

Prakash Saha Vs The State of Jharkhand and Others

Court: Jharkhand High Court

Date of Decision: Nov. 20, 2010

Acts Referred: Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 " Section 20

Citation: (2011) 1 JLJR 288

Hon'ble Judges: Poonam Srivastav, J

Bench: Single Bench

Final Decision: Dismissed

Judgement

Poonam Srivastav, J.

Heard Sri J.P. Jha, Sr. Advocate assisted by Sri S.P. Jha, Junior counsel for the petitioner and Junior Counsel to

S.C. (Mines) on behalf of the opposite parties.

2. A writ petition (W.P.(S) No. 933 of 2002 was filed by the father of the petitioner, which was disposed of on 5th March 2002 with direction to

the opposite parties to consider the case of the petitioner and decide his representation within 45 days from the date, the order is brought to his

notice. It is further contended that the father of the petitioner filed presentation, which was kept pending, hence a cont. (Civil) Case No. 401 of

2003 was preferred. The said contempt was dismissed in default vide order date 25th June 2004.

3. The learned Counsel appearing for the petitioner states that since there is no provision for restoration under the Contempt Act, therefore, no

restoration petition was filed. Another writ petition was filed numbered as W.P.(S) No. 519 of 2003, Sahdeo Saha & Shiva Ramjee Mishra

versus State of Jharkhand and others. This writ petition was dismissed vide order dated 26th March 2003 with an observation that in case the

representation was not decided in conformity with the direction given in the previous writ petition, proper remedy available to the petitioner is to file

contempt application and, therefore, second writ petition was not maintainable. Pursuant to the aforesaid order the instant contempt application has

been filed in the year 2009. Show cause has been filed by the S.C. (Mines) stating therein that the representation has been decided by the

Department of Science and Technology, Nepal House, Doranda, Ranchi vide order dated 27th January 2010 by the Director, Department of

Science and Technology, Dr. Arun Kumar, who was working as Director at the relevant time and thus contempt, if any, stands purged.

4. Learned Sr. Counsel has emphatically stressed that since the representation was decided after a lapse of 7 (seven) years, it amounts to a gross

act of contempt he has disobeyed specific directions of the Court and proceedings are liable to be drawn against him. The representation was

decided very late i.e. after seven years and consequently disobedience of the order to decide representation within prescribed period makes the

opposite party liable for contempt. This fact has been disputed by the counsel appearing on behalf of the opposite parties stating that since the act

of contempt, if any as alleged by the petitioner stands purged, the contempt application is liable to be dismissed on this ground alone.

5. I have heard the respective counsel at length and perused the entire words. The order which is Said to be violated was passed on 5th March

2002; the contempt petition preferred the year 2003 was dismissed on 25th June 2004 for want of prosecution and thereafter nothing was done

for a considerable length of time.

6. The second contempt application was filed only in the year 2009. The first question that arises is that whether a second contempt application for

the same act is maintainable or not. Secondly section 20 of the Contempt of Courts Act provides a period of limitation. It is settled that no notice

can be issued on an application for contempt and no proceedings can be initiated, either on its own motion or otherwise, after the expiry of a

period of one year from the date on which the contempt is alleged to have been committed. This matter stands settled in the case of Hari Nandan

Agrawal and Another Vs. S.N. Pandita and Others, , which has also been approved in a catena of decisions by the Apex Court.

7. Thirdly, since this contempt application has not yet been admitted and Dr. Arun Kumar, who has. decided the representation was not the person

on whom copy of the order was served at any point of time; there is no assertion whatsoever by the petitioner that the order was served on the

opposite party and he deliberately did not decide the representation, where by it amounts to a "willful disobedience" for non-compliance of the

direction or breach of an undertaking given to the Court. This argument of the learned counsel is devoid of substance. In the case of Anil Ratan

Sarkar and Others Vs. Hirak Ghosh and Others, , the Hon^{ble} Supreme Court has held that mere disobedience of an order of a Court may not

be sufficient to amount to a civil contempt, the element of ^{willfulness} is an indispensable requirement to bring home the charge within the

Act.

8. I have considered all these aspects narrated above and have come to a conclusion that the instant contempt application is much beyond time

secondly the order has already been complied with and the grievance that the representation has been decided after 7 (seven) years is absolutely

without any substance, since the contempt application itself was filed in the year 2009 for an alleged disobedience of an order passed in the year

2002; previous contempt was dismissed in the year 2003; assuming the argument of the learned senior counsel to be correct that there is no

provision for restoration, yet the counsel contempt application had to be filed, it ought to have been done immediately in the year 2003 itself.

Instead the petitioner waited for a period of 6 years himself, therefore, if the representation was decided after 7 years, it cannot be said that the

opposite party had knowledge about the order of this Court or any breach of an undertaking was committed by him and, therefore, the opposite

party cannot be held liable for any act, which could amount to bring down the prestige of the Court in the eyes of general public.

9. The contempt application is listed for admission. Notices have not been issued so far, but since matter was heard at length, in my view, the

contempt application is liable to be dismissed on the question of limitation itself as well as it goes without saying that the observation made above is

sufficient to hold that there is no merit in the instant contempt application. No case of deliberate disobedience is made out.

10. It is, accordingly, dismissed.