

Form No. 4
{See rule 11(1)}
ORDER SHEET
ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL, REGIONAL BENCH, LUCKNOW
Court No.1 (E. Court)

O.A. (A) No. 191 of 2014

Ravi Shankar Singh
By Legal Practitioner for the Applicant

Applicant

Versus

Union of India & Others
By Legal Practitioner for Respondents

Respondents

Notes of the Registry	Orders of the Tribunal
	<p><u>05.10.2020</u> <u>Hon'ble Mr. Justice Umesh Chandra Srivastava, Member (J)</u> <u>Hon'ble Vice Admiral Abhay Raghunath Karve, Member (A)</u></p> <p>Heard Shri K.K.S. Bisht, Ld. Counsel for the appellant and Shri Asheesh Agnihotri, Ld. Counsel for the respondents, assisted by Maj Sini Thomas, Departmental Representative.</p> <p>This appeal has been filed against the order dated 05.01.2012 of Summary Court – Martial by which appellant has been reduced to rank from Naik to Sepoy.</p> <p>Shri Asheesh Agnihotri, learned counsel for the respondents has raised a preliminary question regarding maintainability of appeal saying punishment being awarded to appellant in Summary Court - Martial being not dismissal from service or imprisonment for more than three months, as provided in proviso (iv) to Section 3 (o) of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007, (In Short “2007 Act”), the appeal is not maintainable.</p> <p>Submission of learned respondents’ counsel is that it is specifically provided in proviso (iv) to Section 3 (o) of the 2007 Act that only those matters of Summary Court – Martial, where the punishment is of dismissal from service or more than three months imprisonment, are included in “service matters”, and, in respect of which, appeal may be filed. His further submission is that if the punishment passed in Summary Court - Martial is less than dismissal from service, or less than three months imprisonment, the same cannot be challenged in AFT invoking the provisions of Section 15 of 2007 Act. His further submission is that the order challenged in instant appeal is neither dismissal from service nor imprisonment for more than three months, but being a punishment of reduction in rank, the same cannot be challenged in appeal under Section 15 of the 2007 Act. Therefore, his submission is that instant appeal being filed against the punishment of reduction in rank, and not against the punishment of dismissal or imprisonment for more than three months in Court-Martial, the same is not maintainable and is liable to be dismissed as such.</p> <p>Per contra, Shri KKS Bisht, learned counsel for the applicant submits that present appeal being filed under Section 15 of the 2007 Act, definition of</p>

“service matters” as given in Section 3 (o) of the 2007 Act, has not to be read in isolation, but needs to be read together with sub-section (2) of Section 15 of the 2007 Act, which reads that any person aggrieved by an order, decision, finding or sentence passed by a Court – Martial may prefer an appeal in such form, manner and within such time as may be prescribed.

His further submission is that no where it is provided in sub-section (2) of Section 15 of 2007 Act that in only those matters concerning dismissal from service or imprisonment for more than three months in Summary Court – Martial, an appeal may be filed. His further submission is that “Court-Martial used in sub-section (2) of Section 15 of 2007 Act does include Summary Court-Martial also. His further submission is that order passed in Court-Martial being appealable under Section 15 of the 2007 Act and scope of appeal being not restricted to Court-Martial only but Summary Court-Martial being also covered therein, appeal against an order passed in Summary Court-Martial is maintainable. Thus, his submission is that instant appeal being filed against the punishment of reduction in rank passed in Summary Court-Martial is maintainable.

Having heard the submissions of learned counsel of both sides and having gone through Sections 3, and 15 of the 2007 Act, we are of the considered view that in order to see the maintainability of an appeal filed against an order passed in Summary Court – Martial, we can not only bank upon Section 3 (o) of the 2007 Act, but have to read this Section together with Section 15 (2) of the 2007 Act. On joint reading of these Sections, it appears that not only those matters of punishment concerning dismissal from service or imprisonment for more than three months in Summary Court – Martial can be challenged under Section 15 of the 2007 Act, by way of appeal, but any order, decision, finding or sentence passed in Summary Court – Martial can be appealed in AFT. We are also of the view that scope of appeal, as provided in Section 15 of 2007 Act, is not limited to Court-Martial Verdicts only, it includes Summary Court – Martial verdicts also.

With this view of matter, we reject the plea regarding maintainability of appeal, raised by the respondents’ learned counsel and hold that instant appeal is maintainable in Tribunal under Section 15 of the 2007 Act.

Accordingly, appeal is admitted for hearing.

Respondents may file counter affidavit within four weeks. Thereafter, rejoinder affidavit, if any, may be filed within two weeks.

List on **15.12.2020** before the Registrar Court for exchange of pleadings.

(Vice Admiral Abhay Raghunath Karve)
Member (A)

(Justice Umesh Chandra Srivastava)
Member (J)

Ukt/-

