

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

WRIT PETITION NO. 123 OF 2015

Ankit Arun Bhargava and Others. ..Petitioners.
Versus
State of Maharashtra & Another. ..Respondents.

Mr. Ranveer Sekhawat i/b Raj Legal for the Petitioners.
Respondent No. 2 in-person.
Mrs. U. V. Kejriwal, learned APP for the State.

Coram : RANJIT MORE &
R. G. KETKAR, JJ.
Date : **October 13, 2015.**

P. C. :

1. At the outset, learned Counsel appearing for the Petitioner seeks leave to amend so as to incorporate the details of criminal proceedings. Leave granted. Necessary amendments be carried out forthwith.

2. Heard. Learned Counsel appearing for the Petitioner and Respondent No.2 in-person. This is petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, seeking to quash CC.No. 96 of 2015 pending on the file of Principal Judge, CBD Belapur, Vashi which has arisen from FIR No. I-181/2014 registered with Vashi Police Station. The said FIR is registered at the instance of Respondent No.2, alleging the commission of offence punishable under sections 498A, 406, 323, 504 read with 34 of IPC and Section 4 of Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

3. Petitioner No.1 and Respondent No. 2 were husband and wife. Rest of the Petitioners are the family members of Petitioner No.1. Matrimonial disputes between the parties gave rise to the filing of civil as well as criminal proceedings by the parties against one another and the subject matter of present petition is one of them.

4. The learned Counsel appearing for the Petitioner and Respondent No.2 who is appearing in-person submitted that with the help and intervention of family members, friends and well-wishers, the parties have amicably settled their differences by way of mutual settlement by recording a Memorandum of Settlement dated 1st April 2015. They submitted that pursuant to the same, present petition is filed for quashing the above criminal proceedings, by consent.

5. Respondent No. 2 has filed an Affidavit, wherein she has stated that all the disputes between herself and the Petitioners have been amicably settled and therefore she is withdrawing all the allegations made by herself against the Petitioners. She has further stated she has stated that she is not interested in continuing with the criminal prosecution of the Petitioners in the subject FIR. She has solemnly affirmed that she is withdrawing all the allegations made against the Petitioner in the said FIR and that she has no objection for quashing the

proceedings of the criminal case.

6. Respondent No.2 is personally present before the Court. On specific query made by us, she submitted that she has made the said affidavit on her own free will, without there being any pressure or undue influence. She has further confirmed that she has no objection for quashing the criminal proceedings in question initiated by her against the Petitioners.

7. The Apex Court in B. S. Joshi vs. State of Haryana reported [AIR 2003 SC 1386] has held that in the event of settlement of matrimonial dispute, FIR criminal prosecution under Section 498A can be quashed, even though the said offence is not compoundable in terms of Section 320 of the Cr.P.C. The relevant observations of the Apex Court are contained in Paras 14 and 15 which are reproduced herein below:

“14. There is no doubt that the object of introducing Chapter XX-A containing Section 498A in the Indian Penal Code was to prevent the torture to a woman by her husband or by relatives of her husband. Section 498A was added with a view to punishing a husband and his relatives who harass or torture the wife to coerce her or her relatives to satisfy unlawful demands of dowry. The hyper-technical view would be counter productive and would act against interests of women and against the object for which this provision was added. There is every likelihood that non-exercise of inherent power to quash the proceedings to meet the ends of justice would prevent women from settling earlier. That is not the object of Chapter XXA of Indian Penal Code.

15. In view of the above discussion, we hold that the High Court in exercise of its inherent powers can quash

criminal proceedings or FIR or complaint and Section 320 of the Code does not limit or affect the powers under Section 482 of the Code.”

Similar view has been taken by the Full Bench of this Court in Abasaheb Yadav Honmane vs. State of Maharashtra [2008(5) LJ.Soft 46].

8. It can, thus, be seen that the matter has been amicably settled between the parties. From the perusal of complaint, it transpires that the allegations are totally personal in nature. There is no element of public law involved in the case. The offence alleged cannot be said to have any impact on the society. In these circumstances, and especially, in view of the law laid down by the Apex Court in the case of Madan Mohan Abbot vs. State of Punjab, [(2008) 4 SCC 582], we find that no purpose would be served by keeping the criminal proceedings pending except burdening the Criminal Courts which are already overburdened.

9. In the light of the principles laid down by the Apex Court in the aforesaid decision as well as in the case of Narinder Singh vs. State of Punjab [2014 AIR SCW 2065] we are of the considered view that there is no impediment in quashing the subject criminal proceedings. Consequently, the petition is made absolute in terms of prayer clause (a) with no order as to costs.

[R. G. KETKAR, J.]

[RANJIT MORE, J.]