
(1984) 04 SC CK 0028

In the Supreme Court Of India

Case No : Civil Appeal No. 5313 of 1983

Hari Singh and Others

APPELLANT

Vs

State of U.P. and Others

RESPONDENT

Date of Decision : 06-04-1984

Acts Referred:

Constitution of India, 1950 — Article 136, 226

Land Acquisition Act, 1894 — Section 17(4), 4, 4(1), 6, 9

Citation : AIR 1984 SC 1020 : (1984) 1 SCALE 625 : (1984) 2 SCC 624 : (1984) 3 SCR 417 : (1984) 16 UJ 648

Hon'ble Judges : E. S. Venkataramiah, J;A. N. Sen, J

Bench : Division Bench

Advocate : Shanti Bhushan and S. Markandeya, for the Appellant; Gopal Subramaniam and S. Dikshit, for the Respondent

Final Decision : Dismissed

Judgement

E.S. Venkataramiah, J.—About 45 plots of land of Kheragarh village and about 15 adjoining plots of land of Nagala Udaiya village situated in the district of Agra were notified u/s 4(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (Act No. 1 of 1894) (hereinafter referred to as 'the Act') for acquisition for a public purpose, namely, for the construction of the Market Yard of the Krishi Utpadan Mandi Samiti, Kheragarh under a notification dated January 8, 1980 issued by the Government of the State of Uttar Pradesh. As the plots of land in question which were agricultural lands were urgently required for the aforesaid purpose and the Government was of the view that it was necessary to direct that Section 5-A of the Act should not apply to the said acquisition proceedings, it simultaneously made an order u/s 17(4) of the Act directing that Section 5-A would not apply to the said proceedings and incorporated the said order also in the notification issued u/s 4(1) of the Act. The notification was published in the Official Gazette dated January 9, 1980. This was followed by a notification dated January 9, 1980 u/s 6 of the Act published in the Official Gazette dated January 10, 1980. That notification contained an order made u/s 17(1) of the Act authorising the

Collector to take possession of the plots on the expiration of fifteen days from the publication of the notice u/s 9(1) of the Act though no award u/s 11 of the Act had been made. The above said plots of land which were in all about 60 in number belonged to a number of persons. The total extent of land proposed to be acquired was about 41.46 acres. The possession of all the plots of land was also taken in the course of the said acquisition proceedings. In or about June, 1982, notices were issued by the Collector to various persons having interest in the said plots u/s 9(3) of the Act for the purpose of determining the compensation payable to them. After the issue of the said notices, three persons Hari Singh (appellant No. 1), Pooran Chand (appellant No. 2) and Munna Lal (appellant No. 3) filed a writ petition in Civil Misc. Writ Petition No. 8397 of 1982 on the file of the High Court of Allahabad questioning the validity of the acquisition proceedings as regards 6 plots of land in Kheragarh village out of the total of about 60 plots of land which had been acquired by the State Government in the above said proceedings. Appellant No. 1 claimed to be the owner of plots Nos. 249, 250 and 252. Appellant No. 2 claimed to be the owner of plot No. 261 and appellant No. 3 claimed to be the owner of plots Nos. 133 and 134. Appellant Mo. 1 pleaded that there was a house situated on plot No. 249 and that he had also installed a flour mill on it. They all pleaded that they had no knowledge of the acquisition proceedings and were prejudiced by the order made u/s 17(4) of the Act exempting the operation of Section 5-A of the Act in the case of these proceeding. They further pleaded that there was no urgency sufficient in law to sustain the order made u/s 17(4) of the Act as nothing had been done on the lands for nearly two years. Appellant No. 1 also pleaded that Section 17(4) of the Act would not be applicable because on a part of his land there was a house. They also applied for an interim order restraining the Collector from dispossessing them from the plots in question. On September 9, 1982 the High Court made an interim order restraining the respondents from dispossessing the appellants from the plots until further orders, unless they had already been dispossessed. But on January 17, 1983, the High Court rejected the writ petition at the stage of admission after hearing the advocates for both the parties. This appeal by special leave is filed by the appellants under Article 136 of the Constitution on against the order of the High Court.

2. The High Court has not given any reasons for its order dismissing the writ petition. The order reads : 'Rejected'.

3. We have been taken through the writ petition counter affidavits and other papers filed in the High Court and in this Court.

4. At the out set we are of the view that the writ petition filed in July, 1982 questioning the notification issued in January, 1980 after a delay of nearly two and a half years is liable to be dismissed on the ground of laches only. It is no doubt true that the appellant have pleaded that they did not know anything about the notifications which had been published in the Gazette till they came to know of the notices issued u/s 9(3) of the Act but they have not pleaded that

there was no publication in the locality of the public notice of the substance of the notification as required by Section 4(1) of the Act. It should be presumed that official acts would have been performed duly as required by law. It is significant that a large number of persons who own the remaining plots have not challenged the acquisition proceedings. The only other petition in which these proceedings, are challenged re Civil Misc. Writ Petition No. 11476 of 1982 on the file of the High Court filed subsequently by Amar Singh and four others. Moreover in a small place like Kheragarh where these plots are situate, the acquisition of these lands would be the talk of the town in a short while and it is difficult to believe that the appellants who are residents of that place would not have known till July, 1982 that the impugned notification had been published in 1980. Any interference in this case filed after two and a half years with the acquisition proceedings is likely to cause serious public prejudice. This appeal should, therefore, fail on the ground of delay alone.

5. Now even on merits there appears to be no substance in the case of the appellants.

6. At the hearing of this appeal, the appellants have confined their case to plots Nos. 249, 261 and 133 and have given up their case in regard to plots Nos. 250, 252 and 134.

7. Appellant No. 1 claims to be the owner of plot No. 249. On behalf of the respondents it is urged that appellant No. 1 is recorded only as a co-tenure holder alongwith live others and they have not impeached the notifications. With regard to the allegation about the existence of a house on this plot, it is seen that the said fact is denied. The respondents rely upon some statements recorded by the revenue authorities suggesting that there was no house on this plot on the date of the notification. This is a disputed question of fact. Appellant No. 2 who claims to be the owner of plot No. 261 is stated to have purchased it on November 17, 1980 after the impugned notifications were published. The title of appellant No. 3 to plot No. 133 is denied by R. K Kannaujia, Secretary, Krishi Utpadan Mandi Samiti, Kheragarh. In this state of affairs where there are disputed questions of fact it cannot be said that the appellants have made out any case for interference under Article 226 of the Constitution.

8. On behalf of the appellants reliance is, however, placed on a decision of this Court in State of Punjab and Another Vs. Gurdial Singh and Others, In that decision the main point made out was that the acquisition proceedings had been engineered mala fide by a State Minister. We do not have any such allegation in the present case. In the circumstances of this case we do not find that there is any ground to hold that the order made u/s 17(4) of the Act exempting the operation of Section 5-A of the Act is bad in law even though there appears to be some administrative delay in commencing the construction of the Market Yard. Some photographs of the land produced before us, however, show that the work of construction has already been commenced.

9. We do not, therefore, find that there is any ground to interfere with the order of the High Court dismissing the writ petition. The appeal fails and it is dismissed with costs.