

Nain Singh

Vs

Koonwarjee and Others

Civil Appeal No. 1460 of 1966

(J. C. Shah, K. S. Hegde JJ)

02.04.1970

JUDGMENT

HEGDE, J. -

1. The only question the falls decision in this appeal by special leave is as to the application of Section 151, Civil Procedure Code to a remand order falling within Section 105 (2) of that Code.
2. The facts leading up to the point under consideration may now be stated. The appellant was the Jagirdar of the suit properties. One Bhagirath was his tenant. The said Bhagirath died in the year 1947 leaving behind no male issues. His wife had predeceased him. He had two daughters who were living at the time of his death. After his death, defendants Nos. 1 to 5 who are his distant relations took possession of the suit properties and got the revenue records charged in their names. Thereafter the appellant brought the suit under appeal seeking the following reliefs : (1) to declare that his is the owner of the suit properties; (2) to quash the order of the Tehsildar, dated November 8, 1949, transferring the Khata relating to the suit properties to the names of Defendants 1 to 5; (3) to grant possession of those properties to him and (4) other usual incidental reliefs.
3. The defendants resisted the plaintiff's claim. They contended inter alia that : (1) the Civil Court had no jurisdiction to entertain the suit; (2) the plaintiff had lost right over the suit properties in view of the Jagir Abolition Act, 1951, which came into force on December 4, 1952, during the pendency of the suit and (3) the 1st defendant being the adopted son of Bhagirath is entitled to the possession of the suit properties. In the suit several issues were raised. It is not necessary to refer to them in view of the limited scope of this appeal. The Trial Court dismissed the suit upholding the contention of the defendants on two issues, viz. : (1) that the Civil Court had no jurisdiction to entertain the suit and (2) that in view of the Abolition of Jagirs and the vesting of the suit properties in the State, the plaintiff can claim no relief. The first appellate court reversed the findings of the Trial Court on those issues. It came to the conclusion that the Civil Court had jurisdiction to entertain the suit. It further held that though in view of the abolition of the Jagirs, the suit properties had vested in the State, it was for the State to get itself impleaded if it is interested in this litigation and as the State had not chosen to get itself impleaded, it was open to the plaintiff to press the suit. In view of those conclusions, the appellate court set aside the decree of the Trial Court and remanded the suit to the Trial Court for deciding the other issues left undecided. After the remand, the Trial Court negatived every one of the contentions taken by the defendants and decreed the suit as prayed for. In appeal that decree was confirmed. In second appeal the High Court of Madhya Pradesh agreed with the Trial Court and the appellate court on the findings given on all issues excepting the issue, it came to the effect of abolition of the Jagirs on the suit. On that issue, it came to the conclusion that in view of the abolition of Jagirs under the Jagir Abolition Act, the plaintiff

had lost his title to the suit properties and therefore he could not get a decree for possession of the suit properties. It rejected the contention of the plaintiff that that issue is concluded by the decision of the appellate court made before remand as the same had not been appealed against. It opined that the court had inherent power to consider the correctness of that order. It accordingly allowed the appeal and dismissed the suit.

4. The High Court, in our opinion, erred in holding that the correctness of the remand order was open to review by it. The order in question was made under Rule 23, Order XLI, Civil Procedure Code. That order was appealable under Order XLIII of that Code. As the same was not appealed against, its correctness was no more open to examination in view of Section 105 (2) of the Code which lays down that where any party aggrieved by an order of remand from which an appeal lies does not appeal therefrom he shall thereafter be precluded from disputing its correctness. The High Court had misconceived the scope of its inherent powers. Under the inherent power of courts recognised by Section 151, Civil Procedure Code, a court has no power to do that which is prohibited by the Code. Inherent jurisdiction of the court must be exercised subject to the rule that if the Code does contain specific provisions which would meet the necessities of the case, such provisions should be followed and inherent jurisdiction should not be invoked. In other words the court cannot make use of the special provisions of Section 151 of the Code where a party had his remedy provided elsewhere in the Code and he neglected to avail himself of the same. Further the power under Section 151 of the Code cannot be exercised as an appellate power.

5. We are also of the opinion that the High Court is not right in holding that in view of the abolition of the Jagirs, the plaintiff had lost all rights in the suit properties. It is true that in view of the provisions of the Jagir Abolition Act, the suit properties vested in the State. But it was conceded at the bar that if the plaintiff is proved to have been the owner of the suit properties on the day the Jagir Abolition Act came into force, he is entitled to the compensation provided in that Act. Therefore the plaintiff is interested in establishing that on the date Jagir Abolition Act came into force, he was the full owner of the suit properties. The facts of this case fall within the rule laid down by this Court in *Himatrao v. Jaikishandas and Others.* ((1963) 3 SCR 815) On the facts of this case the interests of justice would have been better served if the High Court had ordered the impleading of the State of Madhya Pradesh in the appeal before it and determined the rights of all the parties finally. Hence we set aside the decree of the High Court and remand the case to that Court with a direction that the State of Madhya Pradesh should be impleaded and the rights of all the parties decided in accordance with law. In the circumstances of the case we make no order as to costs of this appeal.

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