

Rafiq and Another

Vs

Munshilal and Another

Civil Appeal No. 1415 of 1981

(Baharul Islam, D. A. Desai JJ)

16.04.1981

JUDGMENT

DESAI, J. -

1. Special Leave granted.

2. We have heard Mr. O. P. Rana, learned counsel for the appellant, and Mr. A. K. Sanghi, learned counsel for the respondent. The high Court disposed of the appeal preferred by the present appellant in the absence of the learned Counsel for the appellant. When the appellant became aware of the fact that his appeal had been disposed of in the absence of his advocate, the moved an application in the High Court to recall the order dismissing his appeal and permit him to participate in the hearing of the appeal. This application was rejected by the High Court and an affidavit was sworn on October 29, 1980. The same was not presented to the court till November 12, 1980 and that there is no satisfactory explanation for this slackness on the part of the learned Advocate who was requested to file the application.

3. The disturbing feature of the case is that under our present adversary legal system where the parties generally appear through their advocates, the obligation of the parties is to select his advocate, brief him, pay the fees demanded by him and then trust the learned Advocate to do the rest of the things. The party may be a villager or may belong to a rural area and may have no knowledge of the courts procedure. After engaging a lawyer, the party may remain supremely confident that the lawyer will look after his interest. At the time of the hearing of the apple, the personal appearance of the party is not only not required but hardly useful. Therefore, the party having done everything in his power to effectively participate in the proceedings can rest assumed that he has neither to go to the High Court to inquire as to what is happening in the High Court with regard to his appeal nor is he to act as a watchdog of the advocate that the latter appears in the matter when it is listed. It is no part of his job. Mr. A. K. Sanghi stated that a practice has grown up in the High Court of Allahabad amongst the lawyers that they remain absent when they do not like a particular bench. Maybe, we do not know, he is better informed in this matter. Ignorance in this behalf is our bliss. Even if we do not put our seal of imprimatur on the alleged practice by dismissing this matter which may discourage such a tendency, would it not bring justice deliver system into disrepute. What is the fault of the party who having done everything in his power expected of him would suffer because of the default of his advocate. If was reject this appeal as Mr. A. K. Sanghi invited us to do, the only one who would suffer would not be the lawyer who did not appear but the party whose interest he represented. The problem that agitates us is whether it is proper that the party should suffer for the inaction, deliberate omission or misdemeanor of his agent The answer obviously is in the negative. Maybe that the learned Advocate absented himself

deliberately or intentionally. We have no material for ascertaining that aspect of the matter. We say nothing more on that aspect of the matter. However, we cannot be a party to an innocent party suffering injustice merely because his chosen advocate defaulted. Therefore, we allow this appeal, set aside the order of the High Court both dismissing the appeal and refusing to recall that order. We direct that the appeal be restored to its original number in the High Court and be disposed of according to law. If there is a stay of dispossession it will continue till the disposal of the matter by the High Court. There remains the question as to who shall pay the costs of the respondent here. As we feel that the party is not responsible because he has done whatever was possible and was in his power to do the costs amounting to Rs. 200 should be recovered from the advocate who absented himself. The right to execute that order is reserved with the party represented by Mr. A. K. Sanghi.

4. Appeal allowed to the extent indicate with costs in the manner indicated.

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