

Supreme Court of India

Navneet Ram Batra vs State Of Uttar Pradesh & Ors on 17 September, 1975

Equivalent citations: 1975 AIR 2144, 1976 SCR (1) 826

Author: A Alagiriswami

Bench: Alagiriswami, A.

PETITIONER:

NAVNEET RAM BATRA

Vs.

RESPONDENT:

STATE OF UTTAR PRADESH & ORS.

DATE OF JUDGMENT 17/09/1975

BENCH:

ALAGIRISWAMI, A.

BENCH:

ALAGIRISWAMI, A.

GOSWAMI, P.K.

UNTWALIA, N.L.

CITATION:

1975 AIR 2144

1976 SCR (1) 826

ACT:

Land Acquisition Act -Sec. 4 (1) 5A 17 (1) and 17(4)-Urgency Clause.-. Dispensing with meaning of objections-Person entitled to object-whether any person in the locality can object or person interested ill land concerned only an object.

HEADNOTE:

The appellant is a tenant or Plot No. 428. A notification was issued under Section 4 (1) of the Land Acquisition Act for setting up an industrial estate in respect of Plot No. 428 and Plot No. 436. By a notification under Section 17 (4) the provisions of section 5A were dispensed with in the ground that provisions of section 17(1) (Urgency) were applicable. The appellant filed a Writ Petition in High Court challenging the said notification issued under section 17 (4) The Single judge dismissed the Writ Petition. An appeal filed to the Division Bench was also dismissed.

On an appeal by Special Leave, it was contended by the appellant that there was a pucca construction on Plot No. 436 which was also notified for acquisition under the impugned notification and consequently the provisions of Section 17 (4) would not be applicable to that land as it

was not arable or waste land and could not be acquired by dispensing with the enquiry under section 5A and as such, the whole notification is bad and should be quashed.

Dismissing the appeal,

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HELD:

1. Admittedly the appellant's land is a waste and arable land and thus falls under section 17(1). The person who could have taken objection to the enquiry under section 5A being dispensed: with was the owner of Plot No. 436. He has not objected to the acquisition it is, therefore, not open to the appellant to question the validity of the notification. If the owner of Plot No. 436 had objected to the notification different considerations might arise. *Sarjoo Prasad v. State of U.P.* (AIR 1965 SC 1763) distinguished. [1827E-F]

2. Section 5A should be understood in the back ground of section 4(1). Section 4 ( I ) requires only the locality in which the land is situate, to be mentioned in the notification. But in actual practice the survey numbers of the lands sought to be acquired are given in such notifications. The question of notifying the locality might probably arise when all the lands in village are sought to be acquired. Otherwise. the word locality is a word of such indefinite import that it is difficult to conceive of any locality in any particular village being notified for acquisition. When a locality in the sense of a village or a group of villages is notified for acquisition any person interested in any land in that locality would be entitled to be heard under section 5A. But where land proposed to be acquired is specifically mentioned in the notification it is only the person interested in that land who is entitled to be heard under section 5A. That is why section 5A provides that any person interested may object to the acquisition of land or of any land in the locality as the case may be. The latter part would apply to a case where lands in any locality are notified under section 4 ( 1 ) . That is the significance of the use of the words "as the case may be." Any person unconnected with land cannot object to the acquisition of the land in the locality since he would not be a person interested. [828-F-H 829A-C]

JUDGMENT:

CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION: Civil Appeal No. 1154 of 1972.

Appeal by special leave from the Judgment and order dated 18th December, 1969 of the Allahabad High Court in Special Appeal No. 324 of 1962.

Yogeshwar Prasad, S. K. Bagga, Mrs. S. Bagga and Miss Rani Arora, for the appellant.

G. N. Dikshit and O. P. Rana, for the respondent. The Judgment of the Court, was delivered by ALAGIRISWAMI, J. The appellant is a tenant of plot No. 428 in mauza Dehra Khas, pargana Central Doon, district Dehradun. This land along with some other pieces of land was notified under s. 4(1) of the Land Acquisition Act on February 8, 1962 for acquisition for the purpose of setting up an industrial estate at Dehradun. By the same notification, under s. 17(4) of the Act it was directed that the provisions of s. 5A shall not apply on the ground that the provisions of s. 17(1) were applicable to the facts of the case. He filed a writ petition out of which this appeal arises for the issue of a writ of certiorari for quashing the notification dated 8th February, 1962. He made various allegations which it is not necessary to go into for the purpose of this appeal. A learned single Judge of the Allahabad High Court dismissed the petition and an appeal filed by him was dismissed by a Division Bench of the same High Court.

The only point argued before us was that there was a pucca construction on plot No. 436 which was also notified for acquisition under the impugned notification and consequently the provisions of s.17(4) would not be applicable to that land as it was not arable or waste land which could be acquired by dispensing with the enquiry under s.5A and as such the whole notification is bad and should be quashed. Admittedly the appellant's land is a waste and arable land and thus falls under s.17 (1) . There was therefore no objection to the Government dispensing with the provisions of s.5A by resorting to the power conferred by s.17(4). The person who could have taken objection to the enquiry under s. 5A being dispensed with was the owner of plot No. 436. He has not objected to the acquisition. He has taken the compensation awarded to him and walked out. It is, therefore? not open to the appellant to question the validity of this notification. If possibly the owner of the land sought to be acquired but any person in the locality derations might arise. The appellant who is only the owner of plot No. 428 in relation to which s. 17(1) and 17(4) are applicable and therefore enquiry under s 5A could properly be dispensed with, cannot object to the same notification because the notification also relates to another land to which s.17(1) and 17(4) are not applicable when the owner of that land has not chosen to challenge the notification. on behalf of the appellant, however, reliance was placed on certain observations of this Court in Sarju Prasad v. State of U.P.(1) to. the following effect:

"It was contended by Mr. S. P. Sinha appearing on behalf of the Municipal Board, Basti, that a part of the land notified for acquisition was waste or arable and in support of his contention, counsel referred us to certain revenue record. But (1) A. I. R. 1965 S. C. 1763.

if only a part of the land is waste or arable and the rest is not, notification under s. 17(4) dispensing with compliance with the requirements of s. 5-A would be invalid. It would not be open to the Court to regard the notification as partially good and partially bad, for if the State had no power to dispense with the inquiry in respect of any part of the land notified under s. 4(1), an inquiry must be held s. 5-A giving an opportunity to persons interested in the land notified to raise the objections to the proposed acquisition and in that inquiry the persons interested cannot be restricted

to raising objections in respect of land other than waste or arable land " That case is the converse of the present case.

The appellant therein was a person who was entitled to object to the notification. Under those circumstances the question whether the notification is to be quashed completely or only partially might well arise. But such a question cannot arise where a person like the appellant has no right to impugn the notification. It was, however, urged that under s. 5-A(1) it is not only the owner of the land sought to be acquired but any person in the locality may object and his objections will have to be heard. Section 5-A(1) reads as follows:

"5A.(1) Any person interested in any land which has been notified under section 4, sub-section (1), as being needed or likely to be needed for a public purpose or for a Company may, within thirty days after the issue of the notification, object to the acquisition of the land or of any land in the locality. as the case may be. "This section should be understood in the background of the provisions of s. 4(1) which reads as follows s "4.(1) Whenever it appears to the appropriate Government that land in any locality is needed or is likely to be needed for any public purpose, a notification to that effect shall be published in the official Gazette, and the Collector shall cause public notice of the substance of such notification to be given at convenient places in the said locality."

It may be noticed that under this section what is necessary is that only the locality the land in which appears to the appropriate Government as needed or as likely to be needed for any public purpose need be specified in the notification under that section. But in actual practice always the survey numbers of the lands sought to be acquired are given in such notifications. The question of notifying the locality might probably arise when all the lands in a village are sought to be acquired otherwise the word 'locality' is a word of such indefinite import that it is difficult to conceive of any locality in any particular village being notified for acquisition. Therefore when a locality in the sense of a village or perhaps a group of villages is notified for acquisition any person interested in any land in that locality would be entitled to be heard under s. 5A. But where the land proposed to be acquired is specifically mentioned in the notification it is only the person interested in that land who is entitled to be heard under s. 5A. That is why s.5A provides that any person interested in any land which has been notified under s.(1) may object to the acquisition of the land or of any land in the locality as the case may be. The latter part would apply to a case where lands in any locality are notified under s. 4(1). That is the significance of the use of the words "as the case may be". To give another interpretation to this section would mean that any person interested in any land which has been notified may object to the acquisition of his land or to the acquisition of any land in the locality. This cannot be correct because he would not be a person interested in any land in the locality which is a pre-requisite before a person can object to the acquisition of any land. In other words in the background of section 4 (1), section 5A provides that where land in any locality is notified under section 4(1) any person who is interested in any land in the locality may object to the acquisition of his land or any land in the locality as the case may be.

We are therefore of opinion that there are no merits in this appeal. It is accordingly dismissed with costs P.H.P. Appeal dismissed.