



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF KENYA**

**AT MIGORI**

**[Coram: A. C. Mrima, J.]**

**CIVIL APPEAL NO. 96 OF 2015**

**BETWEEN**

**SOUTH NYANZA SUGAR CO. LTD.....APPELLANT**

**AND**

**SIMEONA A. OPOLA.....RESPONDENT**

**(Being an appeal from the judgment and decree by Hon. P. Y. Kulecho, Resident Magistrate in Migori Chief Magistrate's Civil Suit No. 554 of 2014 delivered on 30/04/2015)**

**JUDGMENT**

1. Simeona A. Opola, the Respondent herein, filed Cause No. 1216 of 2010 before the defunct Sugar Arbitration Tribunal (which cause was later transferred to and was assigned as Migori Chief Magistrate's Court Civil Suit No. 554 of 2014 (hereinafter referred to as 'the suit') against South Nyanza Sugar Co. Ltd, the Appellant herein. The Respondent claimed that by a Growers Cane Farming and Supply Contract entered into on 27/01/2005 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Contract') the Appellant contracted the Respondent to grow and sell to it sugarcane at the Respondent's parcel of land Plot No. 243 Field No. 89B in Kajulu Sub-Location measuring 1.2 Hectares within Migori County.

2. The Respondent pleaded that the Contract was for a period of five years or until one plant crop and two ratoon crops of the sugarcane were harvested from the subject parcel of land whichever event occurred first. That, the cane was self-developed in that the Appellant did not provide the Respondent with any inputs and services. That, the Respondent discharged his part of the contract until the plant crop was ready for harvesting but the Appellant refused and/or failed to harvest it hence compromised the development of the ratoon crops and that he suffered loss.

3. Aggrieved by the alleged breach of the contract the Respondent filed the suit claiming compensation for the loss of the unharvested plant crop and the first ratoon crop amounting to Kshs. 600,000/= with costs and interest at court rates.

4. The Appellant entered appearance and filed a Statement of Defence dated 21/06/2010 before the Tribunal wherein it denied both the contract and the breach and put the Respondent into strict proof thereof. The Appellant further averred that if at all there was any such breach then the Respondent was the author of his own misfortune as he failed to properly maintain his crops to the required standards or at all to warrant the same being harvested and milled. The Appellant prayed for the dismissal of the suit with costs.

5. The suit was finally settled down for hearing before the Tribunal where both parties were represented by Counsels. The Respondent testified and called an agricultural expert one Paul Simo. The documents which the Respondent had filed in his List of Documents were produced by the consensus of the parties as exhibits. The Appellant did not call any witness. Parties thereafter filed their written submissions and the matter was set for judgment.

6. During the pendency of the judgment, the law regulating the sugar sector was reviewed. The result was the enactment of the Crops Act which repealed the Sugar Act. As the Sugar Act was the creature of the Tribunal, the change in the law rendered the Tribunal defunct. The suit, among many others, was transferred to the trial court. The trial court then wrote and rendered the judgment on 30/04/2015.

7. The trial court awarded the Respondent the value of the plant crop at Kshs. 270,000/=. The Appellant was aggrieved by the judgment and lodged an appeal. In praying that the appeal be allowed and the suit be dismissed with costs the Appellant proposed six grounds in the Memorandum of Appeal dated 18/05/2015 and filed in Court on 02/06/2015.

8. Directions were taken, and the appeal was disposed of by way of written submissions where both parties duly complied.

9. As the first appellate Court, the role of this Court is to revisit the evidence on record, evaluate it and reach its own conclusion in the matter. (See the case of *Selle & Ano. vs. Associated Motor Boat Co. Ltd* (1968) EA 123). This Court nevertheless appreciates that an appellate Court will not ordinarily interfere with findings of fact by the trial court unless they were based on no evidence at all, or on a misapprehension of it or the court is shown demonstrably to have acted on wrong principles in reaching the findings. This was the holding in *Mwanasokoni -versus- Kenya Bus Service Ltd.* (1982-88) 1 KAR 278 and *Kiruga -versus- Kiruga & Another* (1988) KLR 348).

10. I have certainly perused and understood the contents of the pleadings, proceedings, judgment, grounds of appeal, submissions and the decisions referred to by the parties.

11. I noted an anomaly on the record of appeal. Although the issue was not taken up by the parties I will still deal with it as it goes to the substance and competency of the appeal. It is about the filing of the appeal out of time without leave of this Court. Alternatively, it may be a case of absence of the order granting leave to file the appeal out of time from the record of appeal.

12. In this matter judgment before the trial court was delivered on 30/04/2015. The Memorandum of Appeal was filed on 02/06/2015.

13. I have also perused the lower court file. I did not come across any extracted order granting leave to file the appeal out of time. The Memorandum of Appeal itself did not indicate that it was filed pursuant to grant of leave to file the appeal out of time.

14. I will now deal with the effect of the absence of the order granting leave to file the appeal out of time in the record of appeal.

15. Section 65(1) of the Act is the basis of appeals from the subordinate courts to the High Court. It provides as follows: -

Except where otherwise expressly provided by this Act, and subject to such provision as to the furnishing of security as may be prescribed, an appeal shall lie to the High Court-

- (a) (Deleted by 10 of 1969, Sch.);
- (b) from any original decree or part of a decree of a subordinate court, other than a magistrate's court of the third class, on a question of law or fact;
- (c) from a decree or part of a decree of a Kadhi's Court, and on such an appeal the Chief Kadhi or two other Kadhis shall sit as assessor or assessors.

16. Section 79G of the Act provides for the time within which the appeal in Section 65(1) of the Act may be filed. It states as follows: -

Every appeal from a subordinate court to the High Court shall be filed within a period of thirty days from the date of the decree or order appealed against, excluding from such period any time which the lower court may certify as having been requisite for the preparation and delivery to the appellant of a copy of the decree or order:

Provided that an appeal may be admitted out of time if the appellant satisfies the court that he had good and sufficient cause for not filing the appeal in time.

17. Appeals from orders are provided for in Sections 75 and 76 of the Act and Order 43 of the Rules.

18. Order 42 Rule 1 of the Rules provide that an appeal to the High Court shall be in the form of a Memorandum of Appeal signed in the same manner as a pleading.

19. Once an appeal is lodged aforesaid, a Record of Appeal is then filed. The contents of the Record of Appeal are provided for in Order 42 Rule 13(4) of the Rules as follows: -

Before allowing the appeal to go for hearing the judge shall be satisfied that the following documents are on the court record and that such of them as are not in the possession of either party have been served on that party that is to say:

- (a) the memorandum of appeal;
- (b) the pleadings
- (c) the notes of the trial magistrate made at the hearing;
- (d) the transcript of any official shorthand, typist notes electronic recording or palantypist notes made at the hearing;
- (e) all affidavits, maps and other documents whatsoever put in evidence before the magistrate;
- (f) the judgment, order or decree appealed from, and, where appropriate, the order (if any) giving leave to appeal;

Provided that-

- (i) a translation into English shall be provided of any document not in that language;
- (ii) the judge may dispense with the production of any document or part of a document which is not relevant, other than those specified in paragraphs (a), (b) and (f).

20. A Record of Appeal is essentially supposed to be complete with all necessary documents. Courts have severally dealt with cases of incompleteness of Records of Appeal.

21. The Supreme Court in Civil Application No. 20 of 2014 Bwana Mohamed Bwana v Silvano Buko Bonaya & 2 Others (2014) eKLR referred to its earlier finding in Law Society of Kenya vs Centre for Human Rights and Democracy & Others, Supreme Court Petition No. 14 of 2013 as follows: -

[16] For a competent appeal to lie before this Court it must comply with the provisions of Rule 33(1) of the Supreme Court Rules, 2012 which provides that:

An appeal to the Court shall be instituted by lodging in the registry within thirty days of the date of filing of the notice of appeal –

- (a) a petition of appeal;
- (b) a record of appeal; and
- (c) the prescribed fee.

[17] .....

[36] The use of the word ‘shall’ in Rule 33(1) suggests the mandatory nature of the rule, requiring strict adherence to the completeness of the rule. Thus, a strict reading of rule 33(1) leads to the conclusion that an appeal comprises the Petition, the Record of Appeal, and the prescribed fee.

[37] .....

[38] The Record of Appeal is the complete bundle of documentation, including the pleadings, submissions, and judgment from the lower Court, without which the appellate Court would not be able to determine the appeal before it.

22.The Court further held, at paragraph 39, that:

[39] If an intending appellant were to present the Court with a Notice and Petition of Appeal, but without the Record of Appeal, and expect the Court to determine ‘the appeal’ on the basis of these two, such an appeal would be incomplete and hence incompetent. Indeed, this is the gist of Rule 33(1) of the Supreme Court Rules.

23. Ngaah, J in Nyeri High Court Civil Appeal No. 51 of 2013 Ndegwa Kamau t/a Sideview Garage v Fredrick Isika Kalumbo (2016) eKLR dealt with how the Court of Appeal in Kyuma vs Kyema (1988) KLR 185 dealt with the interpretation of Section 79G of the Act.

24. The Court of Appeal held as follows: -

The question is what documents must the appellant file within thirty days or within the time lawfully extended by the certificate of delay” Since the question contemplates that the appeal is against a decree or order, the appellant is obliged to apply first, Memorandum of Appeal in the form set out in appendix F No. 1 of the Civil Procedure Rules and second, a copy of the formal order of the court, if available. Rule 1A of Order 41 permits this latter document to be filed as soon “as possible and in any event within such a time as the court may order”. Therefore a certificate of delay within the true intendment of section 79G must certify the time it took to prepare and deliver to the appellant “a copy of the order” of the magistrate. But the certificate of delay exhibited by the appellant, did not speak of a decree or order. No such order was sought or extracted. What the appellant, in error, sought and what the court dutifully supplied, were the proceedings and judgment”.

25. Sitati, J in Kakamega Election Petition Appeal No. 3 of 2018 Elvis Anyimbo Sichenga v Orange Democratic Movement & 4 Others (2016) eKLR dealt with the same issue in an election petition appeal from the subordinate court. In that appeal the Record of Appeal did not include the decree of the judgment appealed against. The Learned Judge held as follows: -

32. What then am I saying about the failure by the appellant to attach a certified copy of the decree appealed from? I am saying that that omission is not a mere technicality for if it were so, the drafters of the rules would not have made its attachment a mandatory requirement. I am therefore satisfied that the applicant has satisfied this court that the said omission is fatal to the petition and I so find.

26. I will also add my voice on the subject. First, under Order 42 Rule 13(4) of the Rules a Court may dispense with any document to be part of the Record of Appeal except the memorandum of appeal, the pleadings and the judgment, order or decree appealed from and in appropriate cases the order giving leave to appeal. Second, the saving grace under Article 159(2)(d) of the Constitution is inapplicable in this case. That is because the provision only applies to matters relating to procedure or form and not the substance thereof. Third, despite clear provisions on extension of time the Appellant never sought for any extension of time to obtain and file the order on extension of time. The Appellant further did not explain any difficulty in obtaining the leave to appeal out of time.

27. The appeal was to be lodged by 29/05/2015. Instead it was filed on 02/06/2015. From the record no leave to appeal out of time was sought and obtained. The Record of Appeal is therefore incomplete for want of the order granting the leave to appeal out of time. In the words of the Supreme Court in Civil Application No. 20 of 2014 Bwana Mohamed Bwana (supra) ‘such an appeal would be incomplete and hence incompetent.’ The appeal is for rejection.

28. Having said so, there is no competent appeal for consideration. The appeal is therefore struck out with costs.

29. Orders accordingly.

**DELIVERED, DATED and SIGNED at MIGORI this 28th day of May,2020.**  
**A. C. MRIMA**  
**JUDGE**

Judgment delivered electronically: -  
1.info@oyoadvocates.com for Otieno, Yogo, Onjuro & Company Advocatesfor the Appellant.  
2.kerariom@gmail.com for Kerario Marwa & Company Advocates for the Respondent.  
3. Parties are at liberty to obtain hard copies of the Ruling from the Registry upon payment of the requisite charges.  
A. C. MRIMA

JUDGE