

Bai Shakriben (Dead) By Natwar Melsingh and Others

Vs

Special Land Acquisition Officer and Another

Civil Appeals Nos. 8284-8315 of 1996

(K. Ramaswamy, G. B. Pattanaik JJ)

06.05.1996

ORDER

1. Leave granted.,

2. We have heard learned counsel on both sides.

3. Notification under Section 4(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (1 of 1894) (for short, 'the Act') was published on 2-1-1975. The Land Acquisition Officer in his award under Section 11 determined the compensation on 19-5-1980. On reference under Section 18 the Assistant Judge enhanced the compensation by his award and decree made under Section 26 on 20-8-1983. Thereafter the State carried the matter in appeal but the claimants did not. The High Court by judgment dated 22-8-1984 dismissed the appeals. Subsequently, the appellants came to file applications under Order 47 Rule 1 and Section 151 CPC for amendment of the decree to award benefits of Sections 23(1-A), 23(2) and 28 of the Act as amended by Central Act 68 of 1984. Though the Court has amended the decree, the High Court in revision set aside the order by judgment and order dated 11-10-1995 made in FAs Nos. 1303-1317 and batch. Thus these appeals by special leave.

4. Shri Dushyant Dave, learned Senior Counsel for the appellants, contended that in view of the ratio laid down in *Raja Shatrungi v. Mohd. Azmat Azim Khan*, [(1971) 2 SCC 20 : 1971 Supp SCR 433] it must be held that the Reference Court has jurisdiction under Order 47 Rule 1 read with Section 151 CPC to amend the decree though the decree has become final. We are unable to accept the contention. The controversy is no longer *res integra*. This Court in *State of Maharashtra v. Maharau Srawan Hatkar* [(1995) 3 SCC 316] had considered the similar situation. Therein, the award of the Reference Court was on 25-10-1983, i.e., after the Amendment Act was introduced in Parliament. Thereafter, the order became final after the Amendment Act had come into force. Subsequently, an application was made for awarding enhanced solatium, interest and the additional amount under the aforesaid provisions. This Court had considered the controversy and held in paragraph 8 thus : (SCC p. 320)

"Thus, it would be seen that a decree having been made under Section 26(2), the civil court is left to correct only either clerical or arithmetical mistakes as envisaged expressly under Section 13-A of the Act or under Section 152 CPC. Though Section 151 CPC gives inherent power to the Court, it is intended only to prevent abuse of the process of the court or to meet the ends of justice. The present is not a case of such nature. Further, since Section 23 is an express power under which the civil court has been conferred with the jurisdiction to determine compensation, and in addition

to the market value certain percentage of the amount is directed to be awarded as envisaged under Sections 23(1-A) and 23(2) and the interest component under Section 28, the invocation of Section 151 CPC by necessary implication stands excluded."

5. In *Urban Improvement Trust v. Gokul Narain*, [(1966) 4 SCC 17 : JT (1996) 4 SCC 446] this Court once over considered the entire gamut of controversy regarding the power of the executing court to grant relief under the Act including the above judgment and held that payment of additional amount, solatium or interest are independent components payable while enhancing the compensation. The executing court cannot travel behind the award and award amended benefits.

6. A Constitution Bench of this Court in *Union of India v. Raghubir Singh* [(1989) 2 SCC 754] came to consider the effect of sub-section (2) of Section 30 of the transitory provision on which strong reliance was placed by Shri Dave. In paragraphs 33 and 34, the Constitution Bench had held that if the proceedings are pending in appeal, the Amendment Act has no application and it would be applicable only to the proceedings if they are pending before the Collector or Reference Court between 30-4-1982 to 24-9-1984. It would thus be seen that if the proceedings are pending between these dates, indisputably the appropriate course (sic court) or LAO is required to apply the provisions as amended under Act 68 of 1984. But having allowed the decree to become final, the question emerges whether it would be open to the executing court or the Reference Court to go behind the decree which becomes final to amend the self-same decree by exercising the power under Order 47 Rule 1 and Section 151 CPC. We feel that the executing court cannot go behind the decree. It would have been appropriate for the claimants to have gone in appeal and have the matter corrected, but unfortunately they did claim of the appellate remedy and allowed the decree to become final. The omission to award additional amounts under Section 23(1-A), enhanced interest under Section 28 and solatium under Section 23(2) are not clerical or arithmetical mistake crept in the award passed by the Reference Court but amounts to non-award. Under those circumstances, the Reference Court was clearly in error in entertaining the application for amendment of the decree and is devoid of power and jurisdiction to award the amounts under Sections 23(2), 23(1-A) and 28 of the Act.

7. The appeals are accordingly dismissed. No costs.