



"C.R."

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. NITIN JAMDAR

&

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE BASANT BALAJI

FRIDAY, THE 31ST DAY OF OCTOBER 2025 / 9TH KARTHIKA, 1947

WP(PIL) NO. 14 OF 2025

PETITIONER:

KERALA HIGH COURT ADVOCATES ASSOCIATION (KHCAA)
REG. NO. ER 931/2004, HIGH COURT BUILDING, KOCHI,
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, PIN - 682031.

BY ADVS. SRI. YESHWANTH SHENOY,
SMT. AYSHA ABRAHAM

RESPONDENTS:

- 1 STATE OF KERALA
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
REPRESENTED BY ITS CHIEF SECRETARY, PIN - 695001.
- 2 LAW SECRETARY, LAW DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF KERALA, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001.
- 3 ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY, FINANCE DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF KERALA, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001.
- * 4 MAVELIKARA BAR ASSOCIATION
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY,
ADDITIONAL DISTRICT COURT, COURT ROAD,
MAVELIKARA, PIN - 682 031.



* ADDL. R4 IS IMPEADED AS PER ORDER DATED
14/08/2025 IN IA No.3/2025 IN WP(PIL) No.14/2025.

* 5 TRIVANDRUM BAR ASSOCIATION
REP: BY ITS SECRETARY, ASSOCIATION BUILDING,
VANCHIYOOR, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
RESIDING AT TC 35/978, VALLAKADAVU,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.

* ADDL. R5 IS IMPEADED AS PER ORDER DATED
14/08/2025 IN IA No.4/25 IN WP(PIL) No.14/2025.

BY ADVS. SRI. K. GOPALAKRISHNA KURUP,
ADVOCATE GENERAL,
SRI. MOHAMMED RAFIQ, SPECIAL GOVT.PLEADER

BY ADVS. SRI. R.HARIKRISHNAN (KAMBISSERIL)
SRI. NEERAJ NARAYAN
SRI. R.SUNIL KUMAR
SRI. ARUN V.G. (K/795/2004)

THIS WRIT PETITION (PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION) HAVING
COME UP FOR ADMISSION ON 14.08.2025, THE COURT ON 31.10.2025
DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

**“C.R.”****JUDGMENT**Dated this the 31st day of October, 2025.**Nitin Jamdar, C. J.**

Through this Public Interest Litigation, the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association challenges the amendment to the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959, introduced by Section 2 of the Kerala Finance Act, 2025. The Mavelikara Bar Association and the Trivandrum Bar Association have joined as intervenors supporting this challenge.

2. Earlier, the levy of court fees and the valuation of suits in the region were governed by the Madras Court-Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1955, the Travancore-Cochin Court-Fees Act, 1125, and the Travancore-Cochin Suits Valuation Act, 1125. To ensure uniformity across the entire State, it was considered necessary to enact a common law, and accordingly, the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959 (hereinafter referred to as the 'Act of 1959') came into force on 1 February 1962.

3. The Act of 1959 comprises nine chapters. Chapter I sets out the definitions and the applicability of the Act. Chapter II relates to the liability to pay court fees, while Chapter III provides for the determination of court fees under various sections. Chapter IV concerns the computation of fees, and Chapter V addresses the valuation of suits.



Chapters VI and VII contain provisions relating to probates, letters of administration, refunds, and remissions. Under Section 85 of the Act of 1959, the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Rules, 1962 were framed. Schedule I appended to the Act deals with ad valorem fees, and Schedule II prescribes the court fees, which form the main subject matter of the present challenge.

4. The Act of 1959 has undergone several amendments over the years. Act 8 of 1966, enacted to raise additional resources for the Fourth Five Year Plan, enhanced the rates of court fees. This was followed by Act 8 of 1968, which introduced amendments necessitated by the period when the State of Kerala was under President's Rule. By Act 12 of 1969, a further amendment was made to provide for the levy of court fees on election petitions, as no specific provision existed earlier. Subsequently, Act 7 of 1972 amended the Act of 1959 to grant certain concessions to Co-operative Societies and Trade Unions formed by members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Acting on the recommendations of the Taxation Enquiry Committee, the Act was further amended to prescribe a uniform fee rate for miscellaneous petitions. Thereafter, Act 38 of 1976 introduced provisions relating to court fees payable before Tribunals, and Act 39 of 1976 brought in procedural changes. Following a challenge to the validity of certain clauses in the Schedule, on the ground that the court fee levied was excessive and amounted to taxation, the State undertook a study, leading to further amendments through Act



6 of 1991. Subsequent amendments were also made from time to time, based on financial proposals of the Government of Kerala concerning various legislations.

5. The subject matter of challenge is the Kerala Finance Act, 2025 (hereinafter referred to as ‘the impugned Amending Act’), by which the Act of 1959 was amended. For the sake of convenience, the impugned Amending Act is reproduced hereunder:

“ACT 3 OF 2025

THE KERALA FINANCE ACT, 2025

An Act to give effect to certain financial proposals of the Government of Kerala for the Financial Year 2025-2026.

Preamble.- WHEREAS, it is expedient to give effect to certain financial proposals of the Government of Kerala for the Financial Year 2025-2026;

BE it enacted in the Seventy-sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. Short title and commencement.- (1) This Act may be called the Kerala Finance Act, 2025.

(2) Save as otherwise provided in this Act,-

a) clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 4 shall be deemed to have come into force on the 1st day of July, 2017;

(b) section 6 shall come into force on such date as the Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint:



Provided that different dates may be appointed for different provisions of this section and any reference in any such provision to the Act shall be construed as a reference to the coming into force of that provision;

(c) section 7 shall be deemed to have come into force on the 1st day of August, 2024;

(d) the remaining provisions of this Act shall come into force on the 1st day of April, 2025.

CHAPTER II

REVISION OF TAXES

2. Amendment of Act 10 of 1960.- In the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959 (10 of 1960),-

(1) in section 7, in sub-section (2), after the figure and symbol “38,” the figures, bracket, letter and symbol “40(1a),” shall be inserted;

(2) in section 25, for the words “rupees one thousand”, wherever it occurs the words “rupees five thousand” shall be substituted;

(3) in section 27, for the words “rupees five hundred”, wherever it occurs the words “rupees two thousand and five hundred” shall be substituted;

(4) in section 28,-

(i) for the words “rupees two hundred”, the words “rupees five thousand” and for the words “rupees one thousand”, the words “rupees ten thousand” shall be substituted;

(ii) in the Explanation, after the words “charitable endowment”, the words, symbols, brackets and figures “and any institution registered under the Travancore-Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1955 (12 of 1955) and the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (Central Act 21 of 1860)” shall be inserted;



(5) for section 29, the following section shall be substituted, namely:-

“29. Suits for possession under the Specific Relief Act, 1963.- In a suit for possession of immovable property under section 6 of the Specific Relief Act, 1963 (Central Act 47 of 1963), fee shall be computed on one third of the market value of the property or rupees ten thousand, whichever is higher.”;

(6) in section 30, for the words “rupees one thousand”, the words “rupees twenty thousand” shall be substituted;

(7) in section 31, for the words “rupees one thousand”, the words “rupees five thousand” shall be substituted;

(8) in section 35, in sub-section (1), for the words “rupees one thousand”, the words “rupees five thousand” shall be substituted;

(9) in section 37, in sub-section (2),-

(i) in item (i), for the words “Rupees fifty”, the words “Rupees five hundred” shall be substituted;

(ii) in item (ii), for the words “Rupees three hundred”, the words “Rupees two thousand” shall be substituted;

(10) in section 40, after sub-section (1), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:-

“(1a) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), for setting aside a gift deed, settlement deed and release deed, if filed by the settlor, donor or any person who can claim under him in present or future, the fee shall be computed on the market value of the property.”;

(11) in section 45,-



(i) for the words, figures and symbols “section 14 of the Madras Survey and Boundaries Act, 1923, section 13 of the Travancore Survey and Boundaries Act of 1094 or section 14 of the Cochin Survey Act, II of 1074”, the words, symbols, bracket and figures “section 13 of the Kerala Survey and Boundaries Act, 1961 (37 of 1961)” shall be substituted;

(ii) for the words “rupees one thousand”, the words “rupees five thousand” shall be substituted;

(12) in section 46, for the words “fifteen rupees”, the words “seventy five rupees” shall be substituted;

(13) in section 47, for the words and symbol “the fee payable shall be ten rupees.”, the following shall be substituted, namely:-

“the fee payable shall be at the following rates,-

(i) In a Munsiff Court - Rupees five hundred;

(ii) In a Sub-Court or a District Court

- Rupees one thousand.”

(14) in section 50, for the words “Rupees twenty five”, “Rupees fifty”, “Rupees two hundred”, “Rupees four hundred”, the words “Rupees one hundred and twenty five”, “Rupees two hundred and fifty”, “Rupees one thousand” and “Rupees two thousand” shall respectively be substituted;

(15) in section 52A, for the words, figure, letters and brackets “sub-items (C) and (D) of item (iii) of article 3 of Schedule II”, the words, figure, letters and brackets “sub-items (C) and (D) of item (ii) of article 1 of schedule II” shall be substituted;

(16) in section 68, for the words, figure, letters and brackets “article 11(g) and (t) of Schedule II”, the words, figure, letters and brackets “article 9(g) and (s) of schedule II” shall be substituted;



(17) in section 74, in sub-section (1), in item (ii), for the words “rupees twelve thousand”, the words “rupees three lakh” and for the words “rupees fifteen thousand”, the words “rupees ten lakh” shall be substituted;

(18) in section 74A, in sub-section (1), in item (b), for the words “one hundred rupees”, the words “twenty five thousand rupees” and for the words “one thousand rupees”, the words “ten lakh rupees” shall be substituted;

(19) in section 76,-

(i) in sub-section (1), after the words “amount involved in the dispute”, the words, symbols, brackets and figures “on petitions under section 34 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (Central Act 26 of 1996) at the rate of 0.5% of the award amount and on original petitions filed before the High Court and petition filed under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Central Act 54 of 2002) at the rate of rupees one hundred per petition” shall be inserted;

(ii) in sub-section (2), in item (ii), for the words and figures “article 16 of schedule II”, the words and figures “article 12 of schedule II” shall be substituted;

(20) in the schedule,-

(a) in the first schedule, after article 1 and the entries against it in columns (2) and (3), the following article and entries shall respectively be inserted, namely:-

*“1A Complaint or written statement,
pleading a set-off or counter
claim or memorandum of
appeal presented to any Court -*

<i>compensation for bodily injury or death caused by any criminal act, grievous hurt, malicious</i>	<i>One percentum on the amount of compensation”;</i>
---	--



*prosecution, defamation – libel
or slander*

*(b) for the second schedule, the following schedule
shall be substituted, namely:-*

SCHEDULE II

<i>Article</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Proper fee</i>
<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>
1.	<i>Memorandum of appeal from an order inclusive of an order determining any question under section 47 or section 144 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908), and not otherwise provided for when presented—</i> <i>(i) to any Court other than the High Court or to the Land Revenue Commissioner or the Chief Executive Authority or to any Executive Officer</i> <i>(ii) to the High Court—</i> <i>(A) From an order other than an order under the Kerala Farmers’ Debt Relief Commission Act, 2006 (1 of 2007)</i> <i>(1) Where the order was passed by a Subordinate Court or other authority—</i> <i>(a) If the order relates to a suit or proceeding, the value of which exceeds one thousand rupees</i> <i>(b) In any other case</i> <i>(2) Where the appeal is under section 5 of the Kerala High Court Act, 1958 (5 of 1959)-</i> <i>(a) From an order passed in exercise of appellate jurisdiction</i>	<i>Fifty rupees</i> <i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i> <i>Fifty rupees</i> <i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i>



<i>(b) From an order passed in exercise of original jurisdiction, which would be appealable under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908), had it been passed by a Subordinate Court</i>	<i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i>
<i>(c) In any other case</i>	<i>One thousand rupees per appellant</i>
<i>(3) Where the appeal is under section 45-B of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (Central Act 10 of 1949)</i>	<i>One thousand two hundred and fifty rupees</i>
<i>(4) Where the appeal is under section 415 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhitha, 2023 (Central Act 46 of 2023)</i>	<i>Fifty rupees</i>
<i>(B) From an order under the Kerala Farmers' Debt Relief Commission Act, 2006 (1 of 2007)</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i>
<i>(C) From an order of the Appellate Tribunal under the Income Tax Act, 1961 (Central Act 43 of 1961),—</i>	
<i>(a) Where the total income of the assessee as computed by the Assessing Officer, in the case to which the appeal relates is one lakh rupees or less</i>	<i>Two thousand and five hundred rupees</i>
<i>(b) Where such income exceeds one lakh rupees but does not exceed two lakh rupees</i>	<i>Seven thousand and five hundred rupees</i>
<i>(c) Where such income exceeds two lakh rupees—</i>	
<i>(i) in the case of appeal by the Government of India</i>	<i>Two percent of the relief sought for, subject to a maximum of rupees one lakh</i>
<i>(ii) in all other cases</i>	<i>Five percent of the relief sought for, subject to a maximum of rupees ten lakhs</i>



	<i>(d) Where the subject matter of an appeal relates to any matter, other than those specified in sub-clauses (a) to (c) above</i> <i>(D) From an order of the Appellate Tribunal under the Wealth Tax Act, 1957 (Central Act 27 of 1957)—</i> <i>(a) Where the total net wealth of the assessee as computed by the Assessing Officer, in the case to which the appeal relates is one lakh rupees or less</i> <i>(b) Where such net wealth exceeds one lakh rupees but does not exceed two lakh rupees</i> <i>(c) Where such net wealth exceeds two lakh rupees</i> <i>(d) Where the subject matter of an appeal relates to any matter, other than those specified in clauses (a) to (c) above.</i> <i>(iii) to the Government in pursuance of a statutory right to appeal for which no court fee is leviable under any other enactment</i>	<i>Ten percent of relief sought for, subject to a minimum of two thousand five hundred rupees</i> <i>Ten thousand and five hundred rupees</i> <i>Seven thousand and five hundred rupees</i> <i>Five percent of the relief sought for</i> <i>Ten percent of the relief sought for, subject to a minimum of two thousand and five hundred rupees</i> <i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i>
2.	<i>Memorandum of appeal under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (Central Act 26 of 1996)—</i> <i>(i) memorandum of appeal against an order under section 34 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (Central Act 26 of 1996), setting aside or refusing to set aside an award</i> <i>(ii) appeals against orders passed under sections 8, 9, 16 (2), 16 (3) and 17, covered by section 37(1)(a) and (b), section 37(2)(a)</i>	<i>One percentum on amount of award</i>



	<i>and (b) of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (Central Act 26 of 1996) fee shall be chargeable as follows:—</i> <i>(a) if the value of the claim extends upto rupees ten lakh</i> <i>(b) if the value of the claim exceeds rupees ten lakh and upto rupees fifty lakh</i> <i>(c) if the value of the claim exceeds rupees fifty lakh</i>	<i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>Two thousand rupees</i> <i>Five thousand rupees</i>
3.	<i>Copy or translation of a judgment or order not being or having the force of a decree passed by the High Court, or by any Civil Court or by the Presiding Officer of any Revenue Court or office or by any other Court or Judicial or executive authority</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i>
4.	<i>Copy or translation of a judgment or order of a Criminal Court</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i>
5.	<i>Copy of a decree or order, having the force of a decree, made by the High Court or any other Court</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i>
6.	<i>Copy of any document liable to stamp duty under the Kerala Stamp Act, 1959 (17 of 1959) when left by any party to a suit or proceeding in place of the original withdrawn-</i> <i>(a) When the stamp duty chargeable on the original does not exceed two rupees fifty paise</i> <i>(b) in any other case</i>	<i>The amount of the duty chargeable on the original</i> <i>Ten rupees</i>
7.	<i>Copy of any revenue or judicial proceeding or order not otherwise provided for by this Act or</i>	



	<i>copy of any account, statement, report or the like taken out of any Court or office of any public officer—</i> <i>For every document</i>	<i>Ten rupees</i>
8.	<i>(a) Application or petition presented to any officer of land revenue by any person holding temporarily settled land under direct engagement with Government and when the subject matter of the application or petition relates exclusively to such engagement</i> <i>(b) Application or petition presented to any officer of land revenue relating to the grant of land on darkhast or assignment of land</i> <i>(c) Application to a Collector for lease of land for agricultural or non-agricultural purposes</i> <i>(d) Application or petition presented to any executive officer under any Act for the time being in force for the conservancy or improvement of any place if the application or petition relates solely to such conservancy or improvement</i> <i>(e) Application or petition presented to any board or executive officer for a copy or translation of any order passed by such board or officer or of any other document on record in such office</i> <i>(f) Application to a Forest Officer by a forest contractor for extension of the period of lease-</i> <i>(i) if the value of the subject matter of the lease is rupees one lakh twenty five thousand or less</i> <i>(ii) if such value exceeds rupees one lakh twenty five thousand for every rupees five thousand or part thereof, in excess of rupees</i>	<i>Ten rupees</i> <i>Ten rupees</i> <i>Twenty five rupees</i> <i>Twenty five rupees</i> <i>Twenty five rupees</i> <i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>One hundred rupees</i>



	<i>one lakh twenty five thousand</i> <i>(g) Application for attestation of private documents intended to be used outside India-</i> <i>(i) which involves verification of genuineness of the document</i> <i>(ii) which requires counter signature after attestation by a Notary</i> <i>(h) Application or petition presented to the Government and not otherwise provided for-</i> <i>(i) which involves the exercise or non-exercise of power conferred by law or rule having the force of law</i> <i>(ii) in other cases</i> <i>(i) Application or petition presented to the Land Revenue Commissioner or Chief Executive Authority and not otherwise provided for—</i> <i>(i) which involves the exercise or non-exercise of power conferred by law or rule having the force of law</i> <i>(ii) in other cases</i> <i>(j) (i) Application under section 8 (1) of the Kerala Private Forests (Vesting and Assignment) Act, 1971 (26 of 1971), to the Tribunal constituted under that Act</i> <i>(ii) Application to such Tribunal for an interlocutory order</i> <i>(k) Application or petition not falling under clause (h) or (i) and presented to a public officer or in a public office and not otherwise provided for</i>	<i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>Ten rupees</i> <i>Five rupees</i> <i>Fifty rupees</i> <i>Twenty rupees</i> <i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i> <i>Thirty rupees</i> <i>Twenty five rupees</i>
9.	<i>(a) Application or petition presented to any Court for a copy or translation of any</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i>



<i>judgment, decree or any proceeding of or order passed by such Court or of any other document on record in such Court</i>	
<i>(b) Application or petition presented to any Civil Court other than a Principal Civil Court of original jurisdiction or to any Court of Small Causes constituted under the Kerala Small Cause Courts Act, 1957 (8 of 1957), or to a Collector or other officer of revenue in relation to any suit or case in which the amount or value of the subject matter is less than Rs. 250</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i>
<i>(c) Application to any Court that records may be called from another Court, when the Court grants the application, and is of opinion that the transmission of such records involves the use of the post</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees in addition to the fee leviable on the application</i>
<i>(d) Application for permission to deposit revenue or rent either in the office of the Collector or in the Court</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i>
<i>(e) Application or petition presented to a Court for determination of the amount of compensation to be paid by a landlord to his tenant.</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i>
<i>(f) A written complaint or charge of any offence other than an offence for which a Police Officer may, under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhitha, 2023 (Central Act 46 of 2023) arrest without warrant and presented to any Criminal Court and an oral complaint of any such offence reduced to writing under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhitha, 2023 (Central Act 46 of 2023)</i>	<i>Fifty rupees</i>
<i>(g) (i) Application or petition presented to any Court, except Sub-Court or District Court, or to any Magistrate Court in his executive capacity and not otherwise provided in this Act</i>	<i>Twenty rupees per petitioner</i>



<i>(ii) Application or petition presented to Sub Court or District Court</i> <i>(h) Petition for taking possession of any secured assets under section 14 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Central Act 54 of 2002)</i> <i>(i) Application for arrest or attachment before judgment or for temporary injunction-</i> <i>(i) when presented to a Civil Court or Revenue Court other than the High Court in relation to any suit or proceeding</i> <i>(a) if the value of the subject matter of which is less than Rs. 250;</i> <i>(b) if the value is Rs. 250 and above</i> <i>(ii) when presented to the High Court</i> <i>(j) Application or petition under section 47, Order XXI rules 58 and 90 and Order XXXVIII rule 8 of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908)—</i> <i>(i) when filed in a Revenue Court or a Munsiff's Court;</i> <i>(ii) when filed in a Sub-Court or a District Court;</i> <i>(iii) when filed in the High Court District</i> <i>(k) Application or petition under sections 34, 72, 73 and 74 of the Indian Trusts Act, 1882 (Central Act 2 of 1882)</i> <i>(l) (i) Application for probate or letters of administration to have effect throughout India</i>	<i>Thirty rupees per petitioner</i> <i>One thousand rupees per petition</i> <i>Fifty rupees</i> <i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>Fifty rupees</i> <i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i>
---	---



<i>(ii) Application for probate or letters of administration not falling under clause (i)—</i> <i>(a) if the value of the estate does not exceed Rs. 1000;</i> <i>(b) if the value exceeds Rs. 1000:</i> <i>Provided that if a caveat is entered and the application is registered as a suit, one half the scale of fee prescribed in article 1 of schedule I on the market value of the estate less the fee already paid on the application shall be levied.</i> <i>(m) Original petitions not otherwise provided for when filed in—</i> <i>(i) a Munsiff's Court—</i> <i>(a) under the Kerala Small Cause Courts Act, 1957 (8 of 1957)</i> <i>(b) in other cases</i> <i>(ii) a Sub-Court or a District Court</i> <i>(iii) the High Court</i> <i>(iv) for Contempt of Court Cases in the High Court</i> <i>(v) arbitration application before the High Court:</i> <i>Provided that no fee shall be leviable for Habeas Corpus and Writ Petitions preferred as Public Interest Litigation as long as the same is entertained and disposed as Public Interest Litigation before the High Court</i> <i>(n) Application to set aside an award under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (Central Act 26 of 1996),—</i>	<i>Five rupees</i> <i>Twenty five rupees</i> <i>Fifty rupees</i> <i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>Five hundred rupees per petitioner</i> <i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>One thousand rupees</i>
--	--



<i>the principal amount of the award covered by section 34 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (Central Act 26 of 1996)</i> <i>(o) Application for enforcing awards including foreign awards—</i> <i>(i) if the value of the subject matter of the award does not exceed ₹ 1,00,000/-;</i> <i>(ii) if the value exceeds ₹ 1,00,000/-, for every one hundred rupees or part thereof in excess of one lakh rupees upto ₹ 10,00,000/-;</i> <i>(iii) if the value exceeds ₹ 10,00,000/-, for every one hundred rupees or part thereof in excess of ten lakh rupees upto ₹ 1,00,00,000/-;</i> <i>(iv) if the value exceeds ₹ 1,00,00,000/-, for every one hundred rupees or part thereof in excess of ₹ 1,00,00,000/-;</i> <i>(p) Revision petition presented to the High Court under section 115 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908) or under section 22 of the Kerala Small Cause Courts Act, 1957 (8 of 1957) or under the provisions of any other Act, arising out of a suit or proceeding—</i> <i>(i) if the value of the suit or proceeding to which the order sought to be revised relates does not exceed Rs. 1000;</i> <i>(ii) if such value exceeds ₹1000</i> <i>(q) Petition under sections 230 and 272 of the Companies Act, 2013 (Central Act 18 of</i>	<i>One percentum on the principal amount of award</i> <i>One percentum on the value of the subject matter</i> <i>0.75 percentum on the value of the subject matter</i> <i>0.50 percentum on the value of the subject matter</i> <i>0.25 percentum on the value of the subject matter</i> <i>(subject to a maximum of fifty thousand rupees)</i> <i>One hundred and twenty five rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>One thousand two hundred and fifty rupees</i>
--	---



<i>2013), in connection with the winding up of a company</i> <i>(r) Application under section 39 of the Specific Relief Act, 1963 (Central Act 47 of 1963)</i> <i>(s) Application or petition presented to the High Court and not otherwise specifically provided for</i> <i>(t) Election petition questioning the election of a person in respect of—</i> <i>(i) the office of member of a Panchayat;</i> <i>(ii) the office of President or Vice President of a Panchayat;</i> <i>(iii) the office of member of a Block Panchayat;</i> <i>(iv) the office of President or Vice President of a Block Panchayat;</i> <i>(v) the office of member of a District Panchayat;</i> <i>(vi) the office of President or Vice President of a District Panchayat;</i> <i>(vii) the office of member of a Municipal Council or Municipal Corporation;</i> <i>(viii) the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor of Municipal Corporation or Chairman or Vice Chairman of Municipal Council;</i> <i>(ix) Election petition presented to the High Court under section 80A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (Central Act 43 of 1951) of a Member of Legislative Assembly;</i> <i>(x) Election petition presented to the High Court under section 80A of the Representation</i>	<i>One thousand rupees</i> <i>Fifty rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>One thousand rupees</i> <i>Two thousand rupees</i> <i>One thousand and five hundred rupees</i> <i>Two thousand and five hundred rupees</i> <i>One thousand and five hundred rupees</i> <i>Three thousand rupees</i> <i>One thousand two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>One thousand two hundred and fifty</i>
--	---



<i>of the People Act, 1951 (Central Act 43 of 1951) of a Member of Parliament</i> <i>(u) When the difference of the amount awarded by Land Acquisition Officer/ Competent Authority and reference Court, when the enhanced amount—</i>	<i>rupees</i>
<i>(i) does not exceeds rupees twenty five thousand;</i>	<i>Nil</i>
<i>(ii) exceeds rupees twenty five thousand but does not exceeds one lakh;</i>	<i>Five hundred rupees</i>
<i>(iii) exceeds rupees one lakh for every one hundred rupees or part thereof, in excess of one lakh rupees up to five lakh;</i>	<i>Four rupees</i>
<i>(iv) exceeds rupees five lakh for every one hundred rupees, or part thereof in excess of five lakh rupees up to ten lakh;</i>	<i>One rupee</i>
<i>(v) exceeds rupees ten lakh for every one hundred rupees or part thereof, in excess of ten lakh rupees up to twenty lakh;</i>	<i>0.75 rupee</i>
<i>(vi) exceeds rupees twenty lakh for every one hundred rupees or part thereof, in excess of twenty lakh rupees up to fifty lakh;</i>	<i>0.50 rupee</i>
<i>(vii) exceeds rupees fifty lakh for every one hundred rupees or part thereof, in excess of fifty lakh rupees up to seventy five lakh;</i>	<i>0.25 rupee</i>
<i>(viii) exceeds rupees seventy five lakh for every one hundred rupees or part thereof, in excess of seventy five lakh rupees up to one crore;</i>	<i>0.10 rupee</i>
<i>(ix) exceeds rupees one crore for every one hundred rupees or part thereof, in excess of rupees one crore</i>	<i>0.01 rupee</i>
<i>(v) original petition preferred claiming compensation under—</i>	



	<i>the Telecommunications Act, 2023 (Central Act 44 of 2023); Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Right of User in Land) Act, 1962 (Central Act 50 of 1962); the Electricity Act, 2003 (Central Act 36 of 2003)</i> <i>(w) An application under Order XXI rule 97 of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908)—</i> <i>(i) (a) before a Munsiff's Court;</i> <i>(b) before a Sub- Court or a District Court</i> <i>(ii) for appeal/revision</i>	<i>Two percentum of additional compensation awarded</i> <i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>One thousand rupees</i> <i>One thousand rupees</i>
10.	<i>(i) Bail bond or other instrument of obligation when filed in village Courts</i> <i>(ii) Bail bond or other instrument of obligation given in pursuance of an order made by a Court or Magistrate under any section of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhitha, 2023 (Central Act 46 of 2023) or the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908) and not otherwise provided for in this Act.</i>	<i>Ten rupees</i> <i>Twenty five rupees</i>
11.	<i>Every copy of power of attorney when filed in any suit or proceeding</i>	<i>Fifty rupees</i>
12.	<i>Mukhtarnama, Vakalatnama or any paper signed by an advocate signifying or intimating that he is retained for a party—</i> <i>When presented—</i> <i>(i) to any Court other than the High Court or to any Collector or Magistrate or other executive officer;</i> <i>(ii) to the Land Revenue Commissioner or a Chief Executive Authority</i> <i>(iii) to the High Court</i> <i>(iv) to the Government</i>	<i>Twenty five rupees</i> <i>Twenty five rupees</i> <i>Fifty rupees</i> <i>Fifty rupees</i>



13.	<i>Agreement in writing stating a question for the opinion of the court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908)-</i> <i>(i) When presented to in a case where the value of the subject matter does not exceed ₹ 5000</i> <i>(ii) in any other case</i>	<i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>One thousand rupees</i>
14.	<i>Caveat</i>	<i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i>
15.	<i>Application to arbitrator for adjudication of dispute under the Chit Funds Act, 1982 (Central Act 40 of 1982)</i>	<i>Five percentum on the arbitration amount</i>
16.	<i>(a) Petition or counter claim presented to family court under explanation (c) of sub-section (1) of section 7 of the Family Courts Act, 1984 (Central Act 66 of 1984)—</i> <i>When the total claim amount in the petitions/counter claim amount valued, after deduction of the amount valued for the dwelling house—</i> <i>(i) upto rupees five lakhs</i> <i>(ii) above rupees five lakhs and upto rupees twenty lakhs</i> <i>(iii) above rupees twenty lakhs and upto rupees fifty lakhs</i> <i>(iv) above rupees fifty lakhs and upto rupees one crore</i> <i>(v) above rupees one crore</i> <i>(b) Appeals filed before the High Court under section 19 of the Family Courts Act, 1984 (Central Act 66 of 1984)—</i>	<i>Two hundred rupees</i> <i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>One thousand rupees</i> <i>Two thousand rupees</i> <i>Five thousand rupees</i>



	<i>When the total claim amount in the petitions / counter claim amount valued, after deduction of the amount valued for the dwelling house-</i> <i>(i) upto rupees five lakhs</i> <i>(ii) above rupees five lakhs and upto rupees twenty lakhs</i> <i>(iii) above rupees twenty lakhs and upto rupees fifty lakhs</i> <i>(iv) above rupees fifty lakhs and upto rupees one crore</i> <i>(v) above rupees one crore</i>	<i>One hundred rupees</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>One thousand rupees</i> <i>Two thousand and five hundred rupees</i>
17.	<i>(a) Complaints filed under section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 (Central Act 26 of 1881)—</i> <i>When the amount of dishonoured cheque involved in the complaint—</i> <i>(i) upto rupees fifty thousand</i> <i>(ii) above rupees fifty thousand and upto rupees two lakhs</i> <i>(iii) above rupees two lakhs and upto rupees five lakhs</i> <i>(iv) above rupees five lakhs and upto rupees ten lakhs</i> <i>(v) above rupees ten lakhs and upto rupees twenty lakhs</i> <i>(vi) above rupees twenty lakhs and upto rupees fifty lakhs</i> <i>(vii) above rupees fifty lakhs</i> <i>(b) Appeal filed against judgment in section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881</i>	<i>Two hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>Five hundred rupees</i> <i>Seven hundred and fifty rupees</i> <i>One thousand rupees</i> <i>Two thousand rupees</i> <i>Five thousand rupees</i> <i>Ten thousand rupees</i>



	<i>(Central Act 26 of 1881)—</i> <i>(i) When an appeal filed, on getting leave under clause (b) of sub-section (2) of section 419 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhitha, 2023 (Central Act 46 of 2023) before the High Court at the instance of the complainant against the order of acquittal</i> <i>(ii) When filed at the instance of accused against conviction before the Sessions Court</i> <i>(c) Revision filed against judgment in section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 (Central Act 26 of 1881)—</i> <i>(i) At the instance of the complainant challenging insufficiency of sentence before the High Court</i> <i>(ii) When filed at the instance of accused against conviction before the Sessions Court</i>	<i>Five hundred rupees for cheque upto rupees two lakhs and one thousand rupees for cheques above rupees two lakhs</i> <i>Five hundred rupees for cheque upto rupees two lakhs and one thousand rupees for cheques above rupees two lakhs</i> <i>Five hundred rupees for cheque upto rupees two lakhs and one thousand rupees for cheques above rupees two lakhs</i> <i>Five hundred rupees for cheque upto rupees two lakhs and one thousand rupees for cheques above rupees two lakhs</i>
18.	<i>(a) Anticipatory bail applications filed under section 482 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (Central Act 46 of 2023)—</i> <i>(i) application for anticipatory bail before High Court;</i> <i>(ii) application for anticipatory bail before Court of Sessions</i>	<i>Five hundred rupees per petitioner and for each subsequent petition half of the same</i> <i>Two hundred and fifty rupees per petitioner and</i>



		<i>for subsequent each petition half of the same</i>
	<i>(b) Application for bail under section 483 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (Central Act 46 of 2023)—</i>	
	<i>(i) application for bail filed before High Court, otherwise than in custody;</i>	<i>Two hundred rupees per petitioner subject to a maximum of one thousand rupees</i>
	<i>(ii) application for bail filed before Court of Sessions, otherwise than in custody.</i>	<i>One hundred rupees per petitioner subject to a maximum of five hundred rupees</i>
	<i>(c) application for bail filed when a person appears before a court other than High Court or Court of Sessions under section 480 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (Central Act 46 of 2023)</i>	<i>Fifty rupees per petitioner subject to a maximum of two hundred and rupees.”</i>

XX XXX XXXXX

6. Challenging the Amendment Act, the present petition is filed with the following prayers:

(i) To issue a Writ of Mandamus, Writ, Order or Direction, declaring that the amendment to Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959 by Kerala Finance Act, 2025 is unconstitutional as it imposes unreasonable restrictions on the Fundamental Right of citizens to access the justice delivery system;

(ii) To issue a Writ of Mandamus, or any other Writ, Order or Direction, declaring that provisions relating to Ad Valorem Court fees without an upper limit in the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959, and



the subsequent amendment made in 2025 is unconstitutional;

(iii) To issue a Writ of Mandamus, Writ Order or Direction, declaring that Section 73-A of Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959, is unconstitutional, arbitrary, and illegal;

7. For the sake of readability, the discussion on the prayers is divided into three parts, with further subdivisions.

- A. Challenge to Section 73A of the Act of Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959.
- B. Challenge to the provisions relating to ad valorem court fees in the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959 and the amendment of 2025.
- C. Challenge to the amendment made to the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959 by the Act of 2025.

This topic is divided into three components as under:

- (i) Legislative competence of the State to enact the Act of 2025.
- (ii) Challenge on the ground of arbitrariness infringing Article 14 of the Constitution of India.
- (iii) Challenge to the constitutionality on the ground that it infringes Article 21 of the Constitution of India, placing unreasonable restrictions on access to justice.



8. We have heard Mr. Yeshwanth Shenoy, the learned counsel for the Petitioner, Mr. K. Gopalakrishna Kurup, the learned Advocate General along with Mr. Mohammed Rafiq, the learned Special Government Pleader for the State, and Mr. Harikrishnan and Mr. R. Sunil Kumar, the learned counsel for Respondent Nos.4 and 5. We now take up the challenge as per the above categorisation.

9. First, the Petitioner has challenged the validity of Section 73A of the Act of 1959. Section 73A reads as follows:

“73A. Special provision regarding suits, appeals, revision etc. filed by or on behalf of the Government before the Court.- Notwithstanding anything contained in any other provisions of this Act, where a suit, appeal, revision, review or other pleadings or documents are filed or presented by or on behalf of the Government or its officers in their official capacity before any Court, no Court fee shall be chargeable in respect of such suit, appeal, revision, review or other pleadings or documents under the provisions of this Act.”

This provision exempts the State Government from the payment of court fees. It is also to be noted that this provision has been in the statute book since the enactment of the Act of 1959.

10. The Petitioner contends that Section 73A of the Act of 1959 grants a blanket exemption to the Government and its functionaries from the payment of court fees, irrespective of the nature of the proceedings, whether appeals, revisions, or reviews, filed by the State. In such



proceedings, members of the general public are, in most cases, arrayed as respondents. It is argued that the Government and its functionaries are the largest litigants in Kerala, and this exemption results in a substantial loss of revenue to the State. According to the Petitioner, in judicial proceedings, the Government must be treated as a litigant at par with other parties. Hence, a blanket exemption from payment of court fees to the State and its functionaries is unconstitutional, as it creates a classification without any intelligible differentia, and is discriminatory and arbitrary. The Petitioner further submits that imposing a steep increase in court fees on the general public alone, while exempting the State, amounts to a system of cross-subsidy, which is contrary to the basic principles of justice.

11. As stated earlier, Section 73A of the Act of 1959 was introduced in 2002. Its validity was challenged in 2003 before this very Court on the ground that it violated Article 14 of the Constitution of India. The Division Bench of this Court, in the case of *Human Rights Protection Forum v. State of Kerala*¹, rejected that challenge. Notably, the present Petitioner has made no reference to this decision in the petition. In that case, the petitioner, the Human Rights Protection Forum, questioned the action of the State Government in increasing the court fees as arbitrary and contended that Section 73A, which exempts the State Government from paying court fees, was discriminatory. The Division Bench, speaking

¹ 2003 (3) KLT 436



through Chief Justice Jawahar Lal Gupta, rejected the contention for the following reasons:

“5. Mr. Thomas submits that the provision in the statute which exempts the State Government suffers from the vice of discrimination.

6. It is undoubtedly true that Section 73(a) of the Court Fees Act provides that “where a suit, appeal, revision, review or other pleadings or documents is filed or presented by or on behalf of the Government or its officers in their official capacity before any court, no court fee shall be chargeable.....” However, it is not disputed that the court fee goes to the State exchequer. If the State is called upon to pay the court fee, it shall be virtually paying itself. It appears that the provision has been made with the sole object of reducing the work load. In economic terms, it shall not be of any substantial consequence. In fact, it results in saving of time and expense.

7. Mr. Thomas, relies upon the decision of their Lordships of the Supreme Court in Collector, Land Acquisition, Anantnag v. Mst. Katiji and Others (AIR 1987 SC 1353), to contend that the State has to be treated as par with any other litigant. It is undoubtedly so. When the Court is examining the validity of any claim filed by the State, it has to be treated like any other litigant. However, the observations made by their Lordships of the Supreme Court in the context of the condonation of delay cannot be read to mean that any provision exempting the State from payment of court fee or tax would be violative of Article 14. In fact, since the State itself collects the court fee, its position is totally distinct from that of an ordinary citizen. This classification has a reasonable nexus with



the ultimate object of the exemption which is saving of time and expense. Thus, even the second contention cannot be sustained.”

The learned counsel for the Petitioner sought to distinguish the present case by contending that, in the earlier decision, the petitioner therein had failed to produce any factual basis or supporting material, and therefore, the challenge was rejected. However, this is not a correct reading of the judgment. The challenge in that case was twofold – firstly, that the revision of court fees was arbitrary, and secondly, that Section 73A of the Act of 1959 was unconstitutional. The challenge to Section 73A was rejected on merits, not on account of any failure to produce data, which was the reason for rejecting the first ground of challenge. Section 73A was inserted by Act 2 of 2003, and the challenge was dismissed in the same year. We find no reason to take a different view, as we are in respectful agreement with the reasoning adopted by the Hon’ble Division Bench in the said decision.

12. Since we are analysing this judgment, it is relevant to note one more issue, namely, the challenge to the requirement of paying court fees in contempt petitions. This very issue had been raised before a Division Bench of this Court as early as 2003 in *Human Rights Protection Forum*, and the challenge was rejected. This position has remained settled for more than twenty-two years, and we find no reason to depart from this long-standing view of the law laid down by this Court.



13. The second ground of challenge relates to prayer clause (ii), concerning the provision for ad valorem court fees under the Act of 1959 and its subsequent amendments, which, according to the Petitioner, operate without any upper limit. The pleadings in the petition rest on the alleged increase in ad valorem fees. The learned Advocate General, however, submitted that there has been no change in the ad valorem fees themselves and demonstrated this by referring to Schedule I. He explained that only the basis for computation has been modified, not the rate of the fee. The Kerala Finance Act, 2025, he clarified, does not introduce any revision of the ad valorem fees prescribed under Schedule I of the Act of 1959. As per the substitution carried out by Sections 2(3) and 20(b), only the fixed court fees under Schedule II have been revised. It was pointed out that the percentage rate applied remains unchanged; the only variation lies in the base figure on which that percentage is calculated. By way of illustration, he submitted that if the fee was earlier computed at 4% on a base value of ₹1,000/-, it is now computed at 4% on a revised base value of ₹5,000/-. In certain instances, this revision operates to the benefit of litigants. To substantiate this, the learned Advocate General produced a comparative chart showing ad valorem fees payable under Articles 1 and 1A of Schedule I to the Act of 1959 for claims ranging from ₹100/- to ₹50 lakhs, pointing out that there is no change that could be regarded as detrimental to litigants.



14. The learned counsel for the Petitioner had initially advanced arguments on the premise that the ad valorem fees had been altered to the detriment of litigants. However, after the learned Advocate General demonstrated that no such change had occurred, the learned counsel for the Petitioner accepted this position and did not press the issue further. He thereafter confined his submissions to the main contention concerning the revision of Schedule II to the Act of 1959.

15. Now, this takes us to the main challenge, namely, the impugned Amending Act in so far as it relates to the changes in the Schedule. The State has traced its power to levy court fees to Entry 3 of List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. Entry 3 reads as follows:

“Officers and servants of the High Court; procedure in rent and revenue Courts; fees taken in all Courts except the Supreme Court.”

Though the learned counsel for the Petitioner submitted that the Petitioner is not questioning the competence of the State Legislature in enacting the impugned Amending Act, a reference needs to be made to the settled principles so as to put a challenge to a legislation enacted by a competent Legislature in its proper perspective.

16. The challenge in this petition to the exercise of legislative power by a competent Legislature on the ground of arbitrariness falls within a narrow scope. A heavy burden lies on the challenger to demonstrate that



the legislative action of a competent Legislature is arbitrary. In support of the challenge under Article 14 of the Constitution of India, the Petitioner has referred to two facets. One, the decision of the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court in the case of *Delhi High Court Bar Association and Another v. Government of NCT of Delhi and Others*², and second, Report on the Revision of Court Fees and Suits Valuation in Kerala dated 16 January 2025 submitted by the former Justice V.K. Mohanan Committee constituted by the State Government, and the Speech of the Finance Minister in the Assembly to demonstrate arbitrariness and lack of correlation.

17. The Petitioner has placed strong reliance upon the decision of the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court in the case of *Delhi High Court Bar Association*. The learned counsel for the Petitioner submitted that the present issue is squarely covered by that decision, which comprehensively reviewed the entire body of case law on the subject, including various decisions of Indian and international courts and other relevant materials. The learned counsel also took us through the said decision in detail.

18. The Division Bench of the Delhi High Court, in the case of *Delhi High Court Bar Association*, dealt with a group of petitions challenging the constitutionality and validity of the Court Fees (Delhi Amendment) Act, 2012. The petitions were filed by certain bar associations and individual advocates. The primary contention raised before the Division

² 2013 SCC OnLine Del 4091



Bench concerned the legislative competence of the Delhi Legislative Assembly to amend the Court Fees Act, 1870. In the alternative, it was argued that even if such competence were assumed, the impugned legislation would nevertheless be violative of the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India, as well as of human rights principles. The Division Bench framed specific issues for consideration, the first of which was whether the assent of the President was justiciable in the context of the legislative competence of the Delhi Legislative Assembly. After an elaborate discussion extending over 221 paragraphs, the Court held that Article 239AA of the Constitution of India does not empower the Delhi Legislative Assembly to amend the Court Fees Act, 1870, which is a Central legislation. The Bench further observed that even if it were to be assumed that the Delhi Legislative Assembly had the requisite legislative competence, it failed to follow the constitutionally mandated procedure, as it neither complied with the essential preconditions for obtaining the President's assent nor drew the President's attention to the repugnancy between the Central enactment and the proposed amendment. Consequently, the Division Bench struck down the impugned enactment on the ground that it was enacted without legislative competence. In view of this finding, no further inquiry was strictly necessary as to whether the Act violated fundamental or human rights. Nevertheless, the Division Bench proceeded to examine those aspects in detail, referring extensively to international and Indian judicial decisions and Law Commission reports, and concluded that the



impugned legislation also infringed Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India.

19. The decision of the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court in the case of *Delhi High Court Bar Association* undoubtedly has persuasive value. However, it is a settled principle of law that a judgment has to be understood in the context in which it was delivered and in light of the specific issues the court was required to decide. In that decision, the Delhi High Court had already held that the Delhi Legislative Assembly lacked legislative competence, rendering any further declaration unnecessary. In the present case, there is no dispute regarding the competence of the Kerala State Legislature. Regarding the legal principles governing the challenge to the revision of court fees, the decision of the Delhi High Court cannot be construed to mean that any revision of court fees is impermissible, even when such revision is lawful and justified. As discussed later, it is open to the State to consider factors such as the devaluation of the rupee and the expenditure incurred on judicial infrastructure when revising the court fees. The impact of such levies on the State's finances and their correlation with revenue generation will necessarily vary from State to State.

20. The next limb of the Petitioner's challenge concerns the Report of the Justice V.K. Mohanan Committee. It is contended that this report was the sole material relied upon by the State and that it was self-contradictory, arbitrary, and could not have formed a valid basis for



revising the court fees. The Justice V.K. Mohanan Committee (the Committee) was constituted pursuant to the budget proposal dated 10 January 2024. The Committee comprised a retired Judge of this Court, the Secretary of the Law Department, an advocate member, and the Secretary of the Taxes Department. It examined the existing court fee structure, reviewed relevant Law Commission reports, and studied the statutory framework governing court fees. The Committee also engaged with stakeholders, including advocates and their associations, invited representations, and received inputs from judicial officers. In addition, it conducted physical hearings to gather views from various quarters.

21. The learned counsel for the Petitioner took us through the entire Report, offering detailed comments on almost every paragraph. He submitted that all relevant stakeholders were not consulted and that the Committee was given only limited time to complete its work. It was further contended that the stakeholders who were consulted by the Justice V.K. Mohanan Committee were under the impression that the proposed increase in court fees related only to family courts and proceedings under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881. The learned counsel argued that the entire exercise was arbitrary and that the Report was perfunctory, thereby rendering the action of the State Government violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of India. He also criticised the schedule of public hearings, contending that minimal time was spent on each sitting, that the representations submitted were not



genuinely considered, and that both the hearings and the constitution of the Committee amounted to a mere formality.

22. The learned counsel for the Petitioner further criticised the Report, contending that although the Committee had noted the average inflation rate of the Indian rupee between 2003 and 2023 as 6.7%, it nevertheless recommended an increase in court fees which was nearly five times that figure. The Petitioner, in the writ petition, has furnished several instances illustrating the steep rise. For example, in a suit for declaration, the court fee has been increased from ₹1,000/- to ₹5,000/-, representing an increase of 400%; in a suit for injunction, from ₹500/- to ₹2,500/-, an increase of 400%; in a suit relating to trust property, from ₹1,000/- to ₹10,000/-, an increase of 900%; in a suit for possession of immovable property, from ₹1,000/- to ₹20,000/-, an increase of 1900%; in a suit for accounts, from ₹1,000/- to ₹5,000/-, an increase of 400%; and in a suit under the Survey and Boundaries Act, from ₹1,000/- to ₹5,000/-, an increase of 400%. In respect of suits relating to public matters, the fee has been enhanced from ₹10/- to ₹500/- before the Munsiff Court and from ₹100/- to ₹1,000/- before the Sub Court or District Court — an increase of 4900% and 900% respectively. Similarly, in the High Court, court fees in certain categories of proceedings have been raised from ₹10/- to ₹500/-, from ₹100/- to ₹500/-, and from ₹200/- to ₹1,000/-, which, according to the learned counsel, reflects a uniform rise of approximately 400%. On that basis, it was contended that if the average rate of inflation



was only 6.7%, the Committee could not have recommended an increase in court fees exceeding 400%. The learned counsel also criticised the Committee's reference to the exchange rate of the Indian rupee vis-à-vis the US dollar, submitting that it is an irrelevant factor for determining domestic court fee revisions. It was argued that although the Committee cited inflation as the rationale for the enhancement, no empirical study or analysis was undertaken before the enactment of the impugned Amending Act. The learned counsel further pointed out that, from the speech of the Finance Minister, it is evident that the impugned Kerala Finance Act, 2025, was introduced primarily as a revenue-generating measure with an estimated target of ₹1,500 Crores.

23. Broadly, the two principal heads of criticism advanced by the Petitioner against the Report of the Justice V.K. Mohanan Committee are as follows. First, it is contended that the consultation process with stakeholders and the overall procedure adopted by the Committee were perfunctory. According to the Petitioner, such a flawed process vitiates the validity of the Report, and any revision of court fees based upon it, being arbitrary and disproportionate, would fall foul of Article 14 of the Constitution of India. Secondly, the Petitioner, relying upon the Committee's own observation that the average inflation rate over the last two decades was 6.7%, contended that the Committee could not have, on that basis, recommended an increase in court fees as high as 1,500%. It was argued that the Report discloses no empirical study, comparative



data, or specific material to justify such enhancement, and that the conclusions are based on broad and generalised assumptions rather than a reasoned economic or legal analysis.

24. Originally, the State had filed a counter affidavit supporting the validity of the impugned enactment. The Petitioner had sought a direction for the Report of the Committee to be placed on record, and accordingly, the Report was produced. There was, however, no amendment to the petition after the Report was filed, and all submissions were made orally with reference to it. We have to be conscious of the circumstances in which the Report has been placed before us. This Court is not sitting in appeal over the findings of the Committee, nor is this a challenge to any administrative action of the State arising out of the Report. The constitution of the Committee was part of a preparatory exercise undertaken by the State before enacting legislation under Section 2 of the Kerala Finance Act, 2025, to understand the views of the stakeholders. It is in this background that the Report has been brought to our notice. Therefore, we must bear in mind the scope of a challenge to a legislative measure enacted by a competent Legislature. The Petitioner's attempt to correlate the Committee's reference to the 6.7% inflation rate with the extent of increase in court fees, and to rest the entire challenge on that basis, is too simplistic to invalidate an otherwise valid exercise of legislative power. What is relevant to be seen is whether the material placed on record supports or negates the challenge to the impugned



Amending Act.

25. While considering the issue of revision of court fees, the settled legal position is that factors such as the devaluation of the rupee and the increasing financial obligations of the State to maintain and expand judicial infrastructure are relevant considerations. The court fees collected may be utilised towards the administration of justice, though not with mathematical precision. At the same time, as observed by the Law Commission (referred to later), any enhancement in court fees must be reasonable and should not be of such magnitude as to impede or infringe upon the right of access to justice guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

26. Certain basic facts stated in the Report of the Committee are not disputed, nor has any contrary material been placed before us. For instance, it is recorded that in 1998, the average wage of a non-agricultural worker in Kerala was ₹437/-, which increased to ₹1,002/- in 2024. It is also noted that while the national average daily wage (covering both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors) is ₹470/-, the average daily wage in Kerala is ₹893/-. The Report further records that the average price of gold rose from ₹5,600/- per 10 grams in 2003 to ₹71,510/- per 10 grams in 2024, showing an increase of more than twelve-fold during this period. It is also undisputed that there was no revision of court fees between 2003 and 2023, while during the same period, the value of the rupee declined significantly. The exchange rate of the Indian rupee



against the US dollar stood at ₹85.10 in December 2024, marking a depreciation of 2.14% during that year. The Committee observed that in 2000, the exchange rate was ₹47.19 per US dollar; in 2002, ₹44.94; in 2010, ₹45.73; and by 2020, it had risen sharply to ₹76.38. Though the Petitioner has criticised this reference, it is evident that the Committee has cited these figures only to illustrate the overall weakening of the Indian currency. The depreciation of the rupee, both domestically and internationally, over the last few decades, is a matter of record and not in dispute.

27. It is also an undisputed fact that the last revision of court fees in the State of Kerala was carried out in 2003, and no comprehensive revision has been undertaken during the past twenty years. The learned Advocate General has pointed out that the cumulative inflation over the last two decades has reached 265.78%, with an average annual inflation rate of 6.7% during this period. The State has also placed on record that the average per capita income in Kerala has increased more than sevenfold between 2003 and 2023. In this backdrop, and despite the inflation rate being 6.7%, the Committee recommended a revision of court fees up to five times the existing rates.

28. In the counter affidavit, the State has reproduced a table which shows the time gaps for revision of court fees, such as in Suits for Declaratory relief, the fee has been increased from ₹1,000/- to ₹5,000/-



after 34 years, and in Suits for Injunction, the fee has been increased from ₹500/- to ₹2,500/- after 34 years. In Suits relating to trust property, the fee computed was one-fifth of the market value subject to a maximum fee of ₹200/- or where the property has no market value, on ₹1,000/-. The capping so prescribed remained the same from 1962 and now the maximum fee is capped at ₹5,000/-, and in cases where the property has no market value, the fee has to be computed on ₹10,000/-. This revision has taken place after 63 years. Similarly, in Suits under the Specific Relief Act, 1963, the revision of court fee is after 63 years. The table supplied by the State further shows that in Suits for Possession, the fee has been increased from ₹1,000/- to ₹20,000/- after 34 years; in Suits relating to Easements, from ₹1,000/- to ₹5,000/- after 34 years; in Suits for Accounts, from ₹1,000/- to ₹5,000/- after 34 years; in Partition Suits, from ₹50/- to ₹500/- in cases filed before the Munsiff Court, and from ₹300/- to ₹2,000/- in cases filed before the Sub Court, after 34 years; in Suits under the Survey and Boundaries Act, from ₹1,000/- to ₹5,000/- after 34 years; in Suits for altering or cancelling entries in a register, from ₹15/- to ₹75/- after 63 years; in Suits relating to public matters, from ₹10/- to ₹500/- in cases filed before the Munsiff Court and to ₹1,000/- before the Sub Court/District Court, after 63 years; and in Suits not otherwise provided for, from ₹25/- to ₹125/- before the Revenue Court, from ₹50/- to ₹250/- before the Munsiff Court, from ₹200/- to ₹1,000/- where the value of the subject matter is ₹25,000/- or less, and from ₹400/- to ₹2,000/- where the value of the subject matter exceeds



₹25,000/- before the Sub Court/District Court, after 34 years. Thus, all the entries in respect of which revision of court fees is sought to be undertaken under the impugned Amending Act, are included in Schedule II of the Act of 1960.

29. The table placed on record by the State Government in its counter affidavit also indicates the long periods during which court fees have remained unchanged. For instance, in respect of Suits relating to trust property, Suits under the Specific Relief Act, 1963, Suits to alter or cancel entries in a register, and Suits concerning public matters, the court fees have remained unaltered for the past 63 years. As regards most other categories, such as Suits for declaratory relief, Suits for injunction, Suits for possession, Suits relating to easements, Suits for accounts, Partition Suits, Suits under the Survey and Boundaries Act, and Suits not otherwise provided for, the table shows that the court fees have remained unchanged for 34 years.

30. The contention of the Petitioner that the 10% thumb rule, as laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *National Insurance Company Ltd. v. Pranay Sethi and Others*³, should be applied, according to us, is not applicable to the case at hand, where the revision has taken place over a period ranging from 15 to 22 years.

31. The learned Advocate General has further submitted that the challenge, based on arguments advanced orally in respect of individual

³ (2017) 16 SCC 680



entries, proceeds on a misconception. He has taken us through the schedule of the impugned Amending Act and demonstrated, by way of comparison, how the fee revision has occurred — for instance, where the court fee has increased from ₹2/- to ₹10/-. It must also be borne in mind that these revisions have been undertaken after more than two decades. Therefore, even though figures such as 400% are projected to suggest a steep hike affecting fundamental rights, the actual increase at the ground level ranges only from ₹2/- to ₹10/-, or from ₹5/- to ₹25/-, and that too over a period of twenty years. Once these facts are placed on record, even if the Report of the Committee is kept aside, it cannot be said that there has been no devaluation of the rupee or that the legislative exercise undertaken by a competent Legislature is arbitrary or requires invalidation. Having regard to the devaluation of the rupee and the passage of time, we find no arbitrariness in the legislative exercise.

32. The second aspect relates to the growing financial obligation of the State to provide and maintain adequate judicial infrastructure. On this issue, reference may be made to the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *All India Judges' Association v. Union of India*⁴, relied upon by the learned Advocate General. In that case, the Hon'ble Supreme Court was dealing with a petition seeking the constitution of an All India Judicial Service and the establishment of uniform conditions of service and hierarchy across the subordinate judiciary in the country. The Court referred to the recommendations contained in the Fourteenth Report of

⁴ (1992) 1 SCC 119



the Law Commission insofar as they related to the scales of pay of judicial officers and other matters having monetary implications. While observing that the dispensation of justice is an essential feature of governance, the Hon'ble Supreme Court emphasised that the collection of court fees should be utilised for the administration of justice and the development of judicial infrastructure, and not treated as a source of general revenue. The following observations from the said decision are relevant to the issue at hand:

“53. We would like to point out that dispensation of justice is an inevitable feature in any civilised society. Maintenance of law and order require the presence of an efficient system of administration of criminal justice. Under the Civil Code, Court fee is realised under the Court Fee Act. For some time demand to abolish it has been made but the States have abandoned the idea on account of the demand by the States of compensation from the Centre in case of abolition of Court fee. Court fee is not a tax and is a fee as has been held by a Constitution Bench of this Court in Secretary, Government of Madras, Home Department and another v. Zenith Lamps and Electrical Ltd. AIR 1973 SC 724. In paragraph 29 of this judgment Sikri. C.J. speaking for this Court pointed out:

"It seems to us that the separate mention of 'fees taken in court' in the Entries referred to above has no other significance than that they logically come under Entries dealing with administration of Justice and courts. The draftsman has followed the scheme designed in the Court Fees Act, 1870 of dealing with fees



taken in court at one place. If it was the intention to distinguish them from fees in List II Entry 66, surely some indication would have been given by the language employed. If these words had not been separately mentioned in List I, Entry 77 and List II.....

It seems plain that 'fees taken in court' are not taxes, for if it were so, the words 'taxes' would have been used or some other indication given. It seems to us that this conclusion is strengthened by two considerations. First, taxes that can be levied by the Union are mentioned in List I from Entry 82; in List II taxes that can be imposed start from Entry 45. Secondly, the very use of the words 'not including fees taken in any court' in Entry % List I, and Entry 66 List II, shows that they would otherwise have fallen within these Entries. It follows that 'fees taken in court' cannot be equated to "Taxes". If this is so, is there any essential difference between fees taken in court and other fees? We are unable to appreciate why the word 'fees, bears a different meaning in Entry 77, List I and Entry 96 List I or Entry 3 List Hand Entry 66 List II. All these relevant cases on the nature of 'fees' were reviewed in Indian Mica and Micanite Industries Ltd. v. The State of Bihar, AIR 1971 SC 1182 at page 1186, by Hegde, J. and he observed:

"From the above discussion, it is clear that before any levy can be upheld as a fee, it must be shown that the levy has reasonable correlation with the services rendered by the Government. In other words, the levy must



be proved to be a quid pro quo for the services rendered. But in these matters it will be impossible to have an exact correlationship. The correlationship expected is one of a general character and not as of arithmetical exactitude".

54. It is not our intention to raise a dispute on this aspect. We adverted to these authorities and the views of this Court to bring support for the view that what is collected as Court fee at least be spent on the administration of Justice instead of being utilised as a source of general revenue of the States. Undoubtedly the income from Court fees is more than the expenditure on the administration of Justice. This is conspicuously noticeable from the figures available in the publication in the Ministry of Law and Justice.

55. What we have said above should be adequate justification for making provision with a view to making judicial functioning viable."

The collection of court fees and their utilisation for the administration of justice are part of a single, integrated scheme and cannot be treated as separate or independent of each other. In the case of *Secretary, Government of Madras, Home Department and Another v. Zenith Lamps and Electrical Ltd.*⁵, the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that court fees must bear a reasonable relationship to the cost of administering civil justice. The Court observed that, in determining such fees, relevant considerations include the expenses involved in maintaining courts and

5 (1973) 1 SCC 162



the officers who administer justice. It was further emphasised that the court fees are intended to support the administration of justice and should not be treated merely as a means of augmenting the general revenue of the State.

33. The correlation between the levy of court fees and their utilisation for the administration of justice was examined in depth by a three-judge Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *Secretary to Government of Madras and Another v. P.R. Sriramulu and Another*⁶. In that case, a certificate had been granted by the Madras High Court following its judgment declaring certain provisions of the *Tamil Nadu Court Fees and Suit Valuation Act* and the *High Court Court Fees Rules* to be invalid. Although the primary challenge concerned the levy of ad valorem court fees, the broader issue, whether the collection of court fees must bear a rational nexus to the cost of administering justice, was also comprehensively debated before the Court. On this issue, the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed as under:

“18. While considering the reasonableness of the levy the High Court also took into account the vast difference in the rates of fee between the years 1922 to 1955. In this connection it may be pointed out that having regard to the changing social and economic conditions of the country and the threats of frequent inflationary trends hovering around, the levy of court fees cannot remain static and has to be amended according to the requirements of the times. The increase in the court fees

6 (1996) 1 SCC 345



has to be appreciated having regard to the increased need of the revenue by reason of the increased cost of the administration of justice. That being so, it would be a futile exercise to compare the rates of court fee under the Court Fee Act, 1922 with those of 1955. There is bound to be a world of difference in the rates due to large span of time having elapsed between 1922 and 1955.

19. The High Court also took the view that the expenditure incurred by the Government in payment to their Law Officers cannot be debited to the cost of administration of justice which the litigant can be required to compensate for. In our opinion this view of the High Court also cannot be accepted for the simple reason that these Law Officers are also part of the machinery of the administration of justice. Apart from what has been stated above in the foregoing paragraphs it may be noticed that the view expressed by the High Court cannot be sustained in view of the subsequent judgment of this Court in the case of *All India Judges' Assn. v. Union of India* [(1992) 1 SCC 119; 1992 SCC (L&S) 9; (1992) 19 ATC 42] whereby this Court had given various directions to the Government involving considerable amount of funds most of which will fall under the head of administration of civil justice. The Government is, therefore, bound to raise funds through the medium of fee."

(emphasis supplied)

34. In the case of *Zenith Lamp and Electrical Ltd.*, in a matter arising from the levy of court fees, the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that whenever the State Legislature generally increases the court fees, it has to be established that such an increase is necessary to meet the cost of



administration of justice. When there is no broad correlation between the cost of administration of civil justice and the levy of court fees, the imposition ceases to be a fee and becomes a tax. In the absence of such a correlation, the levy would exceed the competence of the State. That would mean, there has to be a correlation between the court fees collected and the administration of justice.

35. In the case of *Sanjeev Kumar Jain v. Raghbir Saran Charitable Trust and Others*⁷, the Hon'ble Supreme Court reviewed the regime of imposition of costs, and made the following observations regarding the court fees:

“30. Though there is a general impression that the court fee regarding litigation is high, in fact, it is not so. Except in the case of few categories of suits (that is money suits, specific performance suits etc., and appeals therefrom), where court fee is ad valorem, in majority of the suits / petitions and appeals arising therefrom, the court fee is a fixed nominal fee. The fixed fees that are payable, prescribed decades ago have not undergone a change and in many cases, the fixed fee is not worth the cost of collection thereof. There is therefore a need for a periodical revision of fixed court fees, that is payable in regard to suits / petitions / appeals filed in Civil Courts, High Court, Tribunals and Supreme Court. For example, in Supreme Court, the maximum court fee payable is only Rs.250/-, whether it is a suit or special leave petition or appeal.

31. A time has come when at least in certain type of litigations, like commercial litigations, the costs should

⁷ (2012) 1 SCC 455



be commensurate with the time spent by the courts. Arbitration matters, company matters, tax matters, for example, may involve huge amounts. There is no reason why a nominal fixed fee should be collected in regard to such cases. While we are not advocating an ad valorem fee with reference to value in such matters, at least the fixed fee should be sufficiently high to have some kind of quid - pro quo to the cost involved. Be that as it may.”

The learned counsel for the Petitioner sought to contend that these observations are made in the context of commercial matters, and they indicate the need for revision of court fees.

36. The learned Advocate General has also relied upon the decision of the Division Bench of this Court in the case of *The Cardamom Marketing Corporation and Another v. The State of Kerala and Others*⁸, which was affirmed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The view of the Division Bench of this Court in the case of *Chackolas Spinning & Weaving Mills Ltd. v. State of Kerala and Another*⁹ was affirmed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *Cardamom Marketing Corporation and Another v. State of Kerala and Others*¹⁰, wherein while confirming that providing social security to legal profession is an essential part of legal system, the Hon'ble Supreme Court upheld the validity of imposition of additional court fees for the said purpose. The learned

⁸ 2007 SCC OnLine Ker 646

⁹ (2006) 1 KLT 989

¹⁰ (2017) 5 SCC 255



Advocate General relied upon the above decision to point out that the Hon'ble Supreme Court has expanded the scope of the State's obligation by stating that all stakeholders of the legal system have to be taken care of and, therefore, the court fee may also be utilised for this purpose.

37. In the case of *P. M. Ashwathanarayana Setty and Others v. State of Karnataka and Others*¹¹, various issues arose before the three-judge Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a group of appeals regarding the policy and legality of the levy of court fees. One issue raised was the broad correlation between the totality of expenses in the administration of civil justice and the court fees collected. The Hon'ble Supreme Court referred to its earlier decision in the case of *Zenith Lamp and Electrical Ltd.* and, in paragraph 67, made the following observations:

“67. We have given our careful and anxious consideration to this vexed problem which is a subject matter of considerable debate both in and outside Courts. The anomalies that the policy behind the impugned provisions can produce in conceivable cases could, indeed, be inequitable or even quite startling. But, the argument, in the last analysis, becomes indistinguishable from the contention that the correlation of the services to the fee would have to be decided on the basis of how the correlation operates in each individual case. It would be an insistence on testing the conceptual nature of the fee on the basis of the degree of the quid pro quo in the case of each individual payer of the fee., That is the peccant part of the argument. Once a broad correlation between the totality of the expenses on the services, conceived as a

¹¹ 1989 Supp (1) SCC 696



whole, on the one hand and the totality of funds raised by way of the fee, on the other established, it would be no part of the legitimate exercise in the examination of constitutionality of the concept of the impost to embark upon its effect in individual cases. Such a grievance would be one of disproportionate nature of the distribution of the fees amongst those liable to contribute and not one touching the conceptual nature of the fee. Indeed this position was clearly recognised by the Madras High Court in Zenith Lamp's case (ILR (1968) 1 Mad 247) itself in the following passage of the, judgment:

"If, in substance, the levy is not to raise revenues also for the general purpose of the State the mere absence of uniformity of the fact that it has no direct relation to the actual services rendered by the authority to each individual who obtains the benefit of the service, or that some of the contributories do not obtain the same degree of service as other may, will not change the essential character of the levy."

68. There might, conceivably, be cases where a particular individual contributor may not derive any benefit at all, though as a member of the class he has no option but to make the contribution. The principle underlying the contention that beyond a point the impost ceases to have the quality of a fee, if valid, can be visualised and applied even to cases where, despite the uniformity in the distribution of the burden, a particular individual does not obtain any service at all. This cannot be a legitimate and permissible ground of invalidation."

(emphasis supplied)



Therefore, the collection of court fees and the expenditure on the administration of justice need not be with mathematical exactitude.

38. The challenge in this petition is to an economic legislation. In the decision in the case of *P. M. Ashwathanarayana Setty and Others*, the Hon'ble Supreme Court emphasised the judicial restraint required in examining the challenges to fiscal statutes and made the following observations:

“79. The problem is, indeed, a complex one not free from its own peculiar difficulties. Though other legislative measures dealing with economic regulation are not outside Article 14, it is well recognised that the State enjoys the widest latitude where measures of economic regulation are concerned. These measures for fiscal and economic regulation involve an evaluation of diverse and quite often conflicting economic criteria and adjustment and balancing of various conflicting social and economic values and interests. It is for the State to decide what economic and social policy it should pursue and what discriminations advance those social and economic policies. In view of the inherent complexity of these fiscal adjustments, courts give a larger discretion to the legislature in the matter of its preferences of economic and social policies and effectuate the chosen system in all possible and reasonable ways. If two or more methods of adjustments of an economic measure are available, the legislative preference in favour of one of them cannot be questioned on the ground of lack of legislative wisdom or that the method adopted is not the best or that there were better ways of adjusting the competing interests and claims. The legislature



possesses the greatest freedom in such areas. The analogy of principles of the burden of tax may not also be inapposite in dealing with the validity of the distribution of the burden of a “fee” as well.

80. *xx xxxx xxxxx*

81. *The legislature has to reckon with the practical difficulties of adjusting conflicting interests. It has to bring to bear a pragmatic approach to resolving these conflicts and evolve a fiscal policy it considers best suited to the felt needs. The complexity of economic matters and the pragmatic solutions to be found for them defy and go beyond conceptual mental models. Social and economic problems of a policy do not accord with preconceived stereotypes so as to be amenable to predetermined solutions. In State of Gujarat v. Ambica Mills Ltd. [(1974) 4 SCC 656: 1974 SCC (L&S) 381: (1974) 3 SCR 760] this Court observed: (SCC pp. 679, 680, 677, 678—paras 71, 72, 65, 67 and 64 respectively)*

“...The court must be aware of its own remoteness and lack of familiarity with the local problems. Classification is dependent on the particular needs and specific difficulties of the community... which are beyond the easy ken of the court,... and which the legislature alone was competent to make. Consequently, lacking the capacity to inform itself fully about the peculiarities of a particular local situation, a court should hesitate to dub the legislative classification as irrational...

...The question whether, under Article 14, a classification is reasonable or unreasonable must, in the ultimate analysis depend upon the judicial approach to the problem.... The more complicated



society becomes, the greater the diversity of its problems and the more does legislation direct itself to the diversities.... In the utilities, tax and economic regulation cases, there are good reasons for judicial self-restraint if not official deference to legislative judgment. The courts have only the power to destroy but not to reconstruct. When these are added to the complexity of economic regulation, the uncertainty, the liability to error, the bewildering conflict of the experts, and the number of times the judges have been overruled by events, self-limitation can be seen to be the path to judicial wisdom and institutional prestige and stability.

Laws regulating economic activity should be viewed differently from laws which touch and concern freedom of speech and religion, voting, procreation, rights with respect to criminal procedure, etc... judicial deference to legislative judgment in instances of economic regulation is explained by the argument that rationality of a classification depends upon local conditions about which local legislative or administrative bodies would be better informed than a court."

82. The lack of perfection in a legislative measure does not necessarily imply its unconstitutionality. It is rightly said that no economic measure has yet been devised which is free from all discriminatory impact and that in such a complex arena in which no perfect alternatives exist, the court does well not to impose too rigorous a standard of criticism, under the equal protection clause, reviewing fiscal services....

83. The observations of this Court in ITO v. K.N. Takim Roy Rymbai [(1976) 1 SCC 916: 1976 SCC



(Tax) 143: (1976) 3 SCR 413] made in the context of taxation laws are worth recalling: (SCC p. 923)

“(T)he mere fact that a tax falls more heavily on some in the same category. is not by itself a ground to render the law invalid. It is only when within the range of its selection, the law operates unequally and cannot be justified on the basis of a valid classification, that there would be a violation of Article 14.”

(emphasis supplied)

84. The question whether the measure of a tax or a “fee” should be ad valorem or ad quantum is again a matter of fiscal policy.

85. In the Zenith Lamp case [(1973) 1 SCC 162: 1973 SCC (Tax) 203: (1973) 2 SCR 973 at 981-82] this Court observed: (SCC p. 170, para 31)

“The fees must have relation to the administration of civil justice. While levying fees the appropriate legislature is competent to take into account all relevant factors, the value of the subject-matter of the dispute, the various steps necessary in the prosecution of a suit or matter, the entire cost of the upkeep of courts and officers administering civil justice, the vexatious nature of a certain type of litigation and other relevant matters. It is free to levy a small fee in some cases, a large fee in others, subject of course to the provisions of Article 14.”

(emphasis supplied)

88. Having regard to the nature and complexity of this matter it is, perhaps, difficult to say that the ad valorem principle which may not be an ideal basis for distribution of a fee can at the same time be said to be



so irrational as to incur any unconstitutional infirmity. The presumption of constitutionality of laws requires that any doubt as to the constitutionality of a law has to be resolved in favour of constitutionality. Though the scheme cannot be upheld, at the same time, it cannot be struck down either.”

Though the learned counsel for the Petitioner sought to contend that the matter before the Hon’ble Supreme Court arose in the context of ad valorem fees, the fundamental principles laid down therein regarding economic legislation are equally applicable. In that decision, the Hon’ble Supreme Court clarified that where the scheme of distribution of the burden is so arbitrary, unreasonable, or disproportionate as to offend Article 14 of the Constitution of India, the levy would be liable to challenge. However, this observation also sets a high threshold for invalidation once a general correlation between the levy and the purpose is established. In the present case, the State Government has placed on record figures relating to expenditure, budgetary allocations, and revenue generated from court fees, demonstrating a significant difference between income and expenditure. It has also shown that there has been no revision of fees in certain categories for nearly sixty years. These factors collectively indicate a legitimate need for revising the court fees. Once such a need is established and the competence of the State to legislate on the subject is undisputed, the validity of the levy cannot be casually assailed.



39. As regards the correlation between the collection of court fees and the expenditure on the administration of justice, the learned Advocate General has placed on record a comparative chart indicating the amounts allocated towards judicial administration. It shows that, as per the budgetary provisions, ₹97.11 Crores were allocated in the year 2002-03, which has increased to ₹1248.70 Crores in 2022-23. In contrast, the revenue generated from court fees, excluding refunds, was only ₹40.89 Crores in 2002-03 and ₹126.85 Crores in 2022-23. According to the learned Advocate General, a substantial portion of the expenditure is accounted for by the salaries and emoluments of judicial officers and staff. The learned Advocate General has relied upon the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *All India Judges' Association* to underline the financial obligations arising from the extension of various monetary benefits to members of the judiciary. Further, in the case of *Chackolas Spinning & Weaving Mills Ltd.*, where the legislative competence of the State to impose additional court fees under the Act of 1959 was questioned, the Division Bench of this Court reaffirmed that the correlation between the amount collected as fees and the expenditure incurred on providing services need not be established with mathematical precision. It is sufficient if there exists a broad and reasonable correlation between the two.

40. According to the Petitioner, the figures shown in the chart represent only the budgetary allocations and do not indicate the actual



expenditure incurred. A budgetary allocation, it is pointed out, merely signifies the amount earmarked for the administration of justice. If such allocated funds are not effectively utilised, resulting in deficiencies in infrastructure or other related issues, appropriate directions can always be issued to the State Government. Once a budgetary provision has been made, the State cannot be heard to contend that there is no allocation for the purpose. However, this aspect is distinct from the question of the validity of the amendment to the Act of 1959. The Petitioner then contended that no statistical data has been provided to correlate the increase in court fees with the actual administrative costs, and therefore, without this data being placed on record, the exercise would be arbitrary. We are not called upon to perform an accounting exercise. The State's rising obligation to provide for judicial infrastructure is not in dispute.

41. Thus, considering the scope of judicial review over the exercise of powers by a competent Legislature, it has to be held that the impugned Amending Act is neither beyond the legislative competence of the State nor violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of India. The revision of court fees has been effected after a considerable lapse of time, ranging from fifteen to twenty years in certain cases, during which period inflation has substantially increased. The figures placed on record indicate that the revenue generated from court fees falls considerably short of the expenditure incurred by the State towards judicial administration. The devaluation of the rupee and the escalating cost of maintaining judicial



infrastructure are legitimate considerations for revising court fees. The proportionality between the necessity for revision and the quantum of enhancement cannot be determined by exact mathematical precision; what is required is only a broad and reasonable correlation. Having regard to the material produced by the State and the admitted circumstances, such as the prolonged gap between revisions and the steady devaluation of the rupee, it cannot be said that the revision of court fees is excessive or disproportionate.

42. The second broad head of challenge is the violation of the fundamental right of access to justice under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The Petitioner has relied upon the 189th Report of the Law Commission of India on “*Revision of Court Fees Structure*”, submitted in February 2004, which has been referred to by the Delhi High Court in the case of *Delhi High Court Bar Association*. It would be fruitful to reproduce one of the main conclusions of the Law Commission in the said Report as under:

“12) As regards ad valorem court fees, since the levy is a percentage of the value of the claim, it may not be necessary to enhance the percentages consequent upon the devaluation of the rupee. This is because the court fee paid will be proportionate to the claim which in any event would be enhanced to reflect the changed value of the rupee. However, in the context of fixed court fees there may be a need to revise the charges to reflect the present



value of the rupee. At the same time, it requires to be emphasised that any enhancement of Court fee should not adversely affect the right of access to justice. Further, the amount collected by way of Court fee should not be more than the expenditure incurred in administration of civil justice. Subject to these limitations, the amount of fixed Court fee prescribed under Schedule 2 of the Court Fees Act, 1870 may be enhanced in proportion to the extent of devaluation of the rupee.”

The Law Commission, in its Report, has observed that any enhancement of court fees should not adversely affect the right of access to justice. However, the extent to which a revision in court fees may operate as an impediment would necessarily vary from person to person, depending upon the nature of the case, the quantum involved, and the time span over which the revision has taken place. While it is beyond dispute that the right of access to justice, being part of Article 21 of the Constitution of India, must be given primacy and cannot be compromised, that principle alone cannot form the basis for invalidating a legislative exercise in the absence of specific material demonstrating such impairment. A challenge of this nature cannot rest upon generalised assertions. There has to be clear pleadings to indicate which enhancement has affected which class of litigants. The impact of the revision varies from entry to entry, and even within the same entry, it may not affect all litigants in the same manner – some may be prejudiced, while others may not.



43. The Division Bench of this Court, in the case of *Human Rights Protection Forum*, which dealt with the issue of a rise in court fees, observed that the burden of proving that an enactment is invalid lies on the person who challenges it, and that there was nothing on record in that case to suggest that the imposition of court fees in various categories of cases was arbitrary. The Division Bench also noted that no factual basis had been provided for the contentions advanced in the petition. A similar situation arises in the present case.

44. The prayers in the writ petition have already been reproduced earlier. The challenge is directed against the entire enactment, namely, the Kerala Finance Act, 2025. The Schedule to the impugned Amending Act spans a wide range of entries, covering diverse categories of cases such as orders passed by the Kerala Farm Debts Relief Commission, applications under the Forest Acts, as well as commercial suits and arbitration matters. The entire range of these provisions has been assailed through a broad and undifferentiated contention that they infringe the right of access to justice. However, it must be specifically demonstrated how the increase in court fees in relation to commercial suits, arbitration proceedings, or matters such as chit funds and debt relief, would, in fact, impede access to justice. The litigants in these categories belong to different economic and social strata, and it cannot be presumed that the enhancement of court fees would have the same impact in every case. There are no pleadings on record identifying the particular categories of



cases or litigants said to be affected, nor has any attempt been made to show how the revised rates create an impediment to access to justice in any specific context. Reliance has been placed on an observation in the Report of the Justice V.K. Mohanan Committee that 63% of the total population lives below the level of extreme poverty and that 30% to 40% of litigants belong to the low-income group. That observation, however, only forms part of the introductory context to the Committee's discussion, reflecting its awareness that a large number of litigants come from economically weaker sections. It cannot, by itself, form the basis of a constitutional challenge under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Once the legislative competence of the State is established and the necessity for revision of court fees is duly demonstrated, the enactment cannot be invalidated on the ground that it impedes access to justice merely on the strength of such broad, generalised assertions unsupported by concrete material.

45. There is no individual litigant before us, nor has any material been produced to show that the right of access to justice of any particular person has been affected. In this context, the learned Advocate General, relying on the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee and Another v. C.K. Rajan and Others*¹², submitted that the High Court should ordinarily refrain from entertaining a writ petition in the nature of a public interest litigation challenging the constitutionality or validity of a statute or

¹² (2003) 7 SCC 546



statutory rule. We do not propose to hold that a public interest petition filed by an Advocates' Association questioning the revision of court fees is not to be entertained at the threshold. However, the Association is obliged to place tangible evidence before the Court demonstrating that a particular enhancement of court fees infringes the constitutional guarantee under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, whether in respect of an individual or a specific class of litigants. A mere assertion that any increase in court fees *per se* amounts to a constitutional infraction cannot be accepted. In the present case, the challenge rests only on general statements and hypothetical apprehensions, unsupported by any material indicating that the revised court fees have, in fact, denied access to justice to any identifiable category of litigants. The impugned legislation, much less in its entirety, cannot, therefore, be struck down on such broad and unsubstantiated grounds that it violates the right of access to justice or the legislative policy underlying it.

46. Similarly, with respect to anticipatory bail, the facts of each case may differ from person to person, and any challenge has to be substantiated by proper pleadings. In the present case, the petitioner has not questioned the levy of court fees on applications for anticipatory bail as such but has contended that the increase from ₹10/- to ₹500/- is excessive and disproportionate. It is relevant to note that from 1960 until 2024-25, the fee of ₹10/- remained unchanged. Before the impugned Amending Act, the applicable fee was ₹10/- under the residuary Article



11(t) of Schedule II, since no specific provision existed for anticipatory bail applications. The amended rate is now ₹500/-, which the petitioner argues amounts to an increase of 4900%. The State, however, maintains that the residuary rate of ₹10/- cannot be used as a benchmark to calculate such a percentage increase. Whether the prescription of a separate court fee of ₹500/- for applications seeking anticipatory bail infringes the right to personal liberty is an issue that may arise for consideration in an appropriate case. It must also be recognised that persons seeking anticipatory bail may be accused of different kinds of offences, including economic and white-collar crimes.

47. It is to be noted that several States in India, in their Court Fees legislations, have incorporated enabling provisions empowering the State Government to reduce or exempt the payment of court fees for certain classes of persons. As far as the State of Kerala is concerned, such provisions are contained in the Act of 1959. Section 72 of the Act exempts certain documents and provides for relaxation from the payment of court fees. Section 73 prescribes a special procedure for suits by societies registered under the Societies Registration Act, allowing payment of only one-half of the fee chargeable on the plaint under the Act, if the District Collector certifies that the society is not in a financially sound position to pay the full amount. Section 74 provides for special provisions regarding suits by registered trade unions, members of the Scheduled Castes, and other categories. The relevant portion of Section



74 reads as follows:

“74. Special provision regarding suits by registered trade union, member of Scheduled Castes. etc.- (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing provisions of this Act, the Court shall, subject to the provisions of sub-section (2), admit the plaint in respect of the following kinds of suit even though the fee chargeable under this Act has not been paid and after such admission calculate the amount of court-fee chargeable in respect of the plaint under the provisions of this Act, and require the Collector of the District to pay the fee so chargeable--

(i) suits for money instituted by a registered trade union wherein the claim does not exceed one thousand rupees;

(ii) suits instituted by a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe whose annual income does not exceed rupees twelve thousand and the amount of the claim does not exceed rupees fifteen thousand.

Explanation.- For the purpose of this clause Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe shall have the same meaning as in the Constitution of India.

(iii) suits for money instituted by a prisoner whose annual income does not exceed twelve thousand rupees and wherein the claim does not exceed fifteen thousand rupees.

(iv) suits for money filed by a co-operative society registered under the Co-operative Societies Act for the time being in force against any person other than a member of the Society;



(v) suits for recovery of compensation under the Work men's Compensation Act, 1923 and for wages or bonus by workmen under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947; and

(vi) suits for arrears of maintenance or for maintenance or for enhancement of maintenance or for recovery of shares of their deceased husband or parents in the family property, filed by women or minors, where the annual income of such women or minors does not exceed twelve thousand rupees.

[xxxxxxxxxxxxxx]

(vii) suits by workmen against their employers in matters arising from their employment;

(viii) suits for recovery of compensation arising out of accidents, filed by the injured where the claim does not exceed rupees fifty thousand and filed by the legal heirs of the deceased in such accidents where the claim does not exceed rupees one lakh;

(ix) suits by associations or societies registered under the Travancore-Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1955 (Act XII of 1955) or the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (Central Act 21 of 1860), with one of their objects as protection of public interest in the matter of environment, consumer protection, adulteration of food stuffs, or other similar matters against the offenders, where the subject matter of the suit relates to any of the above matters and the court finds that there is prima facie case of public interest;

(x) suits filed by 'Poor persons' as defined in the Rules relating to legal aid to the poor applicable in the State



from time to time, when the claim does not exceed rupees fifteen thousand;

(xi) suits by any person serving in the Armed Forces, where the claim does not exceed rupees fifteen thousand;

(xii) suits by ex-servicemen whose annual income does not exceed rupees twelve thousand and the claim does not exceed rupees fifteen thousand;

(xiii) suits by unemployed handicapped persons whose annual income does not exceed rupees twelve thousand and the claim does not exceed rupees fifteen thousand.”

Provided that the plaintiff in the suit has not entered into any agreement with reference to the subject-matter of the proposed suit under which any other person has obtained an interest in such subject-matter or has not acquired by transfer inter vivos an interest in such subject-matter and in cases covered by Clauses (ii), (iii) and (iv) of sub-section (1) above, the claim originates in favour of the plaintiff.

Therefore, the concerned court, subject to the provisions of sub-section (2) of Section 74, may admit the plaint in respect of the above-mentioned kinds of suits even though the fee chargeable under the Act of 1959 has not been paid, and may require the District Collector to pay the fee so chargeable, following the procedure provided as above.

48. Section 74A of the Act of 1959 also provides special provisions regarding certain appeals. It lays down that the Court shall admit the



memorandum of appeal in respect of—(i) an appeal against the decree in a suit referred to in clause (ii) of sub-section (1) of Section 74, presented by the plaintiff in such suit; or (ii) an appeal against the decree in a suit for money instituted against a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe whose monthly income does not exceed twenty-five thousand rupees and wherein the claim does not exceed ten lakh rupees, presented by such member, even though the fee chargeable under this Act has not been paid. After such admission, the Court shall calculate the amount of court fee chargeable in respect of such memorandum of appeal under the provisions of this Act and require the Collector of the district to pay the fee so chargeable. Further, under Section 75 of the Act of 1959, the State Government has the power to reduce or remit fees. Section 75 reads thus:

“75. Power to reduce or remit fees.- The Government may, by notification in the Gazette, reduce or remit, in the whole or in any part of the territory of this State, all or any of the fees chargeable under this Act, and may, in like manner, cancel or vary such notification.”

Therefore, the Act of 1959 contains provisions to address hardship, ensuring that certain classes of persons are not prevented from seeking recourse to a court of law due to their inability to pay the prescribed court fees.

49. To summarise, the challenge to the revision of ad valorem court fees, there being no increase in the ad valorem fees, does not survive and



has, in fact, not been pressed by the petitioner. The challenge to Section 73A of the Act of 1959, which exempts the Government from payment of court fees and was introduced in the year 2003, has already been negated by a Division Bench of this Court in the case of *Human Rights Protection Forum v. State of Kerala*. We find no reason to take a different view. The main challenge to the impugned amending enactment is based on the alleged breach of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India. The entire enactment is challenged, and not any specific provision of the impugned Amending Act. The State Government has the legislative competence to enact the impugned Amending Act. The devaluation of the rupee, inflation, passage of time, and the expenditure on the administration of justice are relevant factors to be taken into account while considering the revision of court fees. The revision of court fees has not taken place in the State of Kerala for more than two decades, and the State has placed material on record to demonstrate the devaluation of the rupee and the increased expenditure on the administration of justice. A broad correlation between the collection of court fees and the expenditure on the administration of justice is all that is necessary; mathematical exactitude is not required. The Report of the Committee constituted by the State Government forms only a part of the exercise undertaken for enacting the impugned Amending Act. The challenge to the legislative exercise of a competent Legislature, however, must be examined within well-settled parameters. Once the basic justification for revising court fees is established, the impugned



Amending Act cannot be declared unconstitutional on the grounds of violating Article 14 of the Constitution of India. As to the challenge based on the alleged violation of the right to access justice, under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, it must again be noted that the entire enactment is sought to be declared unconstitutional on this count. It is not the position of law that any revision in court fees, however justified and lawful, will ipso facto offend the right to access justice. Each entry in the amended Schedule may have a different impact, and even a single entry may affect different classes or persons differently. There are no such specific pleadings or supporting material placed on record in the petition, and the impugned amendment cannot be declared unconstitutional on the basis of generalised assertions.

50. In these circumstances, prayer clause (i), seeking a declaration that the amendment to the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959, by the Kerala Finance Act, 2025, is unconstitutional, is rejected. Prayer clause (ii), seeking a declaration that the provisions relating to ad valorem court fees are unconstitutional, is also rejected. Prayer clause (iii), challenging Section 73A of the Kerala Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act, 1959, is rejected. The writ petition is accordingly dismissed.

51. Before parting, we observe that under the Act of 1959, the State Government has the power to grant full or partial exemption from the payment of court fees to a particular class of persons. Having carried out the exercise of revising court fees, the State Government may consider



whether any circumstances exist that warrant granting full or partial exemption to a particular class or category based on social or financial criteria. However, this decision is left to the discretion of the State Government.

52. All pending interlocutory applications stand closed.

Sd/-
NITIN JAMDAR
CHIEF JUSTICE

Sd/-
BASANT BALAJI,
JUDGE

krj/-



APPENDIX OF WP(PIL) NO.14/2025

PETITIONER'S EXHIBITS:-

- EXHIBIT P1 A TRUE COPY OF THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE KERALA FINANCE ACT, 2025, SHOWING THE AMENDMENT TO THE KERALA COURT FEES AND SUIT VALUATION ACT, 1959.
- EXHIBIT P2 A TRUE COPY OF THE BUDGET SPEECH OF THE HON'BLE MINISTER FOR FINANCE, STATE OF KERALA.
- EXHIBIT P3 A TRUE COPY OF THE DESCRIPTION OF THE KERALA LAW REFORMS COMMISSION AS SHOWN IN THEIR OFFICIAL WEBSITE.
- EXHIBIT P4 A TRUE COPY OF THE DRAFT AMENDMENT BILL OF THE KERALA COURT FEES & SUITS VALUATION ACT, 1959 AS PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF KERALA LAW REFORMS COMMISSION.

RESPONDENTS' EXHIBITS:-

- EXHIBIT R2(A) A TRUE COPY OF GO(RT) NO. 46/2024/LAW DATED DATED 10-01-2024 RELATING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE, ALONG WITH ITS TRANSLATION.
- EXHIBIT R2(B) A TRUE COPY OF THE REPORT ON REVISION OF COURT FEES AND SUIT VALUATION IN KERALA, DATED 16-01-2025, SUBMITTED BY JUSTICE V.K. MOHANAN (RTD) COMMITTEE.
- ANNEXURE-1 G.O. (RT) NO.46/2024/LAW (OPINION G) DTD. 10/01/2024, ALONG WITH ITS TRANSLATION.
- ANNEXURE-2 G.O. (RT) NO.63/2024/LAW (OPINION G) DATED 10/01/2024, ALONG WITH ITS TRANSLATION.
- ANNEXURE-3 G.O. (RT) NO.1093/2024/LAW/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DTD. 16/10/2024, ALONG WITH ITS TRANSLATION.



- ANNEXURE-4 MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS, ALONG WITH TRANSLATIONS.
- ANNEXURE-5 LETTER NO.HCKL/329/2023-E6(A) DTD. 09/03/2024 OF THE REGISTRAR, DISTRICT JUDICIARY, HIGH COURT OF KERALA.
- ANNEXURE-6 U.O NOTE NO.EXP.A4/236/2024-FIN(E2749702) FIN (EXPENDITURE-A) DEPARTMENT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DTD.19/04/2024.
- ANNEXURE-7 GMAIL LETTER RECEIVED FROM DSIMTHIRO@RBI.ORG.IN OF THE ASSISTANT ADVISOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, RESERVE BANK OF INDIA, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, KERALA.
- ANNEXURE-8 PAGE 1 TO 3 EXTRACTED FROM THE APPENDIX OF ECONOMIC SURVEY REPORT OF THE YEAR 2023-24 PUBLISHED BY MINISTRY OF FINANCE, GOVT. OF INDIA DATED 22/07/2024.
- ANNEXURE-9 LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE AS PER ITS MEETING DTD. 29/04/2024.
- ANNEXURE-10 LETTER DTD.02/05/2024 APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE AS PER ITS MEETING DTD.29/04/2024.
- ANNEXURE-11 COPY OF DESHABHIMANI DAILY DATED 01.06.2024.
- ANNEXURE 12 COPY OF MALAYALA MANORAMA DAILY DATED 01.06.2024.
- ANNEXURE-13 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OTHER DETAILS, WHO ATTENDED THE PUBLIC HEARING, AT A GLANCE.
- ANNEXURE-14 LETTER NO.HCKL/2529/2023-E1 DTD. 24/06/2024 OF THE REGISTRY OF THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF KERALA.
- ANNEXURE-15 THE LIST OF 9 STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR VIEWS, OBJECTIONS AND STATEMENT SUBMITTED AND RECEIVED BEFORE 31/05/2024, ALONG WITH THE TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS IN VERNACULAR.



ANNEXURE-16 **THE LIST OF PERSONS AND THEIR WRITTEN VIEWS AND DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED IN PERSON AT THE TIME OF ZONAL HEARING AND RECEIVED THROUGH POST AFTER 31/05/2024 AND BEFORE 19/06/2024, ALONG WITH THE TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS IN VERNACULAR.**

ANNEXURE-17 **MINUTES OF THE ZONAL WISE PUBLIC HEARING, ALONG WITH ITS TRANSLATION.**

//TRUE COPY//

P.A. TO C.J.