

* IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

+ CRL.M.C. 4964/2015 & Crl. M.A. 17797/2015

Date of Decision : February 12th, 2016

SURENDER & ORS Petitioners
Through Mr. N.K. Gupta, Adv.

versus

THE STATE NCT OF DELHI & ANR Respondents
Through Mr. Satya Narayan Vashishth, APP
for State alongwith SI Anil Kumar,
P.S. Sabji Mandi
Mr. Suraj Prakash, Adv. for R-2
alongwith R-2 in person.

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. Surender, Smt. Bimla Devi @ Vimla Devi, Smt. Kanta Devi, Sh. Tulsi Ram Sharma @ Babli, Smt. Dolly @ Ram Bhateri and Sh. Jai Prakash @ JP for quashing of FIR No.73/2012 dated 01.04.2012, under Sections 498A/406/34 IPC registered at Police Station Subzi Mandi on the basis of the mediation report of the Delhi Govt. Mediation & Conciliation Centre, Delhi Disputes Resolution Society (Regd.) arrived at between the petitioner

no.1 and respondent No.2, namely, Smt. Vijeta on 24.09.2014.

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 SI Anil Kumar.

3. The factual matrix of the present case is that the marriage between the petitioner no.1 and respondent no.2 was solemnized on 16.05.2010. After the reception ceremony, the accused/petitioners started harassing the complainant on the point of bringing less dowry. They also taunted the complainant that she did not bring along any gold or silver items with her. Smt. Kanta and Dolly used to instigate the husband of the complainant on which the husband of the complainant used to beat her up. In the month of July, 2010, Smt. Kanta picked up a quarrel with the complainant on which Babli, JP, Dolly and Surinder started abusing the complainant in filthy language and pushed her and gave her beatings. The petitioners also misbehaved with the mother of the complainant and they also asked her to take back the complainant and also that Surinder wants to divorce her. The accused-Surinder also used to consume liquor and

used to give beatings to the complainant. On one day, on the instigation of Kanta, the husband of the complainant held the neck of the complainant and pushed her against the wall and thus she received some injuries. One day, Dolly also picked up a fight with the complainant on which Dolly slapped the complainant. The complainant was also beaten up on 11th and 12th April 2011. The complainant's mother then took her along on 12.04.2011 and got her medically treated. Since then the complainant has been residing with her parents. All the istridhan of the complainant was kept in the custody of her in-laws and was not returned to her.

Thereafter, the complainant lodged a complaint with the police against the accused/petitioners consequent to which the FIR in question was registered. All the accused persons were released on bail by the Trial Court. Later on, the parties got their issues settled by mutual consent in the mediation cell.

4. Respondent No.2, present in the Court, submitted that the dispute between the parties has been amicably resolved. As per the mediation report, it has been agreed between the parties that they shall take divorce by way of mutual consent. It has been agreed that

petitioner no.1 shall pay an amount of Rs. 2 lacs to respondent no.2 as full and final payment of all her claims, arising out of the matrimonial alliance vis-à-vis maintenance (past, present and future), permanent alimony, jewellery, stridhan, dowry articles etc. It is agreed that the schedule of payment of the aforesaid amount shall be done as enunciated in the mediation report. It is agreed that after making the payment of the aforesaid amount nothing shall remain due towards petitioner no.1 and his family members and that respondent no.2 shall not claim any right over the property of petitioner no.1 in future. It is agreed that they shall not file any case or complaint against each other pertaining to their marriage before any Forum or Court of law in future. It is agreed that both parties shall bear their own expenditures for filing for divorce petition by mutual consent and that they shall cooperate with each other in filing the above mentioned divorce petition. It is also agreed that they shall not give any cause of complaint to each other and desist themselves from causing any harassment in any form. Respondent No.2 affirms the contents of the aforesaid settlement and of her affidavit dated 16.10.2015 supporting this petition. In the affidavit, the respondent no.2 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 tranquillity 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.73/2012 dated

01.04.2012, under Sections 498A/406/34 IPC registered at Police Station Subzi Mandi the proceedings emanating therefrom are quashed against the petitioners.

15. This petition is accordingly disposed of.

16. Application Crl. M.A. 17797/2015 is also disposed of.

(P.S.TEJI)
JUDGE

FEBRUARY 12, 2016
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