

Narindra Kumar Jain

Vs

State of M. P.

Criminal Appeal No. 678 of 1996

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

10.05.1996

JUDGMENT

1. Leave granted.

2. This appeal by special leave arises from the judgment of the Division Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court made in Criminal Appeal No. 1394 on October 15, 1986. The Magistrate has acquitted the appellant of the charges under Ss.420 and 409, I.P.C. and other offences but on appeal the High Court convicted the appellant for an offence u/s.409, I.P.C. and sentenced him to undergo imprisonment till the rising of the Court, and a fine of Rs.500/-. In default of the payment of the fine, he was directed to undergo six months' rigorous imprisonment. Since the learned counsel for the appellant had raised a question whether the deficiency is within 5% of the total quantity and since the Court had not gone into that question, we directed the State to produce the entire record. Pursuant thereto, the evidence has been made part of the record and we have carefully scanned the evidence.

3. The charge against the appellant is that he was posted as Manager of Kisan Rice Mills, Sarngarth between January 29, 1968 to October 30, 1973. During the said period, while he was in custody and management of the huge stocks of paddy entrusted to him, it was found that 1,500 quintals paddy was unaccounted for. Consequently, the charge came to be framed against him in the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate for the aforesaid offences. As stated earlier, the Magistrate acquitted him of the charges but the High Court convicted him for the offences under S.409, I.P.C. After elaborate consideration of the evidence, the High Court has recorded as under :

"In our opinion the evidence discussed above clearly establishes that 1,500 qtls. of paddy was found short in the stock which was verified in the presence of the accused. It is true that only 5% of bags were weighed out of the total quantity present. That, however, has been the matter employed and the accused never raised any objection to it. In any case, the accused was admitted the shortage vide Ex.P-13 and his explanation have been that it was due to the fact of the paddy drying. The documents proved and the oral evidence discloses that he had made false entries and showed a false transfer of this quantity of paddy to Baramkela society. In our opinion, the evidence establishes beyond doubt that the accused had misappropriated 1500 quintals of paddy entrusted to him".

4. This finding of the High Court gets ample support from the evidence of the witnesses. We are

totally in agreement with the said finding. The witnesses are disinterested official witnesses. They have no axe to grind against the appellant. P.W.1 has explained that he had physically got the stock verified every year and noted the deficiency. He also stated that it was done in the presence of the appellant accused. P.W.2 also has spoken with reference to the record of the maintenance and he was in custody of the record thereof. Under these circumstances, the evidence clearly establishes that the appellant has failed to account for 1,500 quintals of paddy entrusted to him. Therefore, the conviction of the appellant under S.409 is well justified. Though we find that the sentence imposed by the High Court was inadequate but at this distance of time, it will not be necessary to give any notice for the enhancement of the sentence.

5. The appeal is accordingly dismissed. Appeal dismissed.