

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

121

SAO-15-2023 (O&M)
Date of decision: 24.02.2025

INDERJIT BAJAJ**..Appellant**

Versus

KRISHN GOPAL MANCHANDA AND OTHERS**..Respondents****CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL KSHETARPAL**

Present: Mr. Kanwaljit Singh, Sr. Advocate
with Ms. Shazia K. Singh, Advocate
for the appellant.

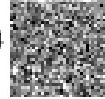
Mr. Akshay Jindal, Advocate
Mr. Vijayveer Singh, Advocate
Mr. Yashwinder Goel, Advocate
for respondents.

ANIL KSHETARPAL, J(Oral)

1. The defendant No.1 assails the correctness of First Appellate Court's order remitting the matter back to the trial Court. The plaintiff filed the suit for specific performance of agreement to sell and in the alternative, suit for recovery and for declaration to the effect that notice dated 23.02.2015 forfeiting the earnest money after cancelling the agreement is null and void.

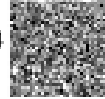
2. The trial Court ordered refund of earnest money but did not grant decree for specific performance. Defendant filed the first appeal. The Court after noticing that there are certain errors in appreciating the evidence and certain additional issues were required to be framed, remitted the matter back to the trial Court for fresh decision.

3. The enabling power of the Appellate Court to remit the matter back to the lower Court is regulated by Order XLI Rule 23 and 23A of the



Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, which has been explained by the Supreme Court in ***P.Purushottam Reddy and Another v. Pratap Steels Ltd. (2002) 2 SCC 686*** in the following manner:-

“10. The next question to be examined is the legality and propriety of the order of remand made by the High Court. Prior to the insertion of Rule 23A in Order 41 of the Code of Civil Procedure by CPC Amendment Act 1976, there were only two provisions contemplating remand by a court of appeal in Order 41 of CPC. Rule 23 applies when the trial court disposes of the entire suit by recording its findings on a preliminary issue without deciding other issues and the finding on preliminary issue is reversed in appeal. Rule 25 applies when the appellate court notices an omission on the part of the trial court to frame or try any issue or to determine any question of fact which in the opinion of the appellate court was essential to the right decision of the suit upon the merits. However, the remand contemplated by Rule 25 is a limited remand in as much as the subordinate court can try only such issues as are referred to it for trial and having done so the evidence recorded together with findings and reasons therefore of the trial court, are required to be returned to the appellate court. However, still it was a settled position of law before 1976 Amendment that the court, in an appropriate case could exercise its inherent jurisdiction under Section 151 of the CPC to order a remand if such a remand was considered pre-eminently necessary ex debito justitiae, though not covered by any specific provision of Order 11 of the CPC. In cases where additional evidence is required to be taken in the event of any one of the clause of Sub-rule (1) of Rule 27 being attracted such additional evidence oral or documentary, is allowed to be produced either before the appellate court itself or by directing any court subordinate to the appellate court to receive such evidence and send it to the appellate court. In 1976, Rule 23A has been inserted in Order 41 which provides for a remand by an appellate court hearing an appeal against a decree if (i) the trial court disposed of the case otherwise than on a preliminary point, and (ii) the decree is reversed in appeal and a retrial is considered necessary. On twin conditions being satisfied, the appellate court can exercise the same power of remand under Rule 23A as it is under Rule 23. After the amendment all the cases of wholesale remand are covered by Rule 23 and 23A. In view of the express provisions of these rules, the High Court cannot have recourse to its inherent powers to make a remand because



as held in Mahendra v. Sushila (AIR 1965 SC 365 at p. 399), it is well settled that inherent powers can be availed of ex debito justitiae only in the absence of express provisions in the Code. It is only in exceptional cases where the court may now exercise the power of remand de hors the Rules 23 and 23A. To wit the superior court, if it finds that the judgment under appeal has not disposed of the case satisfactorily in the manner required by Order 20 Rule 3 or Order 11 Rule 31 of the CPC and hence it is no judgment in the eye of law, it may set aside the same and send the matter back for re-writing the judgment so as to protect valuable rights of the parties. An appellate court should be circumspect in ordering a remand when the case is not covered either by Rule 23 or Rule 23A or Rule 25 of the CPC. An unwarranted order of remand gives the litigation an undeserved lease of life and, therefore must be avoided.”

4. The First Appellate Court has found that the additional issues are required to be culled out in the suit. The Appellate Court has also found that the judgment of the trial Court suffers from certain errors, however, rather than proceeding ahead with the case, the Appellate Court has chosen to remit the matter back to the trial Court. It may be noted here that the plaintiff was not in appeal before the First Appellate Court. The appeal was filed only by defendant. In any case, the First Appellate Court is the last Court of fact and law both. It is required to reappraise the evidence afresh while critically analysing the reasons recorded by the trial Court. The provisions with respect to remitting the matter back to the lower Court are regulated by Order XLI Rule 23A of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, which requires the Appellate Court to refer the judgment of the trial Court on merits and remit the matter back to the lower Court after forming an opinion that re-trial of the case is necessary. In this case, the First Appellate Court has failed to fulfill both the requirements.



5. Keeping in view the aforesaid discussions, the impugned order passed by the First Appellate Court is set aside to the extent of remitting the matter back to the trial Court. The first appeal is restored to its original number. The First Appellate Court is directed to decide the appeal on merits in accordance with law.

6. With these observations, the appeal is disposed of.

7. All the pending miscellaneous applications, if any, are also disposed of.

February 24th, 2025

(ANIL KSHETARPAL)
JUDGE

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Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No
Whether reportable : Yes/No