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Date: 28/10/2025

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Ltd. Vs Smt. Omwati and Others

First Appeal From Order No. 2489 of 2010

Court: Allahabad High Court

Date of Decision: Aug. 8, 2011

Acts Referred:
Constitution of India, 1950 â€" Article 142#Insurance Act, 1938 â€" Section 64VB#Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 â€" Section 147, 147(3), 147(5), 149, 149(1)#Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) â€" Section 279, 304A, 337

Citation: (2011) 8 ADJ 779 : (2011) 4 TAC 391

Hon'ble Judges: Shyam Shankar Tiwari, J; S.P. Mehrotra, J

Bench: Division Bench

Final Decision: Dismissed

Judgement

1. The present Appeal has been filed u/s 173 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, against the judgment and Order/Award dated 4.5.2010 passed by

the Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal, Etawah in Motor Accident Claim Case No. 518 of 2008 filed by the claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7 on

account of the death of Rajendra Singh @ Chotey in an accident which took place on 21st July, 2008 at about 4.30 P.M.

2. The case of the claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7 was that on 21st July, 2008, the said Rajendra Singh @ Chotey was going from his village

Sarai Bhopat Katekheda to Etawah on Vikram Tempo bearing Registration No. UP 75 K9253; and that the Driver of the said Vikram Tempo

was driving the same rashly and negligently; and that when the said Vikram Tempo reached about 2 kilometers on Jaswant Nagar Etawah Road

towards East of the said village, then the said Vikram Tempo overturned on account of rash and negligent driving by its Driver, as a result of which

the said Rajendra Singh @ Chotey sustained serious injuries and another person died on the spot; and that after the accident, the said Rajendra

Singh @ Chotey was admitted in the District Hospital, Etawah where after treatment for 56 hours, he was referred to Agra; and that the said

Rajendra Singh @ Chotey was admitted in B.M. Hospital, Kamla Nagar, Agra where his head was operated on 24th July, 2008; and that during

his treatment at Agra, the said Rajendra Singh @ Chotey died on 26th July, 2008; and that First Information Report in regard to the accident was

lodged in Police Station Civil Lines, District Etawah, which was registered as Case Crime No. 273 of 2008, under Sections 279, 337 and 304A

Indian Penal Code; and that the said Rajendra Singh @ Chotey was a healthy young man aged about 34 years, and he was in job as Labour in

Veer Surendra Yadav Gas Service, Tundla, District Firozabad where he was getting wages about Rs. 3500/per month, and he was also earning

Rs. 2000/per month from agriculture.

3. The said Vikram Tempo has hereinafter been also referred to as ""the vehicle in question"".

4. Despite sufficient service, the owner of the vehicle in question, namely, Netrapal (Respondent No. 8 herein)did not put in appearance nor was

any Written Statement filed on his behalf, and therefore, the proceedings against him were continued exparte.

5. The Appellant Insurance Company filed its Written Statement denying the averments made in the Claim Petition.

6. The Appellant Insurance Company further stated that no cause of action arose to the claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7 for filing Claim Petition

against the Appellant Insurance Company.

7. The Appellant Insurance Company further denied the occurrence of the alleged accident, and also disputed the salary and age of the deceased

Rajendra Singh @ Chotey. The Appellant Insurance Company further stated that the Driver of the vehicle in question was not having valid Driving

Licence at the time of the alleged accident nor were the Permit, Registration and Insurance etc. in respect of the vehicle in question were valid. The

Appellant Insurance Company further stated that the owner of the vehicle in question (Respondent No. 8 herein) violated the terms and conditions

of the Insurance Policy.

8. The Tribunal framed four issues in the Claim Case.

Issue No. 1 was regarding factum of the accident having taken place on 21st July, 2008 at about 4.30 P.M. on account of rash and negligent

driving by the Driver of the vehicle in question (i.e. the Vikram Tempo), due to which the said Rajendra Singh @ Chotey sustained injuries, and

consequently died.

Issue No. 2 was as to whether the vehicle in question (i.e. the Vikram Tempo) was not insured with the Appellant Insurance Company at the time

of the alleged accident.

Issue No. 3 was as to whether the Driver of the vehicle in question (i.e. the Vikram Tempo) was not having valid and effective Driving Licence at

the time of the accident.

Issue No. 4 was as to whether the claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7 were entitled to get any compensation, and if yes, the quantum of such

compensation and against which opposite party in the Claim Petition.

9. The claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7 and the Appellant Insurance Company led oral and documentary evidence in support of their respective

cases.

10. Having considered the material on record, the Tribunal recorded its findings on various issues.

11. As regards Issue No. 1, the Tribunal decided the said Issue in the affirmative in favour of the claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7. The Tribunal

held that the claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7 succeeded in proving that the accident in question took place on account of rash and negligent

driving by the Driver of the vehicle in question (i.e. the Vikram Tempo), as a result of which, the said Rajendra Singh @ Chotey sustained injuries,

and consequently died.

12. As regards Issue No. 2, the Tribunal held that the vehicle in question was validly insured with the Appellant Insurance Company at the time of

the accident. Issue No. 2 was decided accordingly.

13. As regards Issue No. 3, the Tribunal held that the Driver of the vehicle in question was not having valid Driving Licence at the time of the

accident. Issue No. 3 was decided accordingly.

14. As regards Issue No. 4, the Tribunal awarded compensation amounting to Rs. 3,75,015/with interest at the rate of 6% per annum with effect

from the date of filing of the Claim Petition till the date of actual payment. The Tribunal held that keeping in view the fact that the Driver of the

vehicle in question was not having valid Driving Licence on the date of the accident, and having regard to the circumstances of the claimant

Respondent Nos. 1 to 7, it would be proper that the entire amount of compensation be paid by the Appellant Insurance Company, and thereafter

the Appellant Insurance Company would recover the same from the owner of the vehicle in question (i.e. the Respondent No. 8 herein).

15. In view of the above findings, the Tribunal passed the impugned judgment and Order/Award dated 4.5.2010, interalia, awarding compensation

to the claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7 amounting to Rs. 3,75,015/with interest at the rate of 6; per annum with effect from the date of filing of the

Claim Petition (i.e. 13.8.2008) till the date of actual payment.

16. The Tribunal, further directed that the payment of the entire amount of compensation would in the first instance be made by the Appellant

Insurance Company, and thereafter, the Appellant Insurance Company would be entitled to recover the same from the owner of the vehicle in

question, namely, Netrapal (i.e. the Respondent No. 8 herein).

17. We have heard Sri Rahul Sahai, learned Counsel for the Appellant Insurance Company, and Shri R.K. Porwal, learned Counsel for the

claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7, and perused the record.

18. Sri Rahul Sahai, learned Counsel for the Appellant Insurance Company submits that having held that the aforesaid vehicle in question was

being run against the terms and conditions of the Insurance Policy, the Tribunal erred in directing the Appellant Insurance Company to pay the

amount of compensation and thereafter recover the same from the owner of the vehicle in question, i.e., Respondent No. 8 herein.

19. Sri Rahul Sahai submits that in any case, the interest of the Appellant Insurance Company as against the owner of the vehicle in question

(Respondent No. 8 herein) should have been properly secured so that after making the payment of compensation under the impugned award, the

Appellant Insurance Company would be able to recover the same from the owner of the aforesaid vehicle in question. Sri Rahul Sahai has relied

upon the following decisions in this regard:

1. Oriental Insurance Company Ltd. v. Sri Nanjappan and Ors. 2004 (2) TAC 12 (SC)

2. National Insurance Company v. Challa Bharathamma 2005 (1) TAC 4 (SC)

20. We have considered the submissions made by Sri Rahul Sahai, learned Counsel for the Appellant Insurance Company.

21. As regards the submission made by Sri Rahul Sahai that the Tribunal erred in directing the Insurance company to make the payment of

compensation and thereafter recover the same from the owner of the vehicle in question, it is pertinent to refer to the relevant provisions of the

Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

22. Sub section (5) of Section 147 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 lays down as under:

147. Requirements of policies and limits of liability (1) to(4)....

(5) Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for the time being in force, an insurer issuing a policy of insurance under this section shall be

liable to indemnify the person or classes of persons specified in the policy in respect of any liability which the policy purports to cover in the case of

that person or those classes of persons.

23. The above quoted provision thus provides that an insurer issuing a policy of insurance u/s 147 of the said Act, shall be liable to indemnify the

person or classes of persons specified in the policy in respect of any liability which the policy purports to cover in the case of that person or those

classes of persons.

24. Sub section (1) of Section 149 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 provides as follows:

149. Duty of insurers to satisfy Judgments and awards against persons insured in respect of third party risks (1) If, after a certificate of insurance

has been issued under Sub-section (3) of Section 147 in favour of the person by whom a policy has been effected, judgment or award in respect

of any such liability as is required to be covered by a policy under Clause (b) of Sub-section (1) of Section 147 (being a liability covered by the

terms of the policy) [or under the provisions of Section 163A is obtained against any person insured by the policy, then, notwithstanding that the

insurer may be entitled to avoid or cancel or may have avoided or cancelled the policy, the insurer shall, subject to the provisions of this section,

pay to the person entitled to the benefit of the decree any sum not exceeding the sum assured payable there under, as if he were the judgment

debtor, in respect of the liability, together with any amount payable in respect of costs and any sum payable in respect of interest on that sum by

virtue of any enactment relating to interest on judgments.

(2) to (7)....

25. The above quoted provision thus provides that in case any judgment or award is obtained against any person insured by the policy, then the

insurer shall pay to the person entitled to the benefit of the decree any sum not exceeding the sum assured payable there under, as if he were the

judgment debtor, in respect of the liability, together with any amount payable in respect of costs and interest. This will be so even though the insurer

may be entitled to avoid or cancel or may have avoided or cancelled the policy.

26. In view of the above provisions, we are of the opinion that the directions given by the Tribunal requiring the Appellant Insurance Company to

make the deposit of compensation awarded under the impugned award and thereafter recover the same from the owner of the aforesaid vehicle in

question, is in accordance with law, and the same does not suffer from any infirmity.

27. The above conclusion is supported by various decisions of the Apex Court:

1. Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd. v. Inderjit Kaur and Ors. AIR 1998 SC 588.

2. National Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Swaran Singh and Others,

3. National Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Laxmi Narain Dhut,

4. Prem Kumari and Ors. v. Prahlad Dev and Ors. 2008 (1) T.A.C. 803 (SC).

28. In Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd. v. Indrajit Kaur and Ors. AIR 1998 SC 588, their Lordships of the Supreme Court opined as under

(paragraph 7 of the said AIR):

7. We have, therefore, this position. Despite the bar created by Section 64VB of the Insurance Act, the Appellant, an authorised insurer, issued a

policy of insurance to cover the bus without receiving the premium therefore. By reason of the provisions of Sections. 147(5) and 149(1) of the

Motor Vehicles Act, the Appellant became liable to indemnify third parties in respect of the liability which that policy covered and to satisfy awards

of compensation in respect thereof notwithstanding its entitlement (upon which we do not express any opinion) to avoid or cancel the policy for the

reason that the cheque issued in payment of the premium thereon had not been honoured.

(Emphasis supplied)

29. This decision thus supports the conclusion mentioned above on the basis of Sections 147(5) and 149(1) of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

30. In National Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Swaran Singh and Others, their Lordships of the Supreme Court held as follows(paragraph 105 of the said

AIR):

105. The summary of our findings to the various issues as raised in these petitions is as follows:

(i) Chapter XI of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 providing compulsory insurance of vehicles against third party risks is a social welfare legislation to

extend relief by compensation to victims of accidents caused by use of motor vehicles. The provisions of compulsory insurance coverage of all

vehicles are with this paramount object and the provisions of the Act have to be so interpreted as to effectuate the said object.

(ii) An insurer is entitled to raise a defence in a claim petition filed u/s 163A or Section 166 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, interalia, in terms of

Section 149(2)(a)(ii) of the said Act.

(iii) The breach of policy condition e.g., disqualification of the driver or invalid driving licence of the driver, as contained in Sub-section (2)(a)(ii) of

Section 149, has to be proved to have been committed by the insured for avoiding liability by the insurer. Mere absence, fake or invalid driving

licence or disqualification of the driver for driving at the relevant time, are not in themselves defences available to the insurer against either the

insured or the third parties. To avoid its liability towards the insured, the insurer has to prove that the insured was guilty of negligence and failed to

exercise reasonable care in the matter of fulfilling the condition of the policy regarding use of vehicles by a duly licensed driver or one who was not

disqualified to drive at the relevant time.

(iv) Insurance Companies, however, with a view to avoid their liability must not only establish the available defence(s) raised in the said

proceedings but must also establish "breach" on the part of the owner of the vehicles; the burden of proof where for would be on them.

(v) The Court cannot lay down any criteria as to how the said burden would be discharged, inasmuch as the same would depend upon the facts

and circumstances of each case.

(vi) Even where the insurer is able to prove breach on the part of the insured concerning the policy condition regarding holding of a valid licence by

the driver or his qualification to drive during the relevant period, the insurer would not be allowed to avoid its liability towards the insured unless the

said breach or breaches on the condition of driving licence is/are so fundamental as are found to have contributed to the cause of the accident. The

Tribunals in interpreting the policy conditions would apply "" the rule of main purpose"" and the concept of ""fundamental breach"" to allow defences

available to the insurer u/s 149(2) of the Act.

(vii) The question, as to whether the owner has taken reasonable care to find out as to whether the driving licence produced by the driver,(a fake

one or otherwise), does not fulfil the requirements of law or not will have to be determined in each case.

(viii) If a vehicle at the time of accident was driven by a person having a learner"s licence, the insurance Companies would be liable to satisfy the

decree.

(ix) The claims tribunal constituted u/s 165 read with Section 168 is empowered to adjudicate all claims in respect of the accidents involving death

or of bodily injury or damage to property of third party arising in use of motor vehicle. The said power of the tribunal is not restricted to decide the

claims inter se between claimant or claimants on one side and insured, insurer and driver on the other. In the course of adjudicating the claim for

compensation and to decide the availability of defence or defences to the insurer, the Tribunal has necessarily the power and jurisdiction to decide

disputes inter se between the insurer and the insured. The decision rendered on the claims and disputes inter se between the insurer and insured in

the course of adjudication of claim for compensation by the claimants and the award made thereon is enforceable and executable in the same

manner as provided in Section 174 of the Act for enforcement and execution of the award in favour of the claimants.

(x) Where on adjudication of the claim under the Act the tribunal arrives at a conclusion that the insurer has satisfactorily proved its defence in

accordance with the provisions of Sections 149(2) read with Sub-section (7), as interpreted by this Court above, the Tribunal can direct that the

insurer is liable to be reimbursed by the insured for the compensation and other amounts which it has been compelled to pay to the third party

under the award of the tribunal. Such determination of claim by the Tribunal will be enforceable and the money found due to the insurer from the

insured will be recoverable on a certificate issued by the tribunal to the Collector in the same manner u/s 174 of the Act as arrears as land revenue.

The certificate will be issued for the recovery as arrears of land revenue only if, as required by Sub-section (3) of Section 168 of the Act the

insured fails to deposit the amount awarded in favour of the insurer within thirty days from the date of announcement of the award by the tribunal.

(xi) The provisions contained in Sub-section (4) with the proviso there under and Sub-section (5) which are intended to cover specified

contingencies mentioned therein to enable the insurer to recover amount paid under the contract of insurance on behalf of the insured can be taken

recourse to by the Tribunal and be extended to claims and defences of the insurer against the insured by relegating them to the remedy before

regular court in cases where on given facts and circumstances adjudication of their claims inter se might delay the adjudication of the claims of the

victims.

(Emphasis supplied)

31. Proposition Nos. (vi) and (x), reproduced above support the conclusion that the direction given by the Tribunal in the award impugned in the

present case is in accordance with law.

32. In National Insurance Co. Ltd. v. Laxmi Narain Dhut 2007 (2) T.A.C. 398 (S.C.), their Lordships of the Supreme Court considered the

decision in National Insurance Co. Ltd. v. Swaran Singh (supra) and held as under (paragraph 35 of the said TAC):

35. As noted above, the conceptual difference between third party right and own damage cases has to be kept in view. Initially, the burden is on

the insurer to prove that the license was a fake one. Once it is established the natural consequences have to flow.

In view of the above analysis the following situations emerge:

(1) The decision in Swaran Singh''s case (supra) has no application to cases other than third party risks.

(2) Where originally the license was fake one, renewal cannot cure the inherent fatality.

(3) In case of third party risks the insure r has to indemnify the amount and if so advised to recover the same from the insured.

(4) The concept of purposive interpretation has no application to cases relatable to Section 149 of the Act.

The High Courts/Commissions shall now consider the matter afresh in the light of the position in law as delineated above.

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

(Emphasis supplied)

33. In view of the above decision, it is evident that in case of third party risks, the decision in National Insurance Co. Ltd. v. Swaran Singh and

Ors. (supra) would apply, and the insurer has to indemnify the amount to the third party and thereafter may recover the same from the insured.

34. In Prem Kumari and Ors. v. Prahlad Dev and Ors., 2008 (1) T.A.C. 803 (S.C.), their Lordships of the Supreme Court have reiterated the

view expressed in National Insurance Company Limited. v. Laxmi Narain Dhut''s case (supra) explaining the decision in National Insurance

Company Limited v. Swaran Singh and Ors. (supra), and held as under (paragraphs 8 and 9 of the said TAC):

8. The effect and implication of the principles laid down in Swaran Singh''s case (supra) has been considered and explained by one of us (Dr.

Justice Arijit Pasayat) in National Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Laxmi Narain Dhut, The following conclusion in para 38 are relevant:

38. In view of the above analysis the following situations emerge:

(1) The decision in Swaran Singh''s case (supra) has no application to cases other than third party risks.

(2) Where originally the license was a fake one, renewal cannot cure the inherent fatality.

(3) In case of third party risks the insurer has to indemnify the amount, and if so advised, to recover the same from the insured.

(4) The concept of purposive interpretation has no application to cases relatable to Section 149 of the Act.

9. In the subsequent decision The Oriental Insurance Company Limited Vs. Meena Variyal and Others, which is also a two Judge Bench while

considering the ratio laid down in Swaran Singh''s case (supra) concluded that in a case where a person is not a third party within the meaning of

the Act, the Insurance Company cannot be made automatically liable merely by resorting to Swaran Singh''s case (supra). While arriving at such a

conclusion the Court extracted the analysis as mentioned in para 38 of Laxmi Narain Dhut (supra) and agreed with the same. In view of

consistency, we reiterate the very same principle enunciated in Laxmi Narain Dhut (supra) with regard t o interpretation and applicability of Swaran

Singh''s case (supra)

(Emphasis supplied)

35. In view of the above decisions, it is evident that the directions given by the Tribunal requiring the Appellant Insurance Company to deposit the

amount awarded under the impugned award in the first instance, and thereafter, recover the same from the owner of the vehicle in question, are

valid and legal.

36. Sri Rahul Sahai, learned Counsel for the Appellant Insurance Company, however, submits that the above decisions have been given by their

Lordships of the Supreme Court in view of Article 142 of the Constitution of India, and the Tribunal has no power to give such directions as have

been given by the Supreme Court in the above decisions.

37. We have considered the above submission made by Sri Rahul Sahai, and we are unable to accept the same.

38. A perusal of the various judgments of the Apex Court, referred to above, shows that the decisions are based on consideration of the relevant

provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

39. In Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd. v. Inderjit Kaur and Ors., AIR 1998 SC 588 (supra), reference was made to the provisions of Sub-section (5)

of Section 147 and Sub-section (1) of Section 149 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

40. Proposition Nos. (i),(vi) and (x) in National Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Swaran Singh and Others, , lay down that in view of the provisions of the

Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the Tribunal has power to give direction to the insurer to deposit the amount awarded and thereafter recover the same

from the owner of the vehicle.

41. It will thus be noticed that the decisions referred to above are based on consideration of the relevant provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act,

1988. The submission made by Sri Rahul Sahai that the decisions are based on Article 142 of the Constitution of India cannot, therefore, be

accepted.

42. As regards the submission made by Sri Rahul Sahai that the interest of the Appellant Insurance Company should be protected as against the

owner of the vehicle in question (Respondent No. 8 herein) so that in case the Appellant Insurance Company deposits the amount of

compensation, it may be able to recover the same from the owner of the aforesaid vehicle in question, it is pertinent to refer to the decisions relied

upon by Sri Rahul Sahai.

43. In Oriental Insurance Company Ltd. v. Sri Nanjappan and Ors., 2004 (2) T.A.C.12 (SC) (supra), their Lordships of the Supreme Court

opined as under (Paragraph 7 of the said T.A.C.):

7. Therefore, while setting aside the judgment of the High Court we direct in terms of what has been stated in Baljit Kaur"s case 2004 (1) T.A.C.

366 (SC) (supra) that the insurer shall pay the quantum of compensation fixed by Tribunal, about which there was no dispute raised to the

Respondents claimants within three months from today. For the purpose of recovering the same from the insured, the insurer shall not be required

to file a suit. It may initiate a proceeding before the concerned Executing Courtas if the dispute between the insurer and the owner was the subject

matter of determination before the Tribunal and the issue is decided against the owner and in favour of the insurer. Before release of the amount to

the insured, owner of the vehicle shall be issued a notice and he shall be required to furnish security for the entire amount which the insurer will pay

to the claimants. The offending vehicle shall be attached, as a part of the security. If necessity arises the Executing Court shall take assistance of the

concerned Regional Transport Authority. The Executing Court shall pass appropriate orders in accordance with law as to the manner in which the

insured, owner of the vehicle shall make payment to the insurer. In case there is any default it shall be open to the Executing Court to direct

realisation by disposal of the securities to be furnished or from any other property or properties of the owner of the vehicle, the insured. The appeal

is disposed of in the aforesaid terms, with no order as to costs.

(Emphasis supplied)

44. In National Insurance Company v. Challa Bharathamma, 2005 (1) T.A.C. 4 (SC) (supra), it was laid down as follows (Paragraph 13 of the

said T.A.C):

The residual question is what would be the appropriate direction. Considering the beneficial object of the Act, it would be proper for the insurer to

satisfy the award, though in law it has no liability. In some cases the insurer has been given the option and liberty to recover the amount from the

insured. For the purpose of recovering the amount paid from the owner, the insurer shall not be required to file a suit. It may initiate a proceeding

before the concerned Executing Court as if the dispute between the insurer and the owner was the subject matter of determination before the

Tribunal and the issue is decided against the owner and in favour of the insurer. Before release of the amount to the claimants, owner of the

offending vehicle shall furnish security for the entire amount which the insurer will pay to the claimants. The offending vehicle shall be attached, as a

part of the security. If necessity arises the Executing Court shall take assistance of the concerned Regional Transport Authority. The Executing

Court shall pass appropriate orders in accordance with law as to the manner in which the owner of the vehicle shall make payment to the insurer.

In case there is any default it shall be open to the Executing Court to direct realisation by disposal of the securities to be furnished or from any

other property or properties of the owner of the vehicle i.e. the insured. In the instant case considering the Quantum involved we leave it to the

discretion of the insurer to decide whether it would take steps for recovery of the amount from the insured.

(Emphasis supplied)

45. In our opinion, the directions contemplated in the above decisions may be sought by the Appellant Insurance Company before the Executing

Court when the Appellant Insurance Company, after depositing the amount awarded under the impugned award, moves appropriate application

before the Executing Court to recover the said amount from the insured person, i.e. the owner of the vehicle in question (Respondent No. 8

herein), while the claimant files an application for the execution of the award or for the release of the amount deposited by the Appellant Insurance

Company. We are refraining from expressing any opinion in this regard.

46. We may, however, refer to two decisions of this Court wherein the above decisions of the Supreme Court have been considered.

47. In Smt. Bhuri and Ors. v. Smt. Shobha Rani and Ors. 2007 (1) T.A.C. 20 (All.), a learned Single Judge of this Court held as under

(paragraph 5 of the said T.A.C.):

5. From the aforesaid case law, as referred to by the learned Counsel for the parties, it would be evident that in spite of the fact that the insurer is

not made liable to compensate the claimants under the policy u/s 149 of the Motor Vehicles Act, still the liability of payment, under the law as

developed by the Apex Court in this context, has been assigned to the Insurance Company. At the same time, the Insurance Company has also

been given liberty to recover the said amount from the insured within the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act itself and without taking the burden

of filing a suit for that purpose. This principle of law was initially propounded in Baljit Kaur"s case (supra) and it has been followed in the aforesaid

cases referred to by the parties concerned. But in the subsequent cases more especially in Nanjappan"s case (supra) it has also been observed that

before releasing the amount under deposit before the Court the insured/owner of the vehicle shall be issued a notice and he shall be required to

furnish security for the entire amount which the Insurance Company will pay to the claimants. After that notice the Court may direct the attachment

of the offending vehicle as part of the security and could also pass appropriate orders in accordance with law. In case of default it shall be open to

the Court to direct realisation of the amount from the insured/owner by disposal of security or from any other property or properties of the owner

of the vehicle. Therefore, all these modes have been provided by the Apex Court for the insurer to make recovery from the insured. But from all

these directions as given by the Apex Court, the purport is that the Court shall not undermine the interest of the claimants for whose welfare the

Supreme Court has been developing this law through all these cases even by interpreting otherwise the liability of the insurer with Section 149 of

the Motor Vehicles Act. Thus, what is the crux of the matter in the present case is that the revisionist"s claimants cannot be made to suffer even if

the insured/owner of the vehicle does not furnish security or does not appear before the Court in pursuance to the notice issued to him. The burden

of recovering the amount within the provisions of the Act itself has been placed upon the insurer in the aforesaid judgments of the Apex Court. The

claimants who have obtained the award in their favour have not been made to suffer through any observation made by the Supreme Court in these

cases. Thus, in the aforesaid view of the matter, what I feel is that it would be just and proper if the Court below is directed to first take resort to

the issuance of notice to the insured/owner of the vehicle and thereafter only the money under deposit before the Court should be released in

favour of the claimants.

(Emphasis supplied)

48. In National Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Smt. Khursheeda Bano and Others, a Division Bench of this Court laid down as follows (paragraph 4 of

the said A.W.C.):

4. Learned Counsel has cited the judgment of the Supreme Court in National Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Challa Bharathamma and Others, to establish

that the claim of the insurance company should be secured by the owner. We have no quarrel with such proposition. What we want to say is that

unless and until an appropriate application in the selfsame proceeding is made by the insurance company for the purpose of recovery, the question

of furnishing security by the owner cannot arise. Such situation is yet to ripe. At this stage, we are only concerned with the payment of

compensation to the claimants which cannot be stalled and has got nothing to do with the dispute regarding liability between the owner and the

insurance company. The sufferer is a third party. Moreover, in such judgment, the Division Bench of the Supreme Court has categorically held

considering the beneficial object of the Act, it would be proper for the insurer to satisfy the award, though in law it has no liability."" In effect it is a

stopgap arrangement to satisfy the award as soon as it is passed. The judgment of 3 Judges" Bench of the Supreme Court in National Insurance

Co. Ltd. Vs. Swaran Singh and Others, also speaks in para 110 that the Tribunal can direct that the insurer is liable to be reimbursement by the

insured for the compensation and other amounts which it has been compelled to pay to the third party under the award of the Tribunal. Therefore,

the intention of the Legislature as well as the interpretation by the Supreme Court and different High Courts is well settled to the extent that under

no circumstances payment of compensation to the claimants will be stalled. Even at the cost of the repetition we say, it has nothing to do with the

dispute with regard to liability of owner or insurer, which can be considered in the separate application in the selfsame cause or in an execution

application in connection thereto to be initiated by the insurance company.

(Emphasis supplied)

49. In view of the above discussion, we are of the opinion that the Tribunal did not commit any illegality in directing the Appellant Insurance

Company to make deposit of the amount of compensation, and recover the same from the insured person i.e. the owner of the vehicle in question

Respondent No. 8 herein.

50. After making deposit of the amount awarded under the impugned award, it will be open to the Appellant Insurance Company to initiate

appropriate proceedings for recovery of the amount from the owner of the aforesaid vehicle in question (Respondent No. 8 herein), and seek

appropriate directions in such proceedings.

51. It is made clear that in case any appeal is filed by the claimant Respondent Nos. 1 to 7 or by the owner of the aforesaid vehicle in question

(Respondent No. 8 herein), it will be open to the Appellant Insurance Company to contest the same on the grounds legally open to the Appellant

Insurance Company.

52. The amount of Rs. 25,000/deposited by the Appellant Insurance Company while filing the present appeal, will be remitted to the Tribunal for

being adjusted towards the amount to be deposited by the Appellant Insurance Company, as per the directions given in the impugned award.

53. Subject to the above observations, the Appeal filed by the Appellant Insurance Company is dismissed.

54. However, on the facts and in the circumstances of the case, there will be no order as to costs.