

*“29. After referring to a catena of judgments, this Court culled out the following general principles regarding the powers of the appellate Court while dealing with an appeal against an order of acquittal in the following words:*

*42. From the above decisions, in our considered view, the following general principles regarding powers of the appellate Court while dealing with an appeal against an order of acquittal emerge:*

*(1) An appellate Court has full power to review, reappraise and reconsider the evidence upon which the order of acquittal is founded.*

*(2) The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 puts no limitation, restriction or condition on exercise of such power and an appellate Court on the evidence before it may reach its own conclusion, both on questions of fact and of law.*

*(3) Various expressions, such as, “substantial and compelling reasons”, “good and sufficient grounds”, “very strong circumstances”, “distorted conclusions”, “glaring mistakes”, etc. are not intended to curtail extensive powers of an Appellate Court in an appeal against acquittal. Such phraseologies are more in the nature of “flourishes of language” to emphasise the reluctance of an Appellate Court to interfere with acquittal than to curtail the power of the Court to review the evidence and to come to its own conclusion.*

*(4) An Appellate Court, however, must bear in mind that in case of acquittal, there is double presumption in favour of the accused. Firstly, the presumption of innocence is available to him under the fundamental principle of criminal jurisprudence that every person shall be presumed to be innocent unless he is proved guilty by a competent Court of law. Secondly, the accused having secured his acquittal, the presumption of his innocence is further reinforced, reaffirmed and strengthened by the trial Court.*

*(5) If two reasonable conclusions are possible on the basis of the evidence on record, the Appellate Court should not disturb the finding of acquittal recorded by the trial Court.”*

*Rajesh Prasad v. State of Bihar, 2022 SCeJ 45, (2022-1)205 PLR 241 (SC) (SN), (2022) 3 SCC 471*