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Minn. Stat. § 480A.08, subd. 3 (2018).*

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A19-1080**

In re the Marriage of: Esther Jayasheela Potti, petitioner,
Respondent,

vs.

Dasyam Samuel Rajasekhar,
Appellant

**Filed August 24, 2020
Affirmed
Florey, Judge**

Clearwater County District Court
File No. 15-FA-08-643

Cory D. Gilmer, Minneapolis, Minnesota (for respondent)

Dasyam Samuel Rajasekhar, Jacksonville, Florida (pro se appellant)

Considered and decided by Reilly, Presiding Judge; Connolly, Judge; and Florey,
Judge.

UNPUBLISHED OPINION

FLOREY, Judge

Appellant seeks review of the district court's denial of a variety of motions he made relating to his prior divorce. We affirm.

FACTS

Appellant Dasyam Rajasekhar and respondent were divorced in August 2009 and have had ongoing disputes as to the terms and details of that separation since. Most recently, these disputes have focused on the parenting time and custody of their minor child. On July 12, 2019, the district court issued the order with which this appeal is concerned. The order followed what the court described as “various motions, correspondence, and supporting documents” Rajasekhar had filed since December 26, 2018. The district court summarized the filings as requesting, “generally, enforcement of [Rajasekhar’s] parenting time, court-appointed counsel for [Rajasekhar], a new trial to address errors in the original dissolution decree, an award of spousal maintenance during [Rajasekhar’s] parenting time, and an order allowing the parties’ minor child to travel to India with [Rajasekhar].” The order was issued upon the court’s consideration of written arguments submitted by the parties.¹ Throughout the proceedings relevant to this appeal, Rajasekhar appeared pro se.

In its order, the district court (1) granted Rajasekhar’s motion to enforce the parenting time to which he was entitled under the dissolution decree; (2) denied Rajasekhar’s motions for court-appointed counsel as having no basis in law; (3) denied Rajasekhar’s motions for a new trial because no trial had occurred; (4) denied Rajasekhar’s motions for spousal support during his parenting time as having no basis in law; (5) denied

¹ The matter was scheduled for a telephone hearing, but that was terminated with parties’ agreement due to technical difficulties.

Rajasekhar's motions to allow the child to accompany him to India; and (6) denied all other motions and requests. Rajasekhar appealed pro se.

DECISION

Appellate courts generally decline to address issues that are inadequately briefed. *State, Dep't of Labor & Indus. v. Wintz Parcel Drivers, Inc.*, 558 N.W.2d 480, 480 (Minn. 1997); *Melina v. Champlin*, 327 N.W.2d 19, 20 (Minn. 1982); *see McKenzie v. State*, 583 N.W.2d 744, 746 n.1 (Minn. 1998) (deeming claims waived because appellant "allude[d] to" issues but "fail[ed] to address them in the argument portion of his brief"). While more leeway is typically afforded to pro se litigants, they are "still not relieved of the burden of, at least, adequately communicating to the court what it is [they] want[] accomplished and by whom." *Carpenter v. Woodvale, Inc.*, 400 N.W.2d 727, 729 (Minn. 1987); *see Gruenhagen v. Larson*, 246 N.W.2d 565, 569 (Minn. 1976) (stating that court will not, generally, modify ordinary rules and procedures on the grounds that a pro se party lacks the skills and expertise of an attorney); *Fitzgerald v. Fitzgerald*, 629 N.W.2d 115, 119 (Minn. App. 2001) ("Although some accommodations may be made for pro se litigants, this court has repeatedly emphasized that pro se litigants are generally held to the same standards as attorneys and must comply with court rules."). Further, "on appeal[,] error is never presumed. It must be made to appear affirmatively before there can be reversal;" and "the burden of showing error rests upon the one who relies upon it." *Waters v. Fiebelkorn*, 13 N.W.2d 461, 464-65 (Minn. 1944).

In his appellate brief and numerous filings with the district court, Rajasekhar makes a number of vague references to instances of alleged judicial misconduct, ethical violations,

procedural errors, administrative failings, “investigations” into counsel, and erroneous outcomes of prior proceedings. However, he does not articulate with any specificity these allegations of errors, and the errors to which he broadly alludes are presented as only bare assertions. For these reasons, we conclude that any issues or arguments Rajasekhar intended to raise on appeal are not properly before this court. Even if we were to afford Rajasekhar, as a pro se litigant, the (significant) leeway in the construction of his brief necessary for this court to address what—as best as we can infer from the district court’s rulings, his brief, and the district court file—may be the questions he wants this court to address, we would affirm. Specifically, the themes in Rajasekhar’s pro se brief, in the context of the district court’s order and file, suggest that Rajasekhar is seeking review on two points. We conclude that any arguments Rajasekhar makes on these points are without merit.

First, Rajasekhar maintains that he was entitled to court-appointed counsel. He is incorrect. “There is no statutory or constitutional right to counsel in a dissolution proceeding.” *Reed v. Albaaj*, 723 N.W.2d 50, 56 (Minn. App. 2006); see *Hepfel v. Bashaw*, 279 N.W.2d 342, 348 (Minn. 1979) (noting that, generally, indigent parties do not have a right to court-appointed counsel in civil proceedings).

Second, Rajasekhar continues to argue on appeal that he is entitled to “spousal support” from respondent. This argument appears to include the following: (1) Rajasekhar is presently low-income and therefore lives in suboptimal housing and conditions; (2) his housing and other living conditions are unsuitable for his child; and (3) he has a right to some custody of his child pursuant to the dissolution agreement. Therefore, Rajasekhar

argues, respondent, who has a shared responsibility for their child’s wellbeing also has the obligation to ensure that Rajasekhar’s housing and other circumstances meet a certain standard when the child stays with him. We agree with the district court that this claim has no basis in law.

Spousal support, maintenance, and property division—as well as child support—are provided for by statute. *E.g.*, Minn. Stat. § 518.552-68 (2018). Nowhere in the relevant sections does it provide that one parent’s duty to ensure the welfare of his or her child includes the responsibility to financially contribute to the other parent’s material conditions where it would otherwise be less than ideal for the care of the shared minor child. While Rajasekhar makes a number of tangential assertions to his claimed right to spousal support, none purport to demonstrate that there exists a basis in law for this claim. Moreover, the judgement and decree for the original divorce explicitly states that both parties waived all issues with respect to spousal maintenance, and Rajasekhar does not challenge the validity of that waiver. Thus, even if there was legal support for Rajasekhar’s contention, the district court would have lacked jurisdiction to address it. *Loo v. Loo*, 520 N.W.2d 740, 743 (Minn. 1994) (“The legislature has given the trial courts continuing jurisdiction over dissolution proceedings by allowing modifications in . . . maintenance and support unless an enforceable waiver of the statutory right to seek modification of maintenance exists.”).

Affirmed.