

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH.

CRM-M-41714 of 2017
Date of Decision: 14.12.2017

Naresh Dulgach @ Naresh Durgach and othersPetitioners.

Versus

State of Punjab and othersRespondents.

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RAMENDRA JAIN

Present: Mr.M.S.Sidhu, Advocate, for the petitioners.

Mr. Karanbir Singh, AAG, Punjab.

Ms. Gaganjot Kaur, Advocate, for respondent No.2 to 4.

Ramendra Jain, J . (Oral)

Through this petition under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, prayer has been made for quashing F.I.R. No.184 dated 08.10.2014 under Sections 307, 323, 341, 148, 149 and 427 of the Indian Penal Code (for short, 'IPC'), pertaining to Police Station City South, Moga, on the basis of compromise dated 18.07.2017 (Annexure-P3).

Vide order dated 06.11.2017 passed by a Co-ordinate Bench of this Court, the parties were directed to appear before the trial Court on 14.11.2017 for recording their statements with a direction to the Magistrate to furnish a report qua veracity thereof, if any, between the parties.

Consequently, the parties had appeared before the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Moga on 14.11.2017 and got recorded their statements.

Report from the concerned Magistrate has been received vide letter No.960

dated 18.11.2017 duly forwarded by learned District & Sessions Judge,

Moga vide endorsement No. 6062/EB dated 20.11.2017.

According to the report of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Moga, the compromise between the parties is genuine, voluntarily and with their free will and without any coercion or undue influence from any corner.

Two Coordinate Benches of this Court in CRM-M No.15154 of 2016 titled 'Jagroop Singh and others vs. State of Punjab and others' and CRM-M No.10292 of 2016 titled 'Manjit Singh and others vs. State of Punjab and others', while dealing with the point as to whether F.I.R. for the offence under Section 307 I.P.C. can be quashed, have discussed and relied upon Narinder Singh and others vs. State of Punjab and another, 2014(2) R.C.R. (Criminal) 482; Kulwinder Singh and others vs. State of Punjab and another, 2007(3) R.C.R. (Criminal) 1053 and Gian Singh vs. State of Punjab and another, 2012(4) R.C.R. (Criminal) 543, wherein it has been held as under:-

{6}. Full Bench of this Court in Kulwinder Singh and others vs. State of Punjab and another, 2007(3) RCR (CrL.) 1052 considered the scope of powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C., to hold that High Court has powers to quash prosecution in order to achieve ends of justice and to prevent abuse of process of law. These powers are not limited to matrimonial dispute alone, rather these powers are unlimited. However these powers are to be exercised very sparingly and with utmost care and caution. There is no statutory bar which can affect the inherent powers of High Court under Section 482 Cr.P.C. The powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C., is to be exercised Ex-Debitia, justitia to prevent abuse of process of Court.

{7}. In exercise of inherent powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C., criminal proceedings are not to be quashed where the offence is heinous in nature. Proceedings can only be quashed where the issue is overwhelmingly and predominantly of civil profile arising out of commercial, financial, mercantile and civil or matrimonial nature. In a way dispute may involve wrong which is basically private or personal in nature and the parties have redressed the same by entering into compromise.

In Gian Singh vs. State of Punjab and another 2012(4) RCR (Crl.) 543, the Hon'ble Supreme Court considered necessary imports of all previous precedents and observed in the following manner:-

“57. The position that emerges from the above discussion can be summarised thus: the power of the High Court in quashing a criminal proceeding or FIR or complaint in exercise of its inherent jurisdiction is distinct and different from the power given to a criminal court for compounding the offences under Section 320 of the Code. Inherent power is of wide plenitude with no statutory limitation but it has to be exercised in accord with the guideline engrafted in such power viz; (i) to secure the ends of justice or (ii) to prevent abuse of the process of any Court. In what cases power to quash the criminal proceeding or complaint or F.I.R may be exercised where the offender and victim have settled their dispute would depend on the facts and

circumstances of each case and no category can be prescribed. However, before exercise of such power, the High Court must have due regard to the nature and gravity of the crime. Heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. cannot be fittingly quashed even though the victim or victim's family and the offender have settled the dispute. Such offences are not private in nature and have serious impact on society. Similarly, any compromise between the victim and offender in relation to the offences under special statutes like Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity etc; cannot provide for any basis for quashing criminal proceedings involving such offences. But the criminal cases having overwhelmingly and pre-dominatingly civil flavour stand on different footing for the purposes of quashing, particularly the offences arising from commercial, financial, mercantile, civil, partnership or such like transactions or the offences arising out of matrimony relating to dowry, etc. or the family disputes where the wrong is basically private or personal in nature and the parties have resolved their entire dispute. In this category of cases, High Court may quash criminal proceedings if in its view, because of the compromise between the offender and victim, the possibility of

conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal case would put accused to great oppression and prejudice and extreme injustice would be caused to him by not quashing the criminal case despite full and complete settlement and compromise with the victim. 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 proceeding or continuation of the criminal proceeding would tantamount to abuse of process of law despite settlement and compromise between the victim and 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 affirmative, the High Court shall be well within its jurisdiction to quash the criminal proceeding.”

The quashing of criminal proceedings in an offence under Section 307 IPC came up for detailed discussion before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Narinder Singh and others vs. State of Punjab and another, 2014(2) RCR (CrL.) 482. After due consideration the Hon'ble Apex Court formalised the issue of compounding of offences under Section 307 IPC to say that it is an offence against society and is non-compoundable, but in certain cases the High Court would be guided to give adequate treatment to the settlement between the parties in exercise of inherent powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C.

Following principles were laid down in para 31 of the judgment:-

“31. 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:

(I) 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.

(II) 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.

(III) Such a power is not 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 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.

(IV) On the other, those criminal cases having overwhelmingly and pre-dominantly 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.

(V) While exercising its powers, the High Court is to examine as to whether the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal cases would put the accused to great oppression and prejudice and extreme injustice would be caused to him by not quashing the criminal cases.

(VI) Offences under Section 307 IPC would fall in the category of heinous and serious offences and therefore is to be generally treated as crime against the society and not against the individual alone. However, the High

Court would not rest its decision merely because there is a mention of Section 307 IPC in the FIR or the charge is framed under this provision. It would be open to the High Court to examine as to whether incorporation of Section 307 IPC is there for the sake of it or the prosecution has collected sufficient evidence, which if proved, would lead to proving the charge under Section 307 IPC. For this purpose, it would be open to the High Court to go by the nature of injury sustained, whether such injury is inflicted on the vital/delegate parts of the body, nature of weapons used etc. Medical report in respect of injuries suffered by the victim can generally be the guiding factor. On the basis of this prima facie analysis, the High Court can examine as to whether there is a strong possibility of conviction or the chances of conviction are remote and bleak. In the former case it can refuse to accept the settlement and quash the criminal proceedings whereas in the later case it would be permissible for the High Court to accept the plea compounding the offence based on complete settlement between the parties. At this stage, the Court can also be swayed by the fact that the settlement between the parties is going to result in harmony between them which may improve their future relationship.

(VII) While deciding whether to exercise its power under Section 482 of the Code or not, timings of

settlement play a crucial role. Those cases where the settlement is arrived at immediately after the alleged commission of offence and the matter is still under investigation, the High Court may be liberal in accepting the settlement to quash the criminal proceedings/ investigation. It is because of the reason that at this stage the investigation is still on and even the charge sheet has not been filed. Likewise, those cases where the charge is framed but the evidence is yet to start or the evidence is still at infancy stage, the High Court can show benevolence in exercising its powers favourably, but after prima facie assessment of the circumstances/ material mentioned above. On the other hand, where the prosecution evidence is almost complete or after the conclusion of the evidence the matter is at the stage of argument, normally the High Court should refrain from exercising its power under Section 482 of the Code, as in such cases the trial court would be in a position to decide the case finally on merits and to come a conclusion as to whether the offence under Section 307 IPC is committed or not. Similarly, in those cases where the conviction is already recorded by the trial court and the matter is at the appellate stage before the High Court, mere compromise between the parties would not be a ground to accept the same resulting in acquittal of the offender who has already been convicted by the trial

court. Here charge is proved under Section 307 IPC and conviction is already recorded of a heinous crime and, therefore, there is no question of sparing a convict found guilty of such a crime.”

{8}. In nutshell each case has to be considered on its own merits. While exercising inherent powers, High Court has to examine whether possibility of conviction is bleak and continuation of proceedings would put the accused to great oppression and prejudice and would result in futility. Offence under Section 307 IPC falls under the category of heinous offence and generally it is to be treated offence against the State/society and not an individual offence. At the same time High Court would not base its decision merely because offence under Section 307 IPC is mentioned in the FIR or in the charge. It is still open before the Court as to whether insertion of offence under Section 307 IPC is based on evidence or it is just for the sake of incorporation in the FIR.

{9}. In a way, Court is empowered to look into the nature of injury sustained by the victim, whether such injury is inflicted on the vital parts of the body, the nature of weapon used in the crime, medical evidence brought on record in respect of injuries sustained by the victim, place of occurrence and stage of the case are the relevant factors on which this Court can examine as to

whether there is strong possibility of conviction or the chances of conviction are bleak and remote. In case of quashing of criminal prosecution arising out of offence under Section 307 IPC, following facts are necessary to be considered for arriving at the conclusion i.e.:-

(i) Whether offence would remain an offence against State/society or it can be diluted, if weapon used is not deadly weapon,

(ii) Place where occurrence took place is not publicly exposed so as to exhibit action in open before the society.

(iii) Medical opinion is such that it aggravated with the passage of time and ultimately brought the offence within the fold of 307 IPC, and

(iv) the offence is the outcome of any matrimonial discord between the parties.

Consideration of principles highlighted and guidelines framed reveal that the Court has to weigh the culpability on the aforesaid criterion and if the alleged act can be segregated to mean that it was not in public view nor it was exhibited in public view with deadly weapon and if the medical evidence is also based on opinion, evidence highlighting happening or nonhappening of particular event then the offence under Section 307 IPC can be considered for compounding on the basis of compromise.”

In view of the above factual aspects of the case and considering

the fact that the compromise will bring harmony in relations between the parties, the petition is accepted and aforesaid F.I.R.No.184 qua the petitioners, is hereby quashed, subject to depositing costs of ₹10,000/- by the petitioner with the Punjab Legal Services Authority, Chandigarh within one week.

File be put up on 21.12.2017 for production of receipt qua deposit of costs.

14.12.2017.
smriti

(RAMENDRA JAIN)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No