

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 06.01.2021

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE S.M.SUBRAMANIAM

C.M.P.No.15760 of 2016
in
C.M.A.SR.No.47784 of 2016

1.M.Selvi
2.M.Sumathi
3.M.Rekha

... Petitioners

Vs.

1. Anna University Staff Quarters Association,
Rep.by its Secretary,
Gandhi Mandapam Road,
Kotturpuram,
Chennai – 600 085.
(Not claiming any relief and as such
Notice may be dispensed with)

2. Director of Technical Education,
Sardar Patel Road, Chennai 600 025.
(Not claiming any relief and as such
Notice may be dispensed with)

3. The Registrar,
Anna University,
Sardar Patel Road, Chennai – 600 025.

4. Anna – DOTE Residents Family Club,
Rep.by its Secretary,
Gandhi Mandapam Road,
Kotturpuram, Chennai – 600 085.
(Not claiming any relief and as such
Notice may be dispensed with)

5. Tamilnadu Ex-serviceman
Corporation (TEXCO) Mayor
Parameswaran P.V.C.(Posthamar)
Memorial Building, Srinagar Colony,
No.2, West Mada Street,
Saidapet,
Chennai – 600 015.
(Not claiming any relief and as such
Notice may be dispensed with)

.. Respondents

PRAYER: C.M.P.No.15760 of 2016 is filed under Section 30(3) of the W.C. Act, to condone the delay of 427 days in filing the above Civil Miscellaneous Appeal, against the order dated 13.10.2014 passed in W.C.No.36/2009 by the Deputy Commissioner of Labour – I (Commissioner for Employee's Compensation-I), Chennai – 600 006.

C.M.A.SR.No.47784 of 2016 is filed under Section 30 of the Workmen's Compensation Act, against the order dated 13.10.2014 passed in W.C.No.36/2009 by the Deputy Commissioner of Labour – I (Commissioner for Employee's Compensation-I), Chennai – 600 006.

For Petitioners : Mr.K.A.Ravindran
For Mr.A.Shanmugaraj

For Respondents : R3 – Mr.M.Vijayakumar
R1, R2, R4 & R5 – Dispensed with

ORDER

The Civil Miscellaneous Petition on hand is filed under Section 30(3) of the Workmen's Compensation Act, to condone the delay of 427 days in filing the Civil Miscellaneous Appeal, against the order dated 13.10.2014 passed in W.C.No.36/2009 by the Deputy Commissioner of Labour – I (Commissioner for Employee's Compensation-I), Chennai – 600 006.

2. Perusal of the affidavit filed in support of the miscellaneous petition reveals that the W.C. Award was passed on 13.10.2014 and the order copy was received by the petitioners on 05.03.2015. However, the petitioners have not filed the appeal within a reasonable period of time. Further, the reason stated is that immediately on receipt of money, the petitioners instructed their counsel in February 2016 for filing the appeal. Because of heavy flood, the office bundle mingled with disposed bundle and therefore, there is a delay of 427 days in filing the appeal.

3. In fact, the Flood in Chennai happened only during the year 2015 and not during the year 2016. More specifically, the reason that the bundle was mixed up with the other bundles, cannot be a ground to condone enormous delay in filing an appeal. If such grounds are accepted, then in every case, the enormous delay is to be condoned in a routine manner.

4. This Court is of the considered opinion that the reasons stated in the affidavit must be convincing, enabling this Court to consider the condonation of delay. Huge delay cannot be condoned in a routine manner. Law of Limitation is substantive. Condonation of delay is an exception. Only on genuine reasons, delay can be condoned by exercising the power of discretion.

5. Perusal of the affidavit shows that there is absolutely no acceptable reason for the purpose of condoning the enormous delay of 427 days in filing the appeal. The reasons stated in the affidavit must be

convincing, enabling this Court to consider the condonation of delay. Huge delay cannot be condoned in a routine manner. Law of Limitation is substantive. Condonation of delay is an exception. Only on genuine reasons, delay can be condoned by exercising the power of discretion.

6. Mechanical way of condoning delay is undoubtedly impermissible. The condonation of delay can never be a mechanical affair and the High Court cannot condone the delay in a routine manner. Courts are bound to ensure that the reasons for condoning such delays are recorded, so as to set out a precedent and to avoid mechanical way of condonation of delay. When the law provides limitation for preferring an appeal and the proviso clause as contemplates the power of discretion to the Court to condone the delay, then such discretionary powers are to be exercised judiciously and by recording reasons. It is not as if, the High Courts can condone the delay in a routine manner, so as to dilute the law of limitation as contemplated under the Statutes. Thus, in all cases, where there is an enormous delay in filing an appeal, the Courts are bound to

ascertain the reasons and its genuinity and the acceptability of such reasons. Every litigant is expected to prefer an appeal within the period of limitation stipulated in the statute. On account of certain unavoidable reasons, if the appeal is filed with some delay, then the Courts are vested with the discretionary power to condone such a delay. Rule is to file an appeal in time and condonation is an exception, which is to be exercised discreetly and by recording reasons. Recording of reasons are of paramount importance in order to maintain consistency in the matter of condonation of delay.

7. Discretionary powers are expected to be exercised by the Courts judiciously. Any reasonable delay or the reasons, which all are valid and acceptable alone can form an opinion for exercising the power of discretion in the matter of condonation of delay. Thus, uncondonable delay cannot be condoned and what all are the condonable delay and the reasons stated and its validity, which all are important, so as to exercise the power of discretion. The very purpose and object of providing

discretionary powers to the Courts are to ensure that the justice is done in an appropriate manner. Because of some genuine delay, the rights of the litigants cannot be neutralized and they should not be deprived of remedy from the Court of law. Therefore, the power of discretion, which is provided with genuine intention, cannot be diluted nor be neutralized by condoning the delay in a casual manner. Thus, while exercising the power of discretion, Courts are expected to be cautious and the reasons for condonation must be recorded and in the absence of recording any reasons, the Courts are not considering the substantive law of limitation. Therefore, the law must prevail in all circumstances and discretion must be exercised discreetly and with caution.

8. Unconardonable delay cannot be condoned. Law expects that every such delay is to be explained. Unexplained delay cannot be condoned. Such unexplained delay is to be construed as unconardonable. Thus, delay under what circumstances, would be condonable is the relevant point to be considered by the Courts, while condoning such

enormous delay.

9. Parties are expected to file their respective appeals within the period of limitation stipulated in the statute. Undoubtedly, certain unforeseen circumstances may be the reason for delay. However, such unforeseen circumstances or reasons, which all are genuine, must be clearly and truthfully explained in the affidavit filed in support of the miscellaneous petition. In the present case, reading of the affidavit reveals that there is no valid and acceptable reason for the purpose of condoning the enormous delay of 427 days in filing an appeal. In the event of condoning such a long delay, undoubtedly, the same will set a wrong precedent and every such delay is to be condoned in other circumstances. Therefore, in the absence of any valid reasons, the Courts would not condone such an enormous delay. Undoubtedly, meagre delay can be condoned by taking a lenient view. Even to condone such a small delay, Court has to find out, whether there is any sensible reason for such delay. Therefore, the Courts have to adopt a liberal approach only in

small delays and certainly not in the cases of enormous delay. Thus, this Court has no hesitation in arriving a conclusion that the reasons stated in the affidavit filed in support of the miscellaneous petition are neither candid nor convincing and therefore, the delay is to be construed as uncondonable.

10. In view of the fact that the petitioner has not explained the delay with acceptable reasons, this Court is not inclined to entertain the petition and consequently, the Miscellaneous Petition in C.M.P.No.15760 of 2016 stands dismissed and consequently, C.M.A.SR.No.47784 of 2016 is rejected at the SR Stage itself. No costs.

06.01.2021

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Index:Yes
Speaking order

To

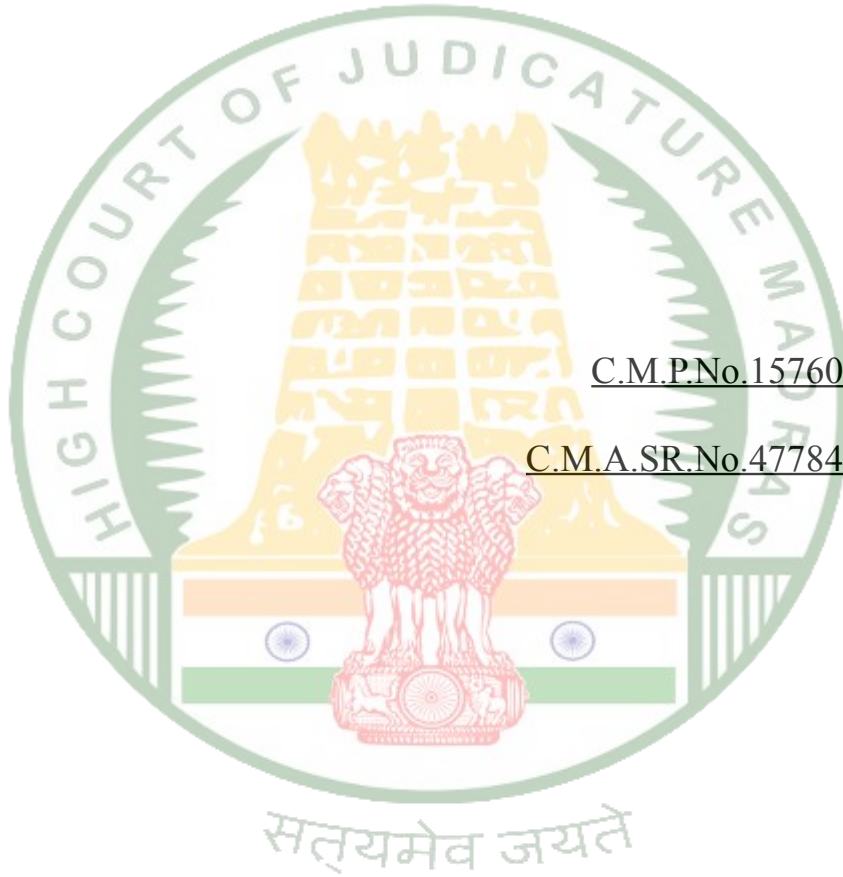
1.Deputy Commissioner of Labour – I,
(Commissioner for Employee's Compensation-I),
Chennai – 600 006.

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C.M.P.No.15760 of 2016 in
C.M.A.SR.No.47784 of 2016

S.M.SUBRAMANIAM, J.
Kak

2.The Sub Assistant Registrar,
A.E.Section,
High Court, Madras.



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