

NAFR

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH, BILASPUR**Criminal Misc. Petition No.197 of 2020**

- Ranjeet Singh S/o Late Shri Kameshwar Singh Aged About 38 Years Caste Rajput, Pro. Singh Enterprises Larangsai Chowk Nagar Ambikapur, Police Station And Tahsil Ambikapur, District Surguja Chhattisgarh.

---- **Petitioner****Versus**

- Smt. Neha Singh W/o Pankaj Singh, Aged About 38 Years Caste Rajpur, R/o Village Thakurpur Varshana Apartment Thakurpur, Post, Police Staiton And Tahsil Surajpur District - Surajpur Chhattisgarh.

---- **Respondent**

 For the Petitioner : Shri Govind Dewangan, Advocate
 For the Respondent : --

Hon'ble Shri Justice Ram Prasanna Sharma**Order On Board****21.01.2020**

1. Heard on application under Section 378(4) of CrPC for grant of leave to appeal.
2. On due consideration, leave is granted.
3. This petition has been preferred against Order dated 24.12.2019 passed by Judicial Magistrate First Class, Ambikapur (CG) in Complaint Case No. 454/2017, filed under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, wherein the said Court dismissed the complaint filed by the petitioner for want of prosecution.
4. It appears from the order sheet that the respondent is still unserved but the case was fixed for appearance of the respondent. As the case was fixed for appearance of the

respondent and notice is still unserved, presence of the petitioner is not compulsory.

5. Dismissal of the complaint case was not the only option before the trial Court. It should have adjourned the case for some other date as per the provisions of Section 256(1) CrMP. The trial Court should have proceeded to issue summon for service against the respondent, but that is not done and the case was dismissed even when the respondent is unserved. The trial Court should have made efforts for appearance of the respondent and thereafter should have proceeded to hear the case on merits after providing opportunity of adducing evidence to both sides.

6. 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.”

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 in appearance on the part of the complainant, the dismissal of the complaint case is not proper, legal and justified.

7. The procedure adopted by the trial Court is not proper. Accordingly, order passed by the trial Court is set aside by allowing the petition. The trial Court is directed to proceed with the case and decide the issues between the parties after recording the evidence of both sides and after hearing both parties. After appearance of the respondent, the trial Court is directed to proceed with the case on merits.

8. The petitioner to appear before the trial Court on **27.02.2020** for further proceedings.

Sd/-
(Ram Prasanna Sharma)
JUDGE