

IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA AT CUTTACK

L.A.A No. 11 of 2021

*Special Land Acquisition Officer,
Khariar*

Appellant

Mr. G. Rout, ASC

Vs.

*Manoranjan Meher
.....*

Respondent

Mr. B. Samantray, Advocate

CORAM: JUSTICE SANJAY KUMAR MISHRA

ORDER

21.10.2022

I.A. Nos.17 of 2021, 18 of 2021 & L.A.A. No. 11 of 2021

Order No.
02.

This matter is taken up through hybrid mode.

2. Though I.A. No.17 of 2021 was filed on 19.02.2021 to allow six months time to pay the required amount of Court Fee, by efflux of time the same has become infructuous.
3. Thereafter neither the Deficit Court Fee has been paid nor any fresh I.A. has been filed by the learned Counsel for the State-Appellant for extending time to pay the Deficit Court Fee.
4. That apart, the Appeal has been preferred against the judgment dated 23.04.2016, passed by the learned Senior Civil Judge, Nuapada, in LAR No. 104 of 2011 on 19.02.2021. As per the Office note, there is a delay of 1673 days.
5. Though I.A. No.18 of 2021 has been filed under Section-5 of the Limitation Act for condonation of delay, the pleadings made in the said I.A. are not convincing and delay has not been properly explained.

6. The apex Court in the case of *Office of the Chief Post Master General & Ors. Vrs. Living Media India Ltd. & Anr.* reported in (2012) 3 SCC 563 observed as under:

“12) It is not in dispute that the person(s) concerned were well aware or conversant with the issues involved including the prescribed period of limitation for taking up the matter by way of filing a special leave petition in this Court. They cannot claim that they have a separate period of limitation when the Department was possessed with competent persons familiar with court proceedings. In the absence of plausible and acceptable explanation, we are posing a question why the delay is to be condoned mechanically merely because the Government or a wing of the Government is a party before us.

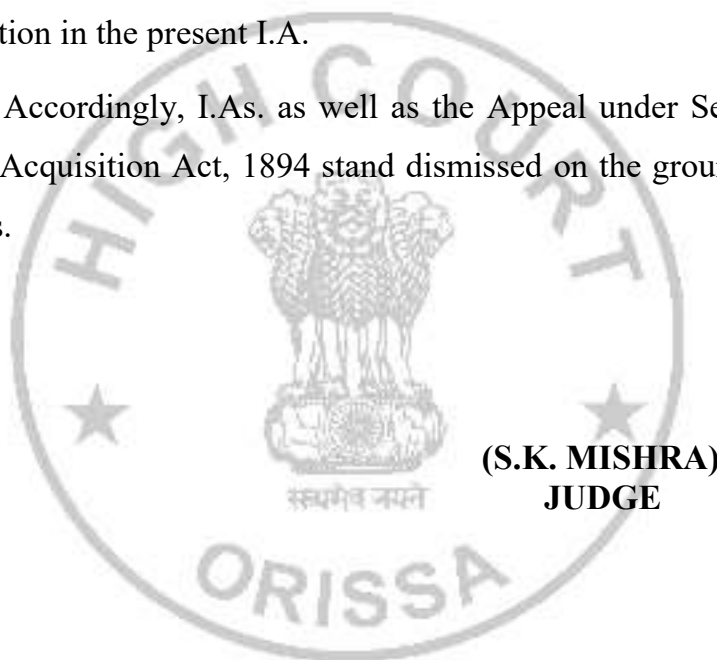
Though we are conscious of the fact that in a matter of condonation of delay when there was no gross negligence or deliberate inaction or lack of bonafide, a liberal concession has to be adopted to advance substantial justice, we are of the view that in the facts and circumstances, the Department cannot take advantage of various earlier decisions. The claim on account of impersonal machinery and inherited bureaucratic methodology of making several notes cannot be accepted in view of the modern technologies being used and available. The law of limitation undoubtedly binds everybody including the Government.

13) In our view, it is the right time to inform all the government bodies, their agencies and instrumentalities that unless they have reasonable and acceptable explanation for the delay and there was bonafide effort, there is no need to accept the usual explanation that the file was kept pending for several months/years due to considerable degree of procedural red tape in the process. The government departments are under a special obligation to ensure that they perform their duties with diligence and commitment. Condonation of delay is an exception and should not be used as an anticipated benefit for government departments. The law shelters everyone under the same light and should not be swirled for the

benefit of a few. Considering the fact that there was no proper explanation offered by the Department for the delay except mentioning of various dates, according to us, the Department has miserably failed to give any acceptable and cogent reasons sufficient to condone such a huge delay. Accordingly, the appeals are liable to be dismissed on the ground of delay.”

7. Also, in view of the recent judgment/order of this Court in the case of *State of Odisha Vrs. Surama Manjari Das* (W.P.(C) No.15763 of 2021 dismissed on 16.07.2021), which has been passed relying on the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *The State of Madhya Pradesh Vrs. Bherulal*, reported in *2020 SCC Online SC 849*, this Court is not inclined to issue notice to the Respondent on the question of limitation in the present I.A.

8. Accordingly, I.As. as well as the Appeal under Section 54 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 stand dismissed on the ground of delay and laches.



Banita