

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

Messrs Suresh Chandra Khandelwal and Company

Vs

State of Madhya Pradesh and Others

Appeal (Civil) 5075 of 2006 (Arising Out of Slp (C) Nos. 26402-404 of 2005)

(Arijit Pasayat and L. S. Panta, JJ)

20.11.2006

JUDGMENT

ARIJIT PASAYAT, J.

Leave granted.

Challenge in these appeals is to the order passed by a learned Single Judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, Indore Bench, dismissing the review petition filed by the appellant.

Background facts in a nutshell are as follows:

Appellant had claimed benefit available under the compounding method in payment of entertainment duty under the provisions of the Madhya Pradesh Entertainment Duties (Advertisement Tax) Act, 1936 (in short the 'Act'). Prayer was sought for to accord the benefit with effect from 1.4.1996 in place of 1.1.1997 as was granted. It was pleaded that though the benefit was granted by order dated 20.12.1996 rightly, it was not proper to confine it for the period from 1.1.1997 to 31.3.1997 instead of from 1.4.1996 to 31.3.1997. The writ petition was dismissed on the ground that no effective relief can be granted to the writ petitioner in 2003-04 in respect of a dispute which related to the year 1996-97. The order dated 7.1.2004 passed in writ petition No.67/97 was assailed by filing a Letters Patent Appeal. According to the appellant, the filing of the LPA was

necessitated because the writ petitioner had sought permission of the Court to place reliance on the decision rendered in another Writ Petition (MP No. 3398 of 1992) dated 21.11.2000. By order dated 26.2.2002, learned Single Judge directed that the matter shall be listed, so it can be taken note of at the time of final hearing. Contrary to the order, learned Single Judge did not take note of the order passed in a similar case. The Letters Patent Appeal was disposed of inter alia with the following observations:

"Having heard learned counsel for the parties and after perusal of the record, we are of the opinion that if according to the appellant, the question posed in the appellant's writ petition stood answered by a judgment pronounced by another Single Judge and also keeping in mind that the said judgment has neither been referred to nor considered, then it would be a fit case where appellant should apply for review of the said order so as to specifically bring it to the notice of the learned Single Judge and then to advance arguments."

Accordingly, the review petition was filed on 16.8.2004 which was numbered as MCC No. 461 of 2004. The same was dismissed by the impugned order holding that review was not permissible. It was noted that in any event the decision on which reliance was placed by the appellant was not in the nature of a binding precedent.

Learned counsel for the appellant submitted that the LPA filed was not decided, because the Division Bench felt that the same can be agitated in a review petition. Contrary to what was stated by the Division Bench, learned Single Judge held that review petition was not maintainable. Consequentially, the appellant was left without a remedy.

Learned counsel for the respondents on the other hand submitted that the learned Single Judge has rightly held that the review petition was not maintainable.

We find substance in the plea of learned counsel for the appellant that it was being left without a remedy. The Division Bench declined to interfere in the matter holding that the grievance could be looked into in a review petition. Learned Single Judge observed that the review petition was not maintainable.

In the peculiar circumstances, we set aside the order of the learned Single Judge. It would be appropriate for the Division Bench to hear the LPA No. 106 of 2004.

The same shall be heard and disposed of on merits in accordance with law.

The appeals are allowed to the aforesaid extent with no order as to costs.