

* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ **CRL.M.C. 790/2016**

Date of Decision: July 19th, 2016

AYUSH SETHI & ORS

..... Petitioner

Through: Mr.Rajeev Kapoor, Adv.

versus

STATE & ANR.

..... Respondents

Through: Ms.Meenakshi Chauhan, APP.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE P.S.TEJI

P.S.TEJI, J.

1. The present petition under Section 482 Cr.P.C. has been filed by the petitioners, namely, Sh. Ayushi Sethi, Sh. Bharat Bhushan Sethi, Smt. Bharti Sethi, Sh. Agam Sethi, Sh. Apar Sethi, Smt. Anita Vij for quashing of FIR No.165/2013 dated 19.09.2013, under Sections 498-A/406/34 IPC registered at Police Station C.A.W. Nanak Pura on the basis of the Memorandum Of Understanding executed in view of the settlement arrived at between petitioner no.1 through his attorney Sh. B.B. Sethi and respondent no.2, namely, Smt. Roopali Sethi on 11.01.2014.

2. Learned Additional Public Prosecutor for respondent-State submitted that the respondent No.2, present in the Court has been identified to be the complainant/first-informant of the FIR in question by her counsel.

3. The factual matrix of the present case is that the marriage was solemnized between petitioner no.1 and the respondent no.2 on 26.10.2012 as per Hindu rites and ceremony. The dowry articles given

in marriage, allegedly, seemed insufficient to the husband of the complainant and to her in-laws and that the mother-in-law of the complainant started demanding a car by make and model Renault Duster. On 17.11.2012, the husband of the complainant beat her mercilessly her for demand of more cash and the car named above. The complainant was allegedly beaten and tortured for dowry almost on a daily basis. On 8th March, 2013, the complainant was thrown out of her matrimonial house after which she left for Karnal, where she was treated for depression. In-laws of the complainant came to Karnal and took her away, allegedly fearing a police case due to the complainant's condition. The complainant's parents and village elders brought her back soon after.

Thereafter, the complainant got lodged the complaint following which the FIR in question was registered against the petitioners. During the pendency of the proceedings, the matter was settled between the accused persons and the respondent no.2.

4. Respondent No.2, present in the Court, submitted that the dispute between the parties has been amicably resolved. As per the MOU, it is agreed between the parties that petitioner no.1 and respondent no.2 shall take divorce by way of mutual consent within 30 days of execution of the said MOU. It is also agreed that petitioner no.1 shall pay a sum of Rs. 14,00,000/- ('Settlement Amount') to respondent no.2 in full and final settlement towards all her claims arising out of the marriage between them including maintenance (past, present and future), permanent alimony, istridhan and dowry articles. It is agreed that the petitioner no.1 shall pay the above mentioned

amount in the manner enunciated in the terms of the MOU. It is agreed that the Settlement Amount includes the expenses incurred by respondent no.2's family at the time of the wedding and that after the payment of the amount of Rs. 14 Lakhs, respondent no.2 shall have no claim left against the petitioner and that she shall never make any claim with regard to anything against the petitioner no.1 or his family members in future. It is also agreed that the petitioner no.1 shall hand over against receipt, the entire articles remaining with him, including all the claimed jewellery articles as per the separate lists prepared at the mutually agreed time of handing over of the articles. It is agreed that the petitioner no.1 shall pay an amount of Rs. 5 Lakhs in the form of pay order or DD to respondent no.2 at the time of quashing of the FIR in question and recording of her statement for the same before this Court. It is also agreed that the respondent no.2 shall return jewellery items (one chain, round ring and tops) to the petitioner no.1 at the time of taking jewellery items from the petitioner no.1. It is also agreed that after taking the jewellery items and the Settlement Amount from petitioner no.1 and after recording of statements in the first motion under Section 13-B(1) of H.M.A., 1955, the parties shall withdraw and make necessary statements for the withdrawal of the cases filed by them before the Court(s) concerned. It is also agreed that they shall not file any further cases of any nature against each other or their families in the future and that they shall not claim any maintenance and/or any right, title, claim or interest, of any nature whatsoever in the property, movable or immovable of the other party and/or their family members, relatives at all times. Respondent

No.2 affirmed the contents of the aforesaid settlement and of her affidavit dated 04.02.2016 supporting this petition. In the affidavit, she has stated that she has no objection if the FIR in question is quashed. All the disputes and differences have been resolved through mutual consent. Now no dispute with petitioners survives and so, the proceedings arising out of the FIR in question be brought to an end. Statement of the respondent No.2 has been recorded in this regard in which she stated that she has entered into a compromise with the petitioners and has settled all the disputes with them. She further stated that she has no objection if the FIR in question is quashed.

5. In ***Gian Singh v. State of Punjab (2012) 10 SCC 303*** Apex Court has recognized the need of amicable resolution of disputes in cases like the instant one, by observing as under:-

“61. In other words, the High Court must consider whether it would be unfair or contrary to the interest of justice to continue with the criminal proceedings or continuation of criminal proceedings would tantamount to abuse of process of law despite settlement and compromise between the victim and the wrongdoer and whether to secure the ends of justice, it is appropriate that criminal case is put to an end and if the answer to the above question(s) is in the affirmative, the High Court shall be well within its jurisdiction to quash the criminal proceedings.”

6. The aforesaid dictum stands reiterated by the Apex Court in a recent judgment in ***Narinder Singh v. State of Punjab (2014) 6 SCC 466***. The relevant observations of the Apex Court in ***Narinder Singh (Supra)*** are as under:-

“29. In view of the aforesaid discussion, we sum up and lay down the following principles by which the High Court would be guided in giving adequate treatment to the settlement between the parties and exercising its power under Section 482

of the Code while accepting the settlement and quashing the proceedings or refusing to accept the settlement with direction to continue with the criminal proceedings:

29.1 Power conferred under Section 482 of the Code is to be distinguished from the power which lies in the Court to compound the offences under Section 320 of the Code. No doubt, under Section 482 of the Code, the High Court has inherent power to quash the criminal proceedings even in those cases which are not compoundable, where the parties have settled the matter between themselves. However, this power is to be exercised sparingly and with caution.

29.2. When the parties have reached the settlement and on that basis petition for quashing the criminal proceedings is filed, the guiding factor in such cases would be to secure:

- (i) ends of justice, or
- (ii) to prevent abuse of the process of any court.

While exercising the power the High Court is to form an opinion on either of the aforesaid two objectives.

29.3. Such a power is not to be exercised in those prosecutions which involve heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. Such offences are not private in nature and have a serious impact on society. Similarly, for the offences alleged to have been committed under special statute like the Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity are not to be quashed merely on the basis of compromise between the victim and the offender.

29.4. On the other hand, those criminal cases having overwhelmingly and predominantly civil character, particularly those arising out of commercial transactions or arising out of matrimonial relationship or family disputes should be quashed when the parties have resolved their entire disputes among themselves.

7. The inherent powers of the High Court ought to be exercised to prevent the abuse of process of law and to secure the ends of justice. The respondent no.2 agrees to the quashing of the FIR in question

without any threat or coercion or undue influence and has stated that the matter has been settled out of her own free will. As the matter has been settled and compromised amicably, so, there would be an extraordinary delay in the process of law if the legal proceedings between the parties are carried on. So, this Court is of the considered opinion that this is a fit case to invoke the jurisdiction under Section 482 Cr.P.C. to prevent the abuse of process of law and to secure the ends of justice.

8. The incorporation of inherent power under Section 482 Cr.P.C. is meant to deal with the situation in the absence of express provision of law to secure the ends of justice such as, where the process is abused or misused; where the ends of justice cannot be secured; where the process of law is used for unjust or unlawful object; to avoid the causing of harassment to any person by using the provision of Cr.P.C. or to avoid the delay of the legal process in the delivery of justice. Whereas, the inherent power is not to be exercised to circumvent the express provisions of law.

9. It is settled law that the inherent power of the High Court under Section 482 Cr.P.C. should be used sparingly. The Hon'ble Apex Court in the case of *State of Maharashtra through CBI v. Vikram Anatrai Doshi and Ors.* MANU/SC/0842/2014 and in the case of *Inder Singh Goswami v. State of Uttaranchal* MANU/SC/0808/2009 has observed that powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C. must be exercised sparingly, carefully and with great caution. Only when the Court comes to the conclusion that there would be manifest injustice or there would be abuse of the process of the Court if such power is not

exercised, Court would quash the proceedings.

10. It is a well settled law that where the High Court is convinced that the offences are entirely personal in nature and therefore do not affect public peace or tranquility and where it feels that quashing of such proceedings on account of compromise would bring about peace and would secure ends of justice, it should not hesitate to quash them. In such cases, pursuing prosecution would be waste of time and energy. Non-compoundable offences are basically an obstruction in entering into compromise. In certain cases, the main offence is compoundable but the connected offences are not. In the case of ***B.S. Joshi and others v. State of Haryana and another*** 2003 (4) SCC 675 the Hon'ble Apex Court observed that even though the provisions of Section 320 Cr.P.C. would not apply to such offences which are not compoundable, it did not limit or affect the powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C. The Hon'ble Apex Court laid down that if for the purpose of securing the ends of justice, quashing of FIR becomes necessary, section 320 Cr.P.C. would not be a bar to the exercise of power of quashing. In the nutshell, the Hon'ble Apex Court justified the exercise of powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C. to quash the proceedings to secure the ends of justice in view of the special facts and circumstances of the case, even where the offences were non-compoundable.

In the light of the aforesaid, this Court is of the view that notwithstanding the fact the offence under Section 498A IPC is a non-compoundable offence, there should be no impediment in quashing the

FIR under this section, if the Court is otherwise satisfied that the facts and circumstances of the case so warrant.

11. *The Courts in India are now normally taking the view that endeavour should be taken to promote conciliation and secure speedy settlement of disputes relating to marriage and family affairs such as, matrimonial disputes between the couple or/and between the wife and her in-laws. India being a vast country naturally has large number of married persons resulting into high numbers of matrimonial disputes due to differences in temperament, life-styles, opinions, thoughts etc. between such couples, due to which majority is coming to the Court to get redressal. In its 59th report, the Law Commission of India had emphasized that while dealing with disputes concerning the family, the Court ought to adopt an approach radically different from that adopted in ordinary civil proceedings and that it should make reasonable efforts at settlement before the commencement of the trial. Further it is also the constitutional mandate for speedy disposal of such disputes and to grant quick justice to the litigants. But, our Courts are already over burdened due to pendency of large number of cases because of which it becomes difficult for speedy disposal of matrimonial disputes alone. As the matrimonial disputes are mainly between the husband and the wife and personal matters are involved in such disputes, so, it requires conciliatory procedure to bring a settlement between them. Nowadays, mediation has played a very important role in settling the disputes, especially, matrimonial disputes and has yielded good results. The Court must exercise its*

inherent power under Section 482 Cr.P.C. to put an end to the matrimonial litigations at the earliest so that the parties can live peacefully.

12. Since the subject matter of this FIR is essentially matrimonial, which now stands mutually and amicably settled between the parties, therefore, continuance of proceedings arising out of the FIR in question would be an exercise in futility and is a fit case for this Court to exercise its inherent jurisdiction.

13. In the facts and circumstances of this case, in view of statement made by the respondent No.2 and the compromise arrived at between the parties, the FIR in question warrants to be put to an end and proceedings emanating thereupon need to be quashed.

14. Accordingly, this petition is allowed and FIR No.165/2013 dated 19.09.2013, under Sections 498-A/406/34 IPC registered at Police Station C.A.W. Nanak Pura and the proceedings emanating therefrom are quashed against the petitioners.

15. This petition is accordingly disposed of.

(P.S.TEJI)
JUDGE

JULY 19, 2016
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