

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH, BILASPUR**ACQA No. 185 of 2018**

Jethu Sahu, S/o Shri Man Singh, aged about 47 Years, R/o- Vijyapuram Colony, Phase-I, House No. 7, Seepat Raod, Naya Sarkanda, Bilaspur, P.S. Sarkanda, District- Bilaspur (C.G.)

---- Appellant

Versus

Vikas Bhimnani, S/o Gokul Das Bhimnani, aged about 45 Years, R/o- Pooja Apartment, Muktidham Chowk, Sarkanda, P.S. Sarkanda, Tahsil & District- Bilaspur (C.G.)

--Respondent

For Appellant	:	Mr. Vinod Kumar Tekam, Advocate.
For Respondent	:	Mr. Atanu Ghosh, Advocate

Hon'ble Shri Justice Ram Prasanna Sharma

Order on Board

9-1-2019

1) This appeal is preferred under Section 378 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 against order dated 07.03.2018 passed by Judicial Magistrate First Class, Bilaspur, District- Bilaspur (C.G.) in Criminal Case No. 8733/2015, whereby the said court dismissed the complaint filed under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instrument Act, 1881 for want of prosecution.

2) It appears from the order-sheet of the said court that the case was fixed on 07.03.2018 for appearance of the respondent. When case was fixed for appearance of the respondent, presence of the appellant/ complainant was not compulsory.

3) In the matter of **Associated Cement Co. Ltd. Vs. Keshvanand** reported in **(1998) 1 SCC 687**, Hon'ble the Apex Court held as under:-

“18. Reading the Section in its entirety would reveal that two constraints are imposed on the court for exercising the power under the Section. First is, if the court thinks that in a situation it is proper to adjourn the hearing then the Magistrate shall not acquit the accused. Second is, when the Magistrate considers that personal attendance of the complainant is not necessary on that day the Magistrate has the power to dispense with his attendance and proceed with the case. When the Court notices that the complainant is absent on a particular day the court must consider whether personal attendance of the complainant is essential on that day for progress of the case and also whether the situation does not justify the case being adjourned to another date due to any other reason. If the situation does not justify the case being adjourned the Court is free to dismiss the complaint and acquit the accused. But if the presence of the complainant on that day was quite unnecessary then resorting to the step of axing down the complaint may not be a proper exercise of the power envisaged in the section. The discretion must, therefore be exercised judicially and fairly without impairing the cause of administration of criminal justice.”

4) Again, in the matter of **Mohd. Azeem Vs. A. Venkatesh & another** reported in **(2002) 7 SCC 726**, Hon'ble the Apex Court held that in a proceeding under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, the single default with respect to the

petitioner/ complainant, the dismissal of the complaint case is not proper, legal and justified.

5) In view of this Court, all the cases should decide on merit and not send the case to record room without deciding the issues between the parties and without providing opportunity to adduce evidence. Dismissal of complaint was not the only option before the trial court. The trial court should have adjourned the case for some other dates as provided under Section 256 (1) of Cr.P.C. but that is not done in the present case, therefore, order passed by the trial court is not sustainable.

6) Accordingly, order passed by the trial court is set aside allowing the appeal. The trial court is directed to proceed with the case in accordance with law after providing opportunity to both side to adduce evidence, thereafter, the trial court shall proceed with the case and decide the issue between the parties on merit.

7) Both the parties shall appear before the trial court on 19th February, 2019 and the trial court shall proceed further.

8) Record of the court below be sent back immediately.

Sd/-
(Ram Prasanna Sharma)
Judge

Raju