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GOLLALESHWAR DEV AND ORS.

v.

GANGAWWA KOM SHANTAYYA MATH & ORS.

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OCTOBER 15, 1985

[A.P. SEN AND D.P. MADON, JJ.]

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Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950, sections 2(10), 50, 51 and 52(1) read with section 92 of Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, scope of - Whether two or more trustees of a registered public trust can with the permission in writing of the Charity Commissioner, bring a suit for declaration that certain property belongs to the public trust and for possession of the same from a person holding it adversely to the trust - Words and phrases - Meaning of the phrase "person having interest in the trust" occurring in section 2(10) of the Act - Persons having interest includes trustees and other beneficiaries -

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The first appellant Gollaleshwar Dev is an ancient temple situate in village Golgeri in the district of Bijapur which formed part of the erstwhile State of Bombay prior to the re-organisation of the States. Consequent upon the enactment of the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950, the temple was registered as a public trust. The district of Bijapur became part of the new State of Karnataka on the appointed day i.e. November 1st, 1956 under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956. The Bombay Public Trust Act continued to remain in force in the areas which formed part of the erstwhile State of Bombay. Appellant No.2 is the present trustee of the temple and appellant No.3 the grandson of ex-trustee Mariyappa the elder brother of appellant No.2 is a beneficiary.

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It had been customary for the trustees to permit persons rendering services to the temple to reside in suit premises on leave and licence basis. The respondents Shantayya and Smt. Shankarawa, who were taken in the service of the temple and allowed to reside in the suit premises free of rent on condition that they were to occupy the said premises so long as their services to the temple were required, started creating trouble in the year 1957 with the result the father of appellant No.2 terminated their services and asked them to vacate the suit premises. On their failure to do so, he brought two suits being Civil Suits Nos. 244 and 255 of 1957 in the name of the idol Shree Gollaleshwar Dev as plaintiff No.1 with himself being

trustee as plaintiff No. 2. The respondents contested the claim on various grounds and pleaded inter alia, (i) that the temple had no right to title to the suit premises which belonged to them by virtue of a registered gift deed dated February 19, 1917 executed by Mariyappa Lingappa the grandfather of appellant No. 3 in favour of their Predecessor-in-title Balalochanayya Hiremath, the first licensee of the suit premises; (ii) that the suits brought under section 50 (ii) of the Act were not maintainable for want of consent in writing given by Charity Commissioner under section 51; and (iii) that the Court of the Civil Judge, Senior Division, Bijapur had no jurisdiction to entertain the suits. The suits were dismissed as not maintainable in view of the decision of the Mysore High Court in Marikamba Temple and Hanuman Temple, Sirsi, by its Manager, S.S. Dhakappa v. Subraya Venkataramanappa Barkur reported in I.L.R. 1958 Mysore 736. Thereafter a Fresh Civil Suit No. 2 of 1962 was instituted before the District Judge, Bijapur after obtaining the consent in writing of the Charity Commissioner by the appellant No. 2's father as plaintiff No. 2 and the idol as plaintiff No. 1. Later Appellant No. 3 in the capacity of a beneficiary and Appellant No. 2 in the capacity of the present trustee were impleaded as plaintiffs Nos. 2 and 3 as "persons interested in the trust". The High Court in the meanwhile had reversed the decision in Marikamba's case in Ganapathi Ram Naik & Anr. v. Kunta Shri Venkataraman Dev reported in 1964 1 Mysore LJ 172. Following the said D.B. decision in the District Judge held that, "although a suit for recovery of property belonging to the idol could be brought either by the idol represented by the trustee or the manager, such a suit is not contemplated by section 50(ii) of the Act and was therefore not maintainable and that such a suit would be governed by the ordinary law and would not lie in the District Court, but either in the Court of the Civil Judge, Junior Division or the court of the Civil Judge, Senior Division according to the valuation of the subject matter of the suit." Aggrieved by the said judgment the appellants preferred an appeal before the High Court. A Division Bench which heard the appeal felt that the decision in Ganapathi Ram's case required reconsideration and referred the matter for the opinion of the Full Bench. The Full Bench upon the hypothesis that section 50 of the Act is in pari materia with section 92 of the Code of Civil Procedure expressed that the well-settled principles governing section 92 of the Code are equally applicable to section 50 of the Act. It accordingly held: (i) that the suit contemplated by section 50 of the Act was one of a representative character; (ii) that a suit by a deity for possession being a suit for vindicating its own personal rights

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A was not governed by section 50 of the Act that persons who
institute suits in their capacity as trustees do so not in their
representative capacity representing the interests of the public
but in their own individual or personal capacity to vindicate
their own rights or that of the idol that is to say, merely
because trustees were persons having interest in the trust the
B provisions of section 50(11) of the Act would not be attracted to
a suit of this kind. Upon that view the full Bench answered the
question referred to it as follows: (i) the expression "persons
having interest in the trust" occurring in section 2(10) and
section 50 of the Act does not include the trustees when they
institute the suits in their capacity as trustees for vindicating
their private rights; and (ii) consequently two or more trustees
C or a public trust cannot file a suit under section 50(11) of the
Act for a declaration that the property belongs to the public
trust and for possession of the same from a person holding it
adversely to the trust. In accordance with the opinion of the
Full Bench, the Division Bench dismissed the appeal filed by the
appellants. Hence the appeal by special leave.

D Allowing the appeal, the Court

HOLD : 1.1 The expression "person having interest" in a
trust occurring in section 2(10) and section 50 of the Bombay
Public Trust Act cannot be given a restrictive construction. The
definition of the expression "person having interest" in section
E 2 (10) being an inclusive one, there is no lawful justification
to exclude the suit brought by two or more trustees in the name
of the idol, to recover possession of its property against a
person holding it adversely to the trust from the purview of
section 50(11) of the Act. The definition of the words "person
having interest" in section 2(10) of the Bombay Public Trust Act,
F as amended in 1953 was made inclusive to set at rest all doubts
and difficulties as to the meaning of these words, which were
intended and meant to be used in a generic sense so as to include
not only the trustees but also the beneficiaries and other
persons interested in the trust. The definition of the expression
"person having interest" in section 2(10) is wide enough to
G include not merely the beneficiaries of a temple, math, wakf etc.
but also the trustees. Therefore appellants Nos. 2 and 3 who
undoubtedly are members of the founder's family i.e.
beneficiaries, are entitled to attend at performance of worship
or services in the temple and also entitled to partake in the
distribution of offerings to the deity and thus answer the des-
H cription "person having interest" as defined in section 2 (10) of
the Act. [657 A-D; 660 A-B]

1.2 Provisions contained in sections 50 to 52 of the Bombay Trust Act make it clear that the Act created and regulated a right to institute a suit by the Charity Commissioner or by two or more persons interested in the trust, in the form of supplementary statutory provisions without defeasance of the right of the manager or a trustee or a shabait of an idol to bring a suit in the name of idol to recover the property of the trust in the usual way. Further, although sub-section (1) of section 52 makes sections 92 and 93 of the Code of Civil Procedure inapplicable to public trust registered under the Act, it has made provision by section 50 for institution of such suits by the Charity Commissioner or by two or more persons interested in the trust and having obtained the consent in writing of the Charity Commissioner under section 51 of the Act. Therefore, any two or more persons interested in the trust should not be deprived of the right to bring a suit as contemplated by section 50(11) (a) of the Act. [658 D-F]

1.3 Section 50 of the Bombay Trust Act is not in pari materia with section 92 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Although section 50 of the Act is structured upon the pattern of section 92 of the Code of Civil Procedure, there is no provision in section 92 of the Code analogous to clause (ii) or relief (a) of section 50 of the Act. Section 50 authorises the institution of a suit by the Charity Commissioner or two or more persons interested in the trust only in the District Court having jurisdiction to try it. The scope of section 50 of the Act is wider than that of section 92 of the Code of Civil Procedure. It applies to a case so long as the relief claimed falls within the scope of the section. One of the reliefs that can be claimed in a suit brought under section 50 of the Act is that covered by relief (a) set out in clause (ii) namely for a declaration that a certain property belongs to a public trust and for possession thereof from person holding it adversely to the trust viz. a suit brought by the Charity Commissioner or two or more persons interested in the trust with his consent in writing as provided in section 51 of the Act. Section 50 of the Bombay Trust Act contemplated not only suits of a representative character but also suits by two or more trustees for preservation of the property of the trust. Therefore, in a suit filed by the idol to enforce its private rights, the provisions of section 92 of the Code of Civil Procedure are not attracted. [659 D-H]

Biswanath & Anr. v. Shri Thakur Radhaballabhi & Ors.
[1967] 2 S.C.R. 618 distinguished.

A **Ganapathi Ram Naik v. Kunta Shri Venkataraman Dev, I.L.R. 1963 Mysore 1059 overruled.**

Shree Gollaleshwar Dev & Ors. v. Gangawwa Kona Shantayya Math & Ors., A.I.R. 1972 Kart (F.B.) p. reversed.

B CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION : Civil Appeal No. 1195 of 1972.

From the Judgment and Decree dated 19.10.1971 and 5.4.1971 of the Mysore High Court in Regular First Appeal No. 57 of 1967.

S.S. Javali and B.P. Singh for the Appellants.

C R.B. Datar for the Respondents.

The Judgment of the Court was delivered by

D SEN, J. This appeal on certificate from the judgment and decree of the Karnataka High Court dated April 5, 1971 raises a question of general public importance. The question is whether
E two or more trustees of a registered public trust can, with the permission in writing of the Charity Commissioner as provided for in s.51 of the Act, bring a suit for declaration that certain property belongs to the public trust and for possession of the same from a person holding it adversely to the trust under
F s.50(ii) of the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950. That depends on whether the words 'persons having interest in the trust occurring in s. 2(10) and s.50 of the Act do or do not include the trustees of a registered public trust. If they do not, two or more trustees cannot file a suit as contemplated by s.50(ii) of the Act. There had been a divergence of opinion in the High Court as to the precise meaning of the words 'persons having interest in the trust' in s.2(10) and s. 50 of the Act and as conflicting views had been expressed by different Benches from time to time, the matter was referred to a Full Bench. The correctness of the view taken by the Full Bench is in question in this appeal.

G Put very briefly, the essential facts are these. Shree Gollaleshwar Dev is an ancient temple and is situate in village Golgeri in the district of Bijapur which formed part of the erstwhile State of Bombay prior to the reorganization of the States. Consequent upon the enactment of the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950, the temple was registered as a public trust. The
H district of Bijapur became part of the new State of Karnataka on

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the appointed day i.e. November 1, 1956 under the States Reorganization Act, 1956. The Act has continued to remain in force in the areas which formed part of the erstwhile state of Bombay.

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It had been customary for the trustees to permit persons rendering services to the temple to reside in the suit premises on leave and licence. The subject-matter in dispute consisting of arches alongside the eastern, northern and southern walls of the temple are meant for the use of devotees for their temporary rest and stay, when they come to visit the temple. The main temple itself is situate in the middle surrounded by an open courtyard. The suit premises being within the four walls of the temple, they form part of the temple and are entered in the certificate of registration as belonging to the temple.

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It appears that plaintiff no. 2's uncle Mariyappa Lingappa permitted one Balalochanayya Hiremath to reside in a part of the suit premises as he happened to be a man of saintly pursuits and one without a family. Subsequently, Balalochanayya left the premises occupied by him. Thereafter, plaintiff no. 2's father as the trustee employed two brothers, Rachayya and Gurunandayya to perform services for the temple and he assigned the suit premises to them for their residence with a view that they should be allowed to occupy the premises free so long as the trustees allowed them to remain in occupation and so long as they were retained in the service of the temple. They were to remain in occupation of the suit premises as licensees of the trustee of the temple. Rachayya and Gurunandayya started asserting rights derogatory to the trust. Accordingly, plaintiff No. 2's father as the trustee filed Civil Suit No. 96 of 1935 in the Court of the Joint Civil Judge, Bijapur and the learned Civil Judge by his judgment dated August 8, 1936 decreed the plaintiffs' claim. The defendants went up in appeal to the Court of the District Judge in Regular Appeal No. 109 of 1936 but the appeal was dismissed on November 22, 1937. Thereafter, plaintiff no. 2's father terminated the services of Rachayya and Gurunandayya and called on them to vacate the suit premises, which they did. After Rachayya and Gurunandayya were removed from service of the temple, Shantayya, brother of Rachayya and Smt. Shankarawa, widow of Gurunandayya were taken in service of the temple and allowed to reside in the suit premises free of rent on condition that they were to occupy the said premises so long as their services to the temple were required. In 1957, Shantayya along with Smt. Shankarawa also started creating trouble and plaintiff No. 2's father, accordingly, terminated their services and asked them to vacate the suit

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A premises. On their failure to do so, he brought two suits being Civil suits Nos. 244 and 255 of 1957 in the name of the idol Shree Gollaleshwar Dev as plaintiff no. 1 with himself being the trustee as plaintiff no. 2. The case of the plaintiffs was that the defendants were in occupation of the said premises with leave and licence of the trustee of the temple and as they refused to deliver possession of the suit premises, the suits had been instituted for a declaration that the property belongs to the temple and for possession thereof. The defendants contested the plaintiffs' claim on various grounds. They pleaded *inter alia*, that the temple had no right or title to the suit premises which belonged to them by virtue of a registered gift-deed dated February 19, 1917 executed by Mariyappa, uncle of plaintiff no. 2 in favour of their predecessor-in-title Balalochanayya, that there was no consent in writing given by Charity Commissioner under s. 51 and therefore the suits brought under s. 50(ii) of the Act were not maintainable; and further that the Court of the Civil Judge, Senior Division, Bijapur had no jurisdiction to entertain the suits. The learned Civil Judge following the decision of the Mysore High Court in **Marikamba Temple and Hanuman Temple, Sirsi, by its Manager, S.S. Dhakappa v. Subrava Venkataramanappa Barkur**, I.L.R. 1958 Mysore 736, upheld these contentions and dismissed the suit as not maintainable.

E It was after this that the present suit was brought by the aforesaid plaintiffs in the Court of the District Judge, Bijapur as Civil Suit No. 2 of 1962 under s. 50(ii) of the Act for the aforesaid reliefs, with the consent in writing of the Charity Commissioner granted under s. 51. As earlier, the suit was instituted by appellant no. 2's father as plaintiff no. 2 in the name of idol shri Gollaleshwar Dev as plaintiff no. 1. Plaintiff no. 2 was impleaded as the present trustee of the temple and plaintiff no. 3 as the grandson of Mariappa, the elder brother of plaintiff no. 2. as a beneficiary. Plaintiff nos. 2 and 3 joined the suit as 'persons interested in the trust'. The High Court in the meanwhile had reversed the decision in **Marikamba's case in Ganapathi Ram Naik & Anr. v. Kunta Shri Venkatraman Dev**, 1964 1 Mysore L.J. 172. The learned District Judge following the decision in **Ganapathi Ram Naik's case** held that although a suit for recovery of property belonging to the idol could be brought either by the idol represented by the trustee or the manager, such a suit is not contemplated by s. 50(ii) of the Act and was therefore not maintainable. It was observed :

H "The words 'persons having interest in the trust' in s. 50 denote a person whose interest is inferior to

that of a trustee or manager and it is by reason of the existence of that inferior or smaller interest that s. 50 of the Act like s. 92 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 authorises the institution of a suit and regulates it in the manner provided therein. But that section does not govern the institution of a suit by a person possessing larger and higher interest which is not regulated by it."

The learned district Judge accordingly held that such a suit would be governed by the ordinary law and would not lie in the District Court but either in the Court of the Civil Judge, Junior Division or the Court of the Civil Judge, Senior Division, according to the valuation of the subject-matter of the suit.

Aggrieved by the judgment of the District Judge the appellants preferred an appeal before the High Court. A Division Bench which heard the appeal felt that the decision in Ganapathi Ram's case required reconsideration and framed two questions for the opinion of the Full Bench, namely :

1. Whether the expression 'persons having interest in the trust' occurring in s. 2(10) and s. 50 of the Act includes trustees also.

2. Whether two or more trustees of a public trust can file a suit for declaration that a property belongs to the public trust and for recovery of possession of the same from a person holding it adversely to the trust under s.50 (ii) of the Act.

The Full Bench upon the hypothesis that s.50 of the Act is in pari materia with s. 92 of the Code expressed that the well-settled principles governing s. 92 of the Code are equally applicable to s. 50 of the Act. It accordingly held following the decision of Woodroffe, J. in Budree Das Mukim v. Ghooni Lal Johurry, I.L.R. (1906) 33 Cal. 789 at p.807, and various other decisions of different High Courts laying down the scope and effect of s. 92 of the Code and Dr. B.K. Mukherjee's Tagore Law Lectures on the Hindu Law of Religious and Charitable Trusts, 3rd edn., p. 347, that the suit contemplated by s. 50 of the Act was one of a representative character. The observations of Woodroffe, J. in the case of Budree Das Mukim v. Ghooni Lal Johurry (*supra*) which has become the locus classicus were to the effect:

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"The suit contemplated by the section is one of a representative character.

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It is obvious that the Advocate-General, Collector or other Public Officer can and do sue only as representing the public and if, instead of these public officers, two or more persons having an interest in the trust, sue with their consent, they so sue under a warrant to represent the public as the objects of the trust : see **Lakshmandas Raghunath Das v. Jugal Kishore**, I.L.R. (1896) 22 Bom. 216, 220.

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It follows from this that when a person or persons sue not to establish the general member or members, but to remedy a particular infringement of their own individual right, the suit is not within or need not be brought under the section."

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It next relied upon the decision of this Court in **Rishwanath & Anr. v. Shri Thakur Radhaballabhji & Ors.** [1967] 2 S.C.R. 618, laying down that a suit by an idol, as a juristic person against persons who interfered unlawfully with the property of the idol, was a suit for enforcement of its private right and was therefore not a suit to which s. 92 of the Code applied and thus such a suit was outside the purview of s. 92 of the Code and it was not a bar to its maintainability, for the conclusion that a suit instituted by the idol represented by its trustees or by persons as *qua* trustees for recovery of trust property is a suit for enforcement of the private rights of the idol or the trustees.

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The Full Bench approved of the view expressed by Somnath Iyer and Gopivallabha Iyengar, JJ. in **Ganapathi Ram Naik v. Kuntal Shri Venkataraman Dev** I.L.R. (1963) Mys. 1059, that a suit by a deity for possession being a suit for vindicating its own personal rights was not governed by s. 50 of the Act but disagreed with it on the construction placed by it upon the words 'person having interest' in s.2(10) and s. 50 of the Act. The Division Bench in **Ganapathi Ram's** case held that the expression 'person having interest' denotes one whose interest is inferior to that of a trustee or a manager and it is by reason of existence of that inferior or smaller interest that s. 50 of the Act, like s. 92 of the Code authorises the institution of a suit and regulates it in the manner provided therein. It was of the view that s. 50 of the Act does not govern institution of a suit by a person possessing larger and a higher interest which is not regulated by it, and differed from the view taken by Hegde, J. in

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Shri Marikamba Temple v. Subraya Venkataramanappa, I.L.R. (1958) Mys. 736, holding that a suit by an idol represented by the trustee was governed by s. 50 of the Act. The Full Bench accordingly held that persons who institute suits in their capacity as trustees do so not in their representative capacity representing the interests of the public but in their own individual or personal capacity to vindicate their own rights or that of the idol. That is to say, merely because the trustees were persons having interest in the trust, the provisions of s. 50(ii) of the Act would not be attracted to a suit of this kind. Upon this reasoning, the Full Bench observed :

"It is, therefore, clear that the expression "two or more persons having an interest in the trust" in s. 50 of the Act cannot include the trustees but persons other than the trustees who have an interest in the trust. The reason for holding that the expression "two or more persons having an interest in the trust" cannot be construed to include trustees, is not because the trustees are not persons interested in the trust but because of the character of the suit contemplated under s. 50 of the Act.

The remedy of the idol represented by its trustee or of the trustees to enforce their individual rights is not to institute a suit under s. 50 but to sue in the ordinary courts in the usual way as any other citizen, and for such a suit, the trustees are not required to satisfy the conditions of s. 50 of the Act. A suit for recovery of trust property instituted by a trustee not because one for enforcement of the right of the public, but being merely for enforcement of the private rights of the trust or trustees, does not, in our opinion, fall within the scope of section 50 of the Act."

Upon that view, the Full Bench answered the questions referred as follows :

1. The expression "persons having interest in the trust" occurring in s. 2(10) and s.50 of the Act does not include the trustees when they institute the suits in their capacity as trustees for vindicating their private rights.

2. Consequently, two or more trustees of a public trust cannot file a suit under s.50(ii) of the Act for

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a declaration that the property belongs to the public trust and for possession of the same from a person holding it adversely to the trust.

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In accordance with the opinion of the Full Bench, the Division Bench dismissed the appeal filed by the appellants.

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Before we advert to the argument based on s.50 of the Act, it should be mentioned that it is undisputed that the temple of Shree Gollaleshwar Dev is a public temple registered as a public trust under the provisions of the Act. The plaintiffs suing are, first, the idol, second, a trustee, and third, a member of the family creating the endowment i.e. a beneficiary. The question is whether the plaintiffs nos. 2 and 3 are persons having an interest in the trust within the meaning of s.2(10) which reads :

"2(10) "Person having interest" includes -

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(a) in the case of a temple, a person who is entitled to attend at or is in the habit of attending the performance of worship or service in the temple, or who is entitled to partake or is in that habit of partaking in the distribution of gifts thereof;

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(b) in the case of a math, a disciple of the math or a person of the religious persuasion to which the math belongs ;

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(c) in the case of a wakf, a person who is entitled to receive any pecuniary or other benefit from the wakf and includes a person who has a right to worship or to perform any religious rite in a mosque, idgah, imambara, dargah, maqbara or other religious institutions connected with the wakf or to participate in any religious or charitable institution under the wakf;

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(d) in the case of a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, any member of such society; and

(e) in the case of any other public trust, any beneficiary."

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The word 'trustee' as defined in s. 2(18) reads :

"2(18). 'trustee' means a person in whom either alone or in association with other persons, the trust property is vested and includes a manager;"

By the Bombay Public Trusts (Amendment) Act, 1953, the word 'includes' was substituted for the word 'means'. The definition of the words 'person having interest' in s.2(10) was made inclusive to set at rest all doubts and difficulties as to the meaning of these words, which were intended and meant to be used in a generic sense so as to include not only the trustees but also the beneficiaries and other persons interested in the trust. It would therefore appear that the definition of the expression 'person having interest' in s.2(10) is wide enough to include not merely the beneficiaries of a temple, math, wakf etc. but also the trustees. It must therefore follow that plaintiffs nos.2 and 3 who undoubtedly are members of the founder's family i.e. beneficiaries, are entitled to attend at performance of worship or service in the temple and also entitled to partake in the distribution of offerings to the deity and thus answer the description 'person having interest' as defined in s.2(10) of the Act.

Section 50 of the Act on the construction of which the appeal depends, insofar as material, provides as follows :

"50. In any case -

(i) * * * * *

(ii) where a declaration is necessary that a particular property is a property belonging to a public trust or where a direction is required to recover the possession of such property or the proceeds thereof or for an account of such property or proceeds from any person including a person holding adversely to the public trust, or

(iii) where the direction of the court is deemed necessary for the administration of any public trust.

The Charity Commissioner or two or more persons having an interest in the trust and having obtained the consent in writing of the Charity Commissioner as provided in Section 51 may institute a suit whether contentious or not in the court within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the whole or part of the subject matter of the trust is situate, to obtain a decree for any of the following reliefs :

- A (a) an order for the recovery of the possession of such property or proceeds thereof."

Sub-section (1) of s. 51 of the Act which also has a material bearing, reads :

- B "51(1) If the persons having an interest in any public trust intend to file a suit of the nature specified in section 50, they shall apply to the Charity Commissioner in writing for his consent. The Charity Commissioner, after hearing the parties and after making such inquiry as he thinks fit, may within a period of six months from the date on which the application is made, grant or refuse his consent to the institution of such suit. The order of the Charity Commissioner refusing his consent shall be in writing and shall state the reasons for the refusal."
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- Sub-s.(1) of s.52 of the Act provides that notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the provisions of s.92 of the Code shall not apply to the public trusts governed by the Act.
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- E It is clear from these provisions that s.50 of the Act created and regulated a right to institute a suit by the Charity Commissioner or by two or more person interested in the trust, in the form of supplementary statutory provisions without defeasance of the right of the manager or a trustee or a shebait of an idol to bring a suit in the name of idol to recover the property of the trust in the usual way. There is therefore no reason why the two or more person interested in the trust should be deprived of the right to bring a suit as contemplated by s.50(ii)(a) of the Act. Although sub-s. (1) of s. 52 makes ss. 92 and 93 of the Code inapplicable to public trusts registered under the Act, it has made provision by s. 50 for institution of such suits by the Charity Commissioner or by two or more persons interested in the trust and having obtained the consent in writing of the Charity Commissioner under s. 51 of the Act.
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- G We are unable to subscribe to the view expressed by the High Court. Although the Full Bench rightly adverted to sub-s. (1) of s. 52 of the Act which excludes the applicability of ss.92 and 93 of the Code to the public trusts governed by the Act, it was not right in its conclusion that a suit instituted by the idol represented by two or more trustees, with the written consent of
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the Charity Commissioner as provided in s. 51 of the Act, was not within the purview of s. 50(ii)(a) of the Act and therefore could not be brought in the Court of the District Judge. Although s. 50 of the Act is structured upon the pattern of s. 92 of the Code, the Full Bench failed to appreciate that there is no provision in s. 92 of the Code analogous to cl. (ii) or relief (a) of s. 50 of the Act. It will be seen from s. 50 that the section authorizes the institution of a suit by the charity Commissioner or two or more persons interested in the trust only in the District Court having jurisdiction to try it. The scope of s. 50 of the Act is wider than that of s. 92 of the Code. It applies to a case so long as the relief claimed falls within the scope of the section. One of the reliefs that can be claimed in a suit brought under s. 50 of the Act is that covered by relief (a) set out in cl. (ii) viz. for a declaration that a certain property belongs to a public trust and for possession thereof from a person holding it adversely to the trust viz. a suit brought by the Charity Commissioner or two or more persons interested in the trust with his consent in writing as provided in s. 51 of the Act.

The fallacy underlying in the reasoning of the Full Bench lies in the wrongful assumption that s. 50 of the Act is in pari materia with s. 92 of the Code. It is upon that erroneous hypothesis that it observes that the suit contemplated by s. 50 of the Act is one of a representative character. It overlooks the scope and effect of s. 50 of the Act which contemplates not only suits of a representative character but also suits by two or more trustees for preservation of the property of the trust. The reasoning of the Full Bench that if the suit is filed by the idol to enforce its private rights, the provisions of s. 92 of the Code are not attracted and a fortiori the same principles equally govern suits under s. 50 of the Act, is not worthy of acceptance. The Full Bench was also wrong in relying upon the decision of this Court in Bishwanath's case which turned on the construction of s. 92 of the code. In that case, it was held that the bar of s. 92 did not apply to a suit by an idol or by its trustees for a declaration that the suit properties belonged to the trust and for possession of the same from persons holding the properties adversely to the trust inasmuch as such a suit is not a suit of a representative character instituted in the interests of the public, but is really a suit for the vindication of the individual or personal rights of the deity or the trustees. The decision in Bishwanath's case is therefore clearly distinguishable and the principles laid down as to the applicability of s. 92 of the Code to such suits are not attracted.

- A There is no warrant for the restrictive construction placed by the Full Bench on the expression 'person having interest' in a trust occurring in s. 2(10) and s. 50 of the Act. The definition of the expression 'person having interest' in s. 2 (10) being an inclusive one, there is no lawful justification to exclude the suit brought by two or more trustees in the name of the idol, to
- B recover possession of its property against a person holding it adversely to the trust from the purview of s. 50(ii) of the Act.

- C In the result, the appeal succeeds and is allowed with costs. The judgment and decree of the High Court affirming those passed by the District Judge, Bijapur are set aside and the plaintiffs' suit for declaration of title to and for possession of the suit property together with mesne profits is decreed.

S.R.

Appeal allowed.