
(1993) 09 P&H CK 0127

In the Punjab And Haryana At Chandigarh

Case No : First Appeal From Order No. 224 of 1985

New India Assurance Co. Ltd. and Another

APPELLANT

Vs

Smt. Mohinder Kaur and Others

RESPONDENT

Date of Decision : 27-09-1993

Acts Referred:

Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 — Section 110B

Citation : (1994) ACJ 773 : (1993) 105 PLR 592

Hon'ble Judges : Amarjeet Chaudhary, J

Bench : Single Bench

Advocate : L.M. Suri and Arun Kumar, for the Appellant; Rajesh Garg, for the Respondent

Judgement

Amarjeet Chaudhary, J.—This judgment of mine will dispose of FAO No. 224 of 1985 filed by New India Assurance Company Limited and Anr. v. Smt. Mohinder Kaur and Ors. and Cross Objections No. 62-CII of 1985 filed in the said FAO by the claimant-respondents.

2. The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal, Chandigarh on a claim application filed by Smt. Mohinder Kaur, widow and her three children, had awarded a compensation of Rs. 2,20,800/- which was recoverable from the New India Assurance Company Ltd., and one Opinderjit Singh on account of death of Randhir Singh who died in accident on 1.9.1983.

3. In this appeal, the New India Assurance Company Ltd., has challenged the award of the Tribunal on the grounds that the Tribunal has awarded exorbitant compensation in favour of the claimant-respondents, the income of the deceased and the annual dependency of the claimants have not been properly calculated and further that the Tribunal had erred in applying the multiplier of 16 in the case. It has been further submitted that no compensation on the basis of the pension after retirement can be granted.

4. In the cross-objections, the claimants have prayed for the enhancement of the

compensation and for applying the multiplier of 20 instead of 16 applied by the Tribunal.

5. The brief facts of the case are as follows:-

Smt. Mohinder Kaur, widow and three children of Randhir Singh, deceased filed a claim application u/s 110-A of the Motor Vehicles Act for the grant of compensation to them on account of death of Randhir Singh, which was caused in a motor vehicle accident. The case of the claimants was that the deceased was 50 years of age and having an income of Rs. 1,600/- p.m. Randhir Singh, deceased was going on his scooter No. CHO-5910 on the road between Sectors 21-A and 18-D, Chandigarh from the side of Bus Stand towards Sector 20, Chandigarh. A motor cycle bearing registration No. CHR 4342 came from behind at a fast speed; The driver of the-motor cycle did not slow down the speed of the motor cycle and also did not blow any horn. The motor cyclist took a turn towards the right side by which time the deceased had almost reached the right side of the road. The motor cycle hit the scooter of the deceased. This accident had, thus, taken place on account of the rash and negligent driving of the driver of the motor cycle. The claimants demanded a sum of Rs. 3,00,000/- as compensation.

6. On the pleadings, the Tribunal framed the following issues:-

1. Whether Randhir Singh died on 1.9.1983 in a motor vehicle accident as a result of rash and negligent driving of motor cycle No. CHR-4342 by Opinderjit Singh respondent No. 1 ?. If so, what is effect? OPP.

2. If issue No. 1 is proved, to what amount of compensation, are the claimants entitled to and if so, against whom ? OPP.

3. Relief.

7. In order to prove their case, the claimants examined PW-1, Rakesh Bajaj, PW-2, Dr. U.S. Bansal, PW-3, ASI Samme Singh, PW-5, Satwinder Singh, PW-6 Tarlok Singh besides one of the claimants Smt. Mohinder Kaur, who herself stepped into the witness box as PW-4.

8. Smt. Mohinder Kaur, PW-4, wife of the deceased in her statement stated that her deceased husband was drawing a sum of Rs. 1,600/- p.m. as his salary and had also left behind landed property which was being used for agricultural purpose. The deceased used to look after the land himself and earn Rs. 6,500/- p.a. therefrom. She further deposed that after his retirement the deceased had planned to look after the agricultural land. However, in the cross-examination, Smt. Mohinder Kaur admitted that the deceased used to be left with just about Rs. 600/- p.m. by way of his carry home salary after necessary deductions.

9. In his statement PW-6 Tarlok Singh, Assistant working in the office of the Controller of Stores, Punjab, Chandigarh where the deceased Randhir Singh also used to work, deposed on the basis of the official record that the deceased was

born on 13.3.1933. The deceased was working as an Assistant and the total emoluments which he was drawing were Rs. 1,590.60 Ps p.m.

10. On 6.11.1984, the Tribunal returned the finding that Randhir Singh deceased had died in accident due to negligent driving of Opinderjit Singh, driver of the Motor Cycle. Believing the statement of PW-6 Tarlok Singh, official witness, who had deposed in the cross-examination on the basis of the record that the deceased used to have a carry home salary of Rs. 1326.40 paise p.m. and since the deceased was entitled to get further promotions as a Superintendent, he was in this way likely to earn salary at a higher rate, in due course of time, the Tribunal, therefore, fixed the average salary of the deceased upto the age of superannuation at Rs. 2,000/- p.m. Out of this monthly income, the Tribunal after deducting Rs. 400/- as personal expenses of the deceased, held that the deceased must be giving Rs. 1600/- to his wife for running house. As such the annual dependency of the claimants upon the deceased was worked out at Rs. 19,200/-. The deceased was 51 years old at the time of his death and was to superannuate after 7 years. The Tribunal, therefore, had applied a multiplier of 7. The Tribunal also held that after the retirement, the deceased would have got a pension of Rs. 1,000/- per month and thus would have been paying Rs. 800/- per month to his wife for running the house after deducting a sum of Rs. 200/- as his personal expenses and further granted compensation for a period of 8 years at the rate of Rs. 800/- per month. The claimants were thus awarded a total compensation of Rs. 2,20,000/- (Rs. 1,34,400/- for first 7 years for the service of the deceased which he was to render and Rs. 86,400/- for a period of 9 years after his retirement).

11. In this appeal filed by the New India Assurance Co. Ltd., the main dispute is with regard to the quantum of compensation awarded by the Tribunal.

12. After hearing the learned counsel for the parties and perusing the case file, I am of the view that there was no justification in calculating the income of the deceased at Rs. 2,000/- per month for the reason that Tarlok Singh (PW-6) in his statement had stated that the deceased's total emoluments were Rs. 1590.60 Ps. per month (rounded off Rs. 1600/-). The Tribunal while assessing the dependency should have taken into consideration the monthly salary of the deceased which he was drawing at the time of his death. Out of this income of Rs. 1600/- the deceased must be spending Rs. 400/- on himself and remaining amount of salary i.e. Rs. 1200/- on his family. In view of this, the annual dependency of the claimants on the deceased would be Rs. 14,400/-. As mentioned in the earlier part of the judgment, the deceased was 51 years old at the time of his death and after 7 years he was to retire on superannuation at the age of 58 years. As such, the multiplier of 7 as adopted by the Tribunal is just and reasonable. In view of this, the total compensation to which the claimants are entitled comes to Rs. 1,00,800/- (Rs. 14,400x7 = 100800/-).

13. The other glaring omission on the part of the Tribunal is with regard to the compensation awarded for 9 years based on calculation of pension of the

deceased. The proposition of law is settled that for the purposes of calculating the compensation, annual dependency of the dependents should be determined in terms of annual loss accruing to them due to abrupt termination of life. For this purpose, annual earning of the deceased at the time of his death and the amount which he was spending on the maintenance of his family will be determining factor. The amount which the deceased was spending on himself as such would be deducted from the annual earning and then the figure arrived at would be adjudged as the annual dependency. The basis, figure then be multiplied by a suitable multiplier. The emphasis on "just compensation" can easily be laid in view of the provisions of Section 110-B of the Motor Vehicles Act under which petitions for grant of compensation are maintained. The mandate of law in the aforesaid provision further envisages for the grant of "just compensation" which the Court thinks reasonable keeping in view the facts and circumstances of each case. This conclusion is based on the Full Bench decision of this Court rendered in Lachhman Singh v. GurmitKaur 1979 PLR 1.

14. As already mentioned in the earlier part of the judgment, the annual dependency of the claimants will be Rs. 14,400/-. By applying a multiplier of 7, the compensation payable to the claimants would be Rs. 1,00,800/- (Rs. One lac and eight hundred). The claimants shall also be entitled to (nic)2% p.a. interest on this amount from the date of claim petition till realization.

15. In view of the foregoing discussion, the appeal filed by the Insurance Company is partly allowed and the award of the Tribunal is modified to the extent indicated above.

16. Learned counsel for the respondents-cross-objectors has not been able to substantiate his claim for enhancement of the compensation. In view of this, cross-objections fail and are dismissed.

17. Parties are left to bear their own costs.