, including solatium and other components. However, the applicants accepted the same under protest, reserving their right to file a reference under section 18 of the Act for enhancement of compensation.

04. It is further contention of the applicants that, while determining the value of the acquired land, the S.L.A.O. did not consider the availability of electricity, water and other amenities such as Primary Schools, Markets, Hospitals, and similar facilities. The S.L.A.O. wrongly determined the market value of the acquired land. The method and procedure adopted by the S.L.A.O. in

determining the value of acquired land are incorrect. The compensation awarded is inadequate and unjust.

05. It is further contention of the applicants that, railway station Karanjadi is located at just 500 to 750 meters from village Bijghar. Village Bijghar is situated near the historical city of Mahad. Village Bijghar has all civic amenities such as high schools, colleges, hospitals, hotels, garages, showrooms, markets, S.T. Depot and all Government Offices within a distance of about 10 km. from the acquired land. There are historical places such as Raigad fort, situated at distance about 15 to 16 km, which is a well-known historical tourist place. Pratapgad fort and Mahabaleshwar are situated a distance about 50 to 60 km. Shivtharghal, a religious place is situated a distance about 30 km. Gandharpale Buddhists caves and M.I.D.C. Mahad are situated at a distance of about 10 to 12 km from the acquired land/village Bijghar. On account of these historical places and surrounding development, village Bijghar and Mahad city are known for tourism. Therefore the acquired land had non-agricultural (N.A) potentiality and higher market value. However, the S.L.A.O. did not consider all these aspects while determining the market value of the acquired land.

06. It is further contention of the applicants that, the compensation awarded by the S.L.A.O. is baseless and arbitrary. He has wrongly determined the market value of the acquired land. The market value of the acquired land at the time of acquisition was Rs.1,000/- per Sq. meter. However, the S.L.A.O. granted only a meager amount, including statutory benefits such as solatium and other components. Thus, the applicants have claimed enhanced compensation at the rate of Rs.1,000/- per square meter for the acquired land, along with 12% additional component, 30% solatium and 15% interest, as stipulated under the Land Acquisition Act. It is further contention of the applicants that they have filed the present reference for enhancement of compensation within six weeks from the date of receipt of notice under Section 12(2), as required under the L.A. Act. Thus, the applicants prayed to allow the reference.

07. The respondent Nos.1 and 2 vide written statement (Exh.11), resisted the reference. The respondent Nos.3 admitted that the land under reference has been acquired for Nageshwari Dam under award case No.98/2000 dated 10.10.2001. Notifications of under section 4 and 6 of the L.A. Act were published in daily newspapers. Notices under section 9(3) and 9(4) were

served upon to the interested persons. Opportunity was given to the applicants during the inquiry. However, the applicants did not produce any evidence to substantiate their claim in response to the notices under section 9(3) and 9(4) of the L.A. Act.

08. It is further contention of the respondent No.3 that, the land under reference is situated within the limits of village Bijghar, Taluka – Mahad, District – Raigad. The S.L.A.O., after considering the prevailing market value determined the value of the acquired land. The S.L.A.O. after, preparing groups of lands, awarded market value group wise as stated in the award. The S.L.A.O. awarded adequate and reasonable compensation for the acquired land. The compensation awarded is adequate and in consonance with market value prevailing at the time of notification under section 4 of L.A. Act. The applicant's claim is exorbitant and excessive therefore they are not entitled to any enhancement of compensation. In short, the respondent Nos.1 and 2 prayed for dismissal of the reference with costs, alleging it to be devoid of merits.

09. The respondent No.3 vide written statement **(Exh.19)** denied the applicants claim and adopted the line of defence taken by the respondent Nos.1 and 2, alleging

the claim to be excessive and exorbitant. In addition, the respondent No.3 contended that the land under reference was undeveloped and was not yielding any income. Even the surrounding area of the land under reference was undeveloped. There were no industries, markets or other commercial establishments near the land under reference. Considering government market value prevailing in the year 1999, the S.L.A.O. determined the market value and compensated the applicants accordingly. The value of the land under reference as determined by the S.L.A.O. is just and proper. Thus, the respondent No.3 prayed for dismissal of the reference.

10. Considering the rival pleadings of the parties, my learned predecessor framed the issues at **Exh.12 and 21** which are reproduced herein below and to which I have recorded my findings against each of them.

Sr. No.	Issues	Findings
1	Whether the applicants prove that the compensation awarded by the opponents is inadequate and insufficient and not in accordance with the prevailing market rate ?	Yes.
2	Whether the applicants are entitled to enhanced compensation ? If yes, at	Yes. At Rs.700/-

	what rate ?	per Sq.meter
3	What order and award ?	As per final order.

:: REASONS ::

11. In support of claim, the applicant No.1 – Vasant Dhondu Pawar(A.W.1) filed his affidavit in lieu of examination-in-chief at **Exh.22**. The applicants also examined land valuer Mr.Abhinay Jogi (A.W.2) at **Exh.23**. Besides oral evidence, the applicants relied upon documentary evidence such as, valuation report of land (**Exh.24**) & location map(**Exh.25**) of acquired land prepared by land valuer Mr. Abjinay Jogi (A.W.2), disputed award (**Exh.100**), certified copies of index No.II(**Exh.101 to 109**) of sale transactions which took place prior notification under Section 4 of L.A. Act, certified copies of judgments delivered by my learned predecessor in L.A.R.No.19/2006 dated 12.04.2017 and L.A.R. No.25/2006 dated 10.04.2017 (**Exh.110 & 111**) regarding land acquired under the same award (**Exh.100**).

12. The respondent Nos.1 and 2 chose not to lead any oral and or documentary evidence on their behalf.

13. The applicants filed notes of argument at Exh.98. The respondent No.3 filed notes of argument at Exh.99.

As to issue No.1:-

14. Learned advocate for the applicants in written notes of argument (Exh.98) contended that while awarding compensation, S.L.A.O. did not consider road and railway transport, telecommunication, availability of civic amenities, availability of skilled and unskilled laborers, tourism, nearest industrial development, non agricultural potentiality of acquired land, the historical importance of the location, and other important aspects available at Taluka Mahad. It is further contention that while determining valuation of acquired land, the S.L.A.O. did not consider availability of electricity and water and failed to consider sale transactions which took place near the acquired land. The S.L.A.O. wrongly determined the market value of the acquired land. The compensation awarded is baseless, arbitrarily, inadequate, unjust and incorrect. The market value of acquired land at the time of notification under section 4 of L.A. Act was Rs.1,000/- per Sq. meter. Therefore, prayed for allowing the application.

15. In support of these submissions, learned advocate for the applicants relied upon following judgments:-

- i) **Gadigeppa Mahadevappa Chikkumbi Vs. State of Karnataka and others AIR 1990 KARNATAKA 2,**
- ii) **Shashikant Krishnaji (Kandpile) Mali (deceased) through L.R.'s etc. Vs. Special Land Acquisition Officer, Panvel, District – Raigad 1993 B.C.J. 27,**
- iii) **Land Acquisition Officer, Revenue Divisional Officer, Chittoor Vs. Smt. L. Kamamma and others AIR 1998 SUPREME COURT 781,**
- iv) **Osman Khan Abdul Majid Khan and another Vs. State of Maharashtra 1994 Mh.L.J. 1103,**
- v) **State of Maharashtra Vs. Smt. Bhimabai Bhika Gondal (dead through L.R.s) 2007(6) ALL MR 215,**
- vi) **Union of India & Ors. Vs. Shiv Raj & Ors. 2014(6) ALL MR 451 (S.C.),**
- vii) **Major Gen. Kapil Mehra & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr. 2014 ALL SCR 3728,**
- viii) **The Akkalkot Municipal Council, Solapur Vs. Shri. Ramesh Rao Tulsiram Kharade & Ors. 2009(5) ALL MR 856,**
- ix) **Valliyammal & Anr. Vs. Special Tahsildar (Land Acquisition) & Anr. 2011(5) ALL MR 933 (S.C.),**

- x) **Nelson Fernandes & Ors. Vs. Special Land Acquisition Officer, South Goa & Ors. 2007 ALL SCR 1608,**
- xi) **Pandhari Dhondiba Nukulwad Vs. The State of Maharashtra And ... 2020(1) LPJ (BHC) 61**

16. The applicant No.1 – Vasant(A.W.1) reiterated the contents of reference Exh.1 in his affidavit of examination-in-chief stating that the compensation awarded by the S.L.A.O. for his acquired land is inadequate and unjust. He contended that the method and procedure adopted by the S.L.A.O. in determining the value of the acquired land was not correct, as the S.L.A.O. did not consider nearby the sale transactions. His witness land valuer Mr. Abhinay Jogi (A.W.2) deposed accordingly in his evidence. On the other hand, the respondents supported the reasoning of the award and the method adopted by the S.L.A.O. in determining the price of the acquired land. However, the respondents adduced no evidence in support of their defence.

17. I have perused the evidence produced by the applicants. It is seen from the alleged award that, in order to determine price of the acquired land, the S.L.A.O. classified lands into six groups on the basis of land revenue assessment. He divided lands in two types i. e. Kharip and Varkas. In the award the S.L.A.O. also stated that he has

considered the market value from the year 1999. While determining the price of the land N.A. Potentiality, place, area, nature and class of lands were determined by the comparison method. He then fixed value of acquired land at Rs.97,500/- & 68,500/- per hector for Kharip and varkas lands respectively, and calculated compensation accordingly with benefits of 30% solatium and 12% additional components.

18. To come to the correct conclusion, it has to be seen whether the method and procedure adopted by the S.L.A.O. for determination of price of acquired land is correct or not. To answer the same, useful reference is required to be made to the judgment in the case of wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed th*State of Maharashtra Vs. Baliram Patil 2006(6) Mh.L.J. 82* at “grouping of land made by S.L.A.O. on the basis of assessment is not legal and in accordance with the provision of law”. Further in the judgment of *State of West Bengal Vs. Shyampada etc. AIR 1975 S.C. 7223*, the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that “while the land classification for revenue purpose might have it's own rationals, it is not uncommon to find that land which has a lower classification for revenue purpose fetches a higher price in the market”.

19. Thus, on going through above settled law, it is manifest that the determination of price of acquired land on the basis of land revenue assessment cannot be a determinative factor, simply for the reason that land revenue assessment is fixed by the Government before decades ago and there is no revision taken place. In the backdrop, the classification of land on the basis of land revenue assessment cannot be determinative factor for the determination of the price of the acquired land. It is also observed that a “ready reckoner” is published by the Government which only provides basic rates for transactions on which parties have to carry out their transactions for purpose of payment of stamp duty to the Government. However, it does not reflect the actual market value of the said land and the market value of the land is normally more than the ready reckoner rate.

20. It is well settled that market value of the land has to be assessed considering transaction between willing purchaser and willing seller. Therefore, factors like fertility, quality, irrigation facility, prospects of such facilities in the near future must be considered. The market price of agricultural land can also be considered on the basis of nature of land, i.e., irrigated or non irrigated.

21. The applicant No.1 – Vasant(A.W.1) was cross-examined at length by the respondents. However upon going through his cross-examination, it is seen that nothing was elicited from him which could support the defence of the respondents that the compensation awarded by the S.L.A.O. vide the award **(Exh.100)** is adequate. On the other hand, evidence of the applicants establishes that M.I.D.C. Mahad is just at 10 Km away from the acquired land, featuring a large number of industries more particularly chemical industries. Nearby acquired lands, there were roads approaching to the State Highway. Karanjadi railway station is just at a distance of half a kilometer from village Bijghar. There are a number of tourist spots nearby the acquired lands. There is zero pollution of air and water in the proximity of acquired land.

22. I have perused the alleged award, it is seen that the S.L.A.O. did not consider the above aspects. The S.L.A.O. though stated to have considered sale transactions, he has not referred a single sale transaction in the award while determining the market value of the land acquired. The S.L.A.O. has given vague findings about market value of the year 1999 i.e. the year of notification under Section 4 of L.A. Act., N.A. potentiality, place, area, nature, and class of land by the comparison method. The respondents not

adduce any evidence to justify the method and procedure adopted by the S.L.A.O. in determining the market value of the acquired land to prove it to be correct and is in consonance with the settled positions.

23. The S.L.A.O. in determining the market value of acquired land failed in his duty to consider the historical importance of taluka Mahad and availability of civic amenities nearby the acquired land. It is admitted fact that city of Mahad is known for Raigad fort i.e. “Capital of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the water Satyagraha of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at Chavadar Tale, and other tourism spots like “Gandharpale Caves, Shivtharghal” etc. which fetch tourists to visit it. Thus, it is seen that Mahad taluka is rich in its tourism. Due to tourism spots, more peoples are interested to invest in the lands, developing resorts, restaurants, guest house, eateries and allied business. However, this aspect also not been considered by the S.L.A.O. while determining the market value of the acquired land.

24. In the alleged award (Exh.100), it is seen that, the S.L.A.O. determined market value of the acquired land grouping the lands on the basis of revenue assessment. As discussed earlier, the Hon’ble Supreme Court in the case of *Baliram Patil* (supra), held that grouping of land made by

S.L.A.O. on the basis of assessment is not legal and in accordance with the provision of law. Besides, the S.L.A.O. did not consider any sale transactions determining the market value of the acquired land. Thus, it is observed that the S.L.A.O. did not consider important aspects in determining the market value of the acquired land in proper perspective. With this, it is concluded that the applicants have been able to establish that the compensation awarded by the respondents is inadequate, insufficient and not as per the prevailing market value. Resultantly, issue No.1 is answered in the affirmative.

As to issue No.2:-

25. The applicants claimed enhanced compensation for the acquired land at Rs.1,000/- per Sq. meter. In the notes of argument, it was contended by learned advocate for the applicants that considering the factors like road transport, rail transport, availability of skilled and unskilled labours, chemical industries in M.I.D.C., N.A. potentiality of the acquired lands and fast development of Mahad taluka, the applicants are entitled for enhance compensation at Rs.1,000/- per Sq. meter.

26. To substantiate the claim of enhanced compensation at Rs.1,000/- Sq. meter, the applicants relied

upon sale instances (Exh.101 to 109) shown below in tabular form;

SR No.	Date of Sale deed	Property location and area	Agreement between	Agreement Value	Rate per Sq. meter
1	Doc. No.518 dated 15-05-1999	Cts no.1597, 1598, 1599, Mahad Area = 215.4 Sq.meter	Sundarabai Ganpat Salunkhe And Smitha Eknath Gole	4,65,000/-	2119/-
2	Doc. No.776 dated 23-07-1998	Mahad Cts no.1222, Area = 46.8 Sq.meter	Pardeep Ramesh Bagade And Vaishali Nandkumar Yadav	1,75,000/-	1603/-
3	Doc. No.961 dated 04-07-2001	Mahad S. No.2749, 2750 Area = 294.03 Sq.meter	M/s. Ramvardayini Construction and Pradip Kashinath Rajmane	3,30,000/- & 3,40,000/-	1121/-
4	Doc. No.636 dated 15-06-1998	Mahad Cts no.1001, Area = 214 Sq.meter	Ramlal Tuljaram Sheth And Khadija Gulam Mohiddin	2,39,338/-	1118/-
5	Doc. No.668 dated 20-06-1998	Mahad Cts no.1001, Area = 214 Sq.meter	Ramlal Tuljaram Sheth And Akbar Mahamad Isane	2,54,631/-	1190/-
6	Doc. No.744 dated 15-07-1998	Mahad Cts no.156 A/1, Area = 1354 Sq.meter	Maruti Devji Thombare And Rafik Ibrahim Isane	11,01,000/-	1354/-
7	Doc. No.436 dated 23-03-2000	Mahad Cts no.145, hno - 11/2 Area = 1900 Sq.meter	Nilam Bastimal Jain And Chetankumar Gajanan Ratnaparakhi	20,96,000/-	1103/-
8	Doc.No.637 dated 15-06-	Mahad Cts no.1001,	Ramlal Tuljaram Sheth And	2,34,754/-	1094/-

	1998	Area = 214 Sq.meter	Anamtulla Alimiya		
9	Doc. No.1188 dated 03-09- 2001	Mahad Cts no.8, Area = 0-08-0 HR	Jayant Chandrakant Deshmukh And Pidilite Industrial Ltd.	1000000/-	1250/-

27. The applicant No.1 – Vasant (A.W.1) deposed that, value of the acquired lands at the time of notification under Section 4 of L.A. Act was around Rs.1,000/- per Sq. meter. But the S.L.A.O. without considering market value awarded compensations ignoring nearby sale transactions of acquired land.

28. In support, the applicants also examined Valuer Mr.Abhinay Jogi (A.W.2). He has deposed that immediately after publication of notice under section 4 of L.A. Act, he inspected land under reference. Prepared valuation report **(Exh.24)**, along with a location map of the land **(Exh.25)**, shows the available and proposed infrastructural facilities for the land under reference. Having conducted a pit test, he found a hard stratum in the soil. Valuer Mr.Abhinay Jogi (A.W.2) also stated that water, electricity, and roads were available to the acquired land. The existing geographical situation of the land under reference was beneficial for non-agricultural purposes. However, in determining the compensation for the land under reference, the S.L.A.O. did

not consider these aspects; furthermore, they did not make any comment in the award regarding the potential of the acquired land for non-agricultural, commercial, or industrial purposes.

29. On the other hand, the respondents supported the award, contending that there is no evidence from the applicants to substantiate the claim that the market value of the acquired land was Rs.1,000/- per sq. meter at the time of acquisition. According to the respondents, the sale transactions relied upon by the applicants cannot be compared to the acquired land. The compensation awarded by the S.L.A.O. is adequate, reasonable, and in consonance with the market value prevailing at the time of the notification under Section 4 of the L.A. Act. According to the respondents, the applicants' claim for enhancement is excessive and exorbitant.

30. It is necessary to look into the legal position before evaluating evidence on the point of enhanced compensation.

31. Section 23 of the Land Acquisition Act stipulates the factors to be considered in determining compensation. It provides that the market value has to be fixed as of the

date of publication of notice under Section 4(1) of the L.A. Act. While deciding the market value of acquired land, the Land Acquisition Officer is required to keep in mind the following factors:

- i) The existing geographical situation of the land;
- ii) The existing use of the land;
- iii) Already available advantages, such as proximity to
a National or State highway, a road, and/or a
developed area; and
- iv) The market value of land situated in the same
locality, or adjacent or very near to the acquired land.

32. As observed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *Chimanlal Hargovinddas Vs. Special Land Acquisition Officer, Poona & Anr. AIR 1988 S.C. 1952*, "the standard method of determination of the market value of any land acquired is by evaluating the market price of the land on the date of publication of notice under Section 4(1) of the L.A. Act; the dates of notification under Sections 6 & 9 are irrelevant. In doing so, the Court has to correlate the market value reflected in the most comparable instance, which provides an index of market value. Only genuine instances have to be taken into consideration. Even post-notification instances can be taken into account if they are very proximate and genuine, and if the acquisition itself has

not motivated the purchaser to pay a higher price on account of the resultant improvement in development prospects. A balance sheet of plus and minus factors may be drawn for this purpose, and relevant factors evaluated in terms of price variation as a prudent purchaser would do. The Reference Court would act as a hypothetical purchaser willing to purchase the land in an open market at the prevailing price on that day from a seller willing to sell at a reasonable price. Thus, the market value is determined with reference to the open market sale of comparable land in the neighborhood, by a willing seller to a willing buyer."

33. On the backdrop of the above legal positions, evidence of the applicants needs to be evaluated to determine whether the applicants are entitled to compensation. If yes, at what rate ?

34. Going back to the oral evidence of the applicants, Applicant No.1 – Vasant (A.W.1), in his affidavit of examination-in-chief, reproduced the contents of the application/reference Exh.1, and as I have discussed above the evidence of the said witness is remained intact. In his cross-examination the respondents themselves brought on record that the acquired land was within the limits of the Bijghar and the distance between Bijghar village and Mahad

is only 8 to 10 km. The remainder of the cross-examination consisting of suggestions that the surrounding area of the acquired land is undeveloped and that the land was reasonably compensated according to the market value at the time of acquisition was denied by the applicant No.1 – Vasant (A.W.1).

35. Valuer Mr.Abhinay Jogi(A.W.2) has deposed that, immediately after the publication of the notice under Section 4 of the L.A. Act, he inspected the land under reference. He prepared a valuation report **(Exh.24)** along with a location map of the land **(Exh.25)**, showing the available and proposed infrastructural facilities for the land under reference. Having performed a pit test, he found a type of hard stratum in the soil. Valuer Mr.Abhinay Jogi (A.W.2) also stated that there was availability of water, electricity, and roads to the acquired land. The existing geographical situation of the land under reference was beneficial for non-agricultural purposes. However, the respondents, in determining compensation for the land under reference, did not consider all these aspects, nor did they make any comment in the award regarding the potentiality of the acquired land for non-agricultural, commercial, and/or industrial purposes.

36. It is to be noted that, while reviewing the evidence of the valuer, Mr. Abhinay Jogi, and after perusal of valuation report (Exh.24), it is observed that in suggesting the market value of the acquired land at the time of notification under Section 4 of the L.A. Act to be Rs. 1,000/- per sq. meter, he (A.W.2) considered some judgments in Land References decided by my predecessor in respect of acquired land. These decisions, under the award in dispute, showed an enhancement of compensation to Rs. 700/- per sq. Meter.

37. Valuer Mr. Abhinay Jogi (A.W.2) has also relied on sale transactions (Exh.101 to 109) of Mahad city, as referred to above in tabular form. But to suggest the market value of the acquired land at Rs.1,000/- per sq. meter, he did not make any deduction for development costs from the price of the sale deeds of Mahad city to determine the market value of the acquired land. Hence, the valuation report (Exh. 26) and the market value of the acquired land suggesting Rs. 1,000/- per sq. meter cannot be acted upon.

38. No doubt, to prove the sale transactions (Index No. II) (Exh.101 to 109), the applicants did not examine the parties to the said transactions, i.e., either the vendor or the vendee. Showing that certified copies of index/sale

deeds are admissible in evidence, learned advocate for the applicants referred to Section 51(A) of the L.A. Act, which reads as follows:

Section 51(A) – Acceptance of certified copy as evidence: In any proceeding under this Act, a certified copy of a document registered under the Registration Act, 1908, including a copy given under Section 57 of that Act, may be accepted as evidence of the transaction recorded in such document.

39. Besides, in the judgment of Osman Khan (cited supra), it has been held that "a certified copy of a registered document can be considered as evidence in reference under the Land Acquisition Act. Thus, considering Section 51(A) of the L.A. Act and the judgment of Osman Khan, I do find substance in the submission of the learned advocate for the applicants that certified copies of sale transactions are admissible in evidence. Thus, it is observed that the index of sale deeds filed on record by the applicants is admissible in evidence.

40. In the case in hand, the notification is dated 10.10.2001, and the highest rate of sale deed is dated 15/05/1999 i.e., prior to the notification. The said sale transactions appear bona fide and genuine. As seen from

the sale transactions relied upon by the applicants, the rates of land in Mahad city are rising from Rs.1,097/- to Rs. 2,119/- per sq. meter. One of the sale transactions, i.e., the sale deed dated 03.09.2001 (Exh.109) relied upon by the applicants, shows that land under the said sale deed in village Kambale-Birwadi nearby the acquired lands was purchased by Pidilite Industries at Rs.1,250/- per sq. meter. Pidilite Industries is admittedly situated in M.I.D.C. Mahad within 10 km of the acquired lands. Therefore, it can be considered that the rate of the acquired land is below Rs. 1,250/- per sq. meter, i.e., the rate at which Pidilite Industries purchased the land in village Kambale-Birwadi.

41. As far as the other sale deeds (Exh.101 to 109) are concerned, these are sale deeds for Mahad city. In the city, there is availability of roads, drainage systems, electricity, and layout systems; Mahad city is situated on the Mumbai-Goa highway. On the other hand, the acquired lands are agricultural lands. The acquired lands are adjacent to the Mahad-Vinhere-Khed state highway and near to the M.I.D.C. Mahad and Mahad city. Thus, the acquired lands have N.A. (Non-Agricultural) potential. However, it cannot be ignored that at the time of acquisition, the acquired lands were agricultural lands and, at that time, had only water, electricity, and road facilities.

At the time of acquisition, the acquired lands did not have internal roads, drainage systems, or layouts. The distance between the state highway and the acquired lands is 10 km.

42. Considering the "guesswork" principles, a lot of development is required for the acquired lands to convert them into lands like those in Mahad city. As the acquired lands are agricultural, a huge amount is required to convert them into non-agricultural land. A substantial portion of the land must be reserved for the formation of roads and other civic amenities. Therefore, it will be just and proper to deduct 65% toward the cost of development from the sale price shown in the sale transaction dated 15.05.1999(Exh. 101). After deducting 65% toward the cost of development, the price of the lands comes to Rs.741.35 per sq. meter. Applying the guesswork principle and deducting development costs, the market value of the acquired lands comes to Rs.700/-.

43. The applicant referred certified copies of judgment dated 12.04.2017 in L.A.R.No.19/2006(Exh.110) and the judgment dated 10.04.2017 in L.A.R. No.25/2006 (Exh.111), decided by my learned predecessor in respect of lands situated in the same village and acquired for the same project under the same notification. My learned

predecessor, considering the same evidence as produced in the case at hand, partly allowed the reference and awarded enhanced compensation at Rs.700/- per sq. meter.

44. It is useful to refer here to the judgment of *Hanmabai Iranna Patil Vs. State of Maharashtra and another 2009(4) Mh.L.J. 805*, wherein the Hon'ble Bombay High Court held that "the claimants whose lands are situated in the same village and acquired for the same project under the same notifications are entitled to compensation at the same rate on the ground of parity."

45. In the case at hand, as admittedly stated above, my learned predecessor, considering the same evidence, awarded enhanced compensation at Rs.700/- per sq. meter for lands situated in the same village (i.e.Bijghar) and acquired for the same project under the same notification. Thus, considering the judgment of Hanmabai Iranna Patil referred to above, I find no special reason to take a different view from that of my learned predecessor. Having considered all discussed aspects, it is observed that the applicants are entitled to enhanced compensation for the acquired land at the rate of Rs.700/- per sq. meter on the ground of parity.

46. As regards the rest of the judgments cited on behalf of the applicants, those are either on the points already referred to in this judgment or on points which are not a prime consideration in this judgment. Therefore, I find it unnecessary to deal with each judgment separately.

47. Having considered the above-discussed aspects, it is observed that the applicants have been able to establish that, on the date of notification under Section 4 of the L.A. Act, the market value of the acquired land was Rs.700/- per sq. meter. Accordingly, the applicants are entitled to enhanced compensation. However, any compensation already paid to the applicants is required to be deducted. In addition to the enhanced land value, the applicants are entitled to statutory benefits, i.e. 30% solatium and 12% additional component, along with interest as per the provisions of the L.A. Act.

As to Issue No.3:-

48. In answering Issue Nos.1 & 2, it has been observed that the claimants/applicants proved that the compensation awarded by the respondents is inadequate and not in accordance with the prevailing market value. Recording the reasoning for Issue No.2, it has been observed that the claimants/applicants are entitled to

enhanced compensation at the rate of Rs.700/- per sq. meter, after deducting compensation already received and benefits of solatium and components with applicable interest under the L.A. Act. Accordingly, in view of the findings on Issue No. 3, the following order is passed:

:: ORDER ::

1.	The Reference is partly allowed with costs.
2.	The applicants are entitled to enhanced compensation for the acquired land from Survey No.23/3, area 0-18-0 (1800 Sq.meter) situated at village Bijghar, Taluka – Mahad, District – Raigad at the rate of Rs.700/- per sq. meter.
3.	The applicants are entitled to 30% solatium on the enhanced compensation under Section 23(2) of the L.A.Act.
4.	The applicants are entitled to a 12% additional increase on the enhanced amount of compensation from the date of the notification under Section 4(1) of the Land Acquisition Act to the date of the award, i.e. dated 10.10.2001, under Section 23(1A) of the L.A. Act.

5.	The applicants are also entitled to interest at 9% per annum for the first year of the award and thereafter at 15% per annum until the realization of the entire amount.
6.	Formulate the award accordingly.

Mahad
Date : 02.05.2026

(Smt. H. R. Jadhav)
Civil Judge Senior Division
Mahad.