

W.A.No.1750 of 2024

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 14.07.2026

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,
CHIEF JUSTICE

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.ARUL MURUGAN

W.A.No.1750 of 2024

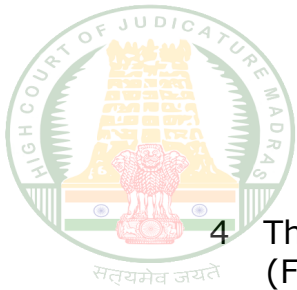
Sunit Kumar Agarwal

Advocate, Flat No.2610, 26th Floor, Tower B,
Lodha White City, Near to Apex Hospital,
Akurli Road, Damu Nagar, Lokhandwala,
Kandivali East, Mumbai – 400 101.

.. Appellant

Vs

- 1 The Asst. General Manager
(For Kind attention Meera, AGM)
Punjab National Bank Central Sashttra Circle
2nd Floor, Spencer Plaza, 769, Anna Salai,
Chennai – 600 002.
- 2 K.Mahadevan
Asstt. General Manager, Punjab National Bank,
Zonal Sastra, 4th Floor, PNB Tower, 46-49,
Royapettah High road Royapettah, Chennai-600 014.
(Formerly posted as AGM at Punjab National Bank,
Central Sastra Circle, 2nd Floor, Spencer Plaza, 769,
Anna Salai, Chennai – 600 002 (TN)).
- 3 The Chief Manager
(For Kind Attention Narmadha)
Punjab National Bank, 150, Luz Church Road
Mylapore, Chennai – 600 004.



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- 4 The Chief Manager
(For Kind Attention D.Muthukumar)
Punjab National Bank, No.21-Raja Annamalai Road
Puruswalkam, Chennai – 600 084.
- 5 Rahul Srivastava
Chief Manager, Punjab National Bank
Retail Assets Branch (Loan Point), 3rd Floor ,
Royala Towers, 158, Anna Salai, Chennai – 600 002.
(Formerly Posted as CM at Punjab National Bank
No.21-Raja Annamalai Road, Puruswalkam,
Chennai – 600 084. (TN)).
- 6 Amit Kumar
Chief Manager, Punjab National Bank
Head Customer Acquisition Centre (CAC)
Trichy Main Branch, Behind Bus Stand,
Tiruchirappalli Trichy-621 111.
(Formerly Posted as CM at Punjab National Bank
No.21-Raja Annamalai Road, Puruswalkam,
Chennai – 600 084. (TN)).
- 7 Shiva Komra
Manager – Law, Punjab National Bank
Sastra Centre, 1st Floor, 27-33-40
Kodavalli Vari Street, Besant Road Cross
Governorpet, Vijayawada-520 002
(Formerly posted as Mgr-Law at ARMB,
Mezzanine Floor, PNB Tower, 46-49,
Royapettah High Road, Royapettah
Chennai – 600 014 (TN)).
- 8 Praseetha Pillai @ Prabhakaran
Chief Manager – Law, Punjab National Bank
Zonal Office, Camp Office 6-1-73, 2nd Floor
Saeed Plaza, Ladki-Ka-Pul Saifabad
Khairtabad. Hyderabad – 500 004 (Telangana)
(Formerly posted as Sr MGR-Law at Circle Office,
2nd Floor, PNB Tower, 46-49, Royapettah High Road,
Royapettah, Chennai – 600 014 (TN)).



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9 The Circle Head
Punjab National Bank Circle Office
PNB Tower, 2nd Floor, 46-49 Royapettah High Road
Royapettah Chennai – 600 014.

10 The Zonal Manager
Punjab National Bank, Zonal Office,
PNB Tower, 5th Floor, 46-49
Royapettah High Road, Royapettah
Chennai – 600 014.

.. Respondents

PRAYER: Appeal filed under Clause 15 of the Letters Patent against the order dated 18.4.2024 passed by the learned Single Judge in W.P.No.1379 of 2024.

For Appellant : Mr.Sunit Kumar Agarwal
Appearing in person

For Respondents : Mr.P.Raghunath
for M/s.T.S.Gopalan & Co

JUDGMENT

(Delivered by the Hon'ble Chief Justice)

This writ appeal is directed against the order dated 18.4.2024 passed by the learned Single Judge in W.P.No.1379 of 2024. By the said order, the learned Single Judge declined to exercise extraordinary writ jurisdiction to resolve a dispute involving unpaid professional legal fees and dismissed the writ petition. Aggrieved by

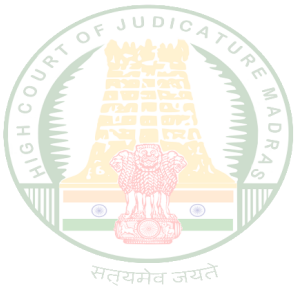


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this dismissal, the appellant, appearing in person, has preferred this appeal.

2. The appellant is a former empanelled advocate for Punjab National Bank (the respondent bank). He approached the writ court seeking a direction to the respondents for the payment of outstanding bills toward professional fees and expenses, quantified initially at Rs.6,80,412/-, and subsequently enhanced in these appellate proceedings to Rs.10,00,628/- on account of newly discovered bills.

3. The appellant, appearing in person, submits that the outstanding dues are undisputed and he has rendered services to the absolute satisfaction of the bank over several years. The delay and non-payment are owing to administrative malice, as certain bank officials demanded 40% commission to release his legitimate dues. The respondent bank, as an instrumentality of the State under Article 12 of the Constitution, cannot act arbitrarily or in breach of trust.



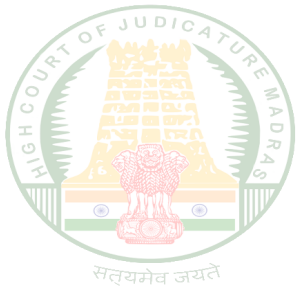
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4. Per contra, learned counsel for the respondent bank submits that while certain undisputed bills have already been settled, other claims are seriously disputed. He added that certain deficiencies in service have necessitated a closer scrutiny of the bills, rendering the entire claim a private contractual dispute.

5. We have given our anxious consideration to the submissions advanced on either side.

6. The core issue that stems up for consideration is whether a writ petition under Article 226 of the Constitution is the appropriate remedy for enforcing a claim for professional fees arising out of an attorney-client relationship, especially where the facts are seriously disputed.

7. A writ is an extraordinary public law remedy. It is designed to correct glaring constitutional overreaches, failures of public duty, and arbitrary abuses of State power. It is not intended to serve as an alternate recovery mechanism for commercial or professional contracts.



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8. For a court to step into the realm of contract under writ jurisdiction, the appellant must demonstrate an absolute, unambiguous admission of liability by the respondent, coupled with shocking arbitrariness that offends the sense of justice under Article 14 of the Constitution of India. When the respondent/bank raises questions regarding the performance of a service, the matter loses its public law character and enters the domain of private civil obligations.

9. A scrutiny of the records reveals that the claims submitted by the appellant are not admitted by the bank. The bank has explicitly cited deficiencies in the legal services rendered. The appellant, on his part, has countered with grave criminal allegations of bribery and corruption.

10. On an overall consideration of the facts, the learned Single Judge, in our view, was right in holding that a writ petition is not the appropriate remedy to resolve this disputed contractual matter.



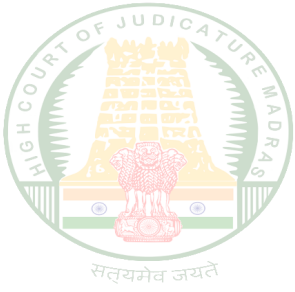
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We find no legal infirmity in the approach adopted by the learned Single Judge that warrants our intervention in appeal.

11. The dismissal of the writ petition does not mean the appellant is without a remedy. The appellant has knocked on the wrong judicial door. The proper course of action is to approach a competent civil court, where both parties can file detailed pleadings, produce documents, cross-examine witnesses and establish the truth through a regular trial.

12. The appeal is hereby dismissed and the impugned order of the learned Single Judge is affirmed.

13. The appellant is granted liberty to establish his claims for professional fees and agitate his grievances before a competent civil court or appropriate forum. If the appellant chooses to file a civil suit, the time spent *bona fide* prosecuting the writ petition and this writ appeal shall be excluded for the purpose of computing limitation.



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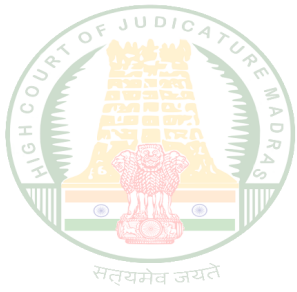
There shall be no order as to costs.

(SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,CJ) (G.ARUL MURUGAN,J)
14.07.2026

Index : Yes/No
Neutral Citation : Yes/No
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Punjab National Bank, Zonal Office,
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THE HON'BLE CHIEF JUSTICE
AND
G.ARUL MURUGAN,J.

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