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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M No. 839 of 2017
Date of Decision: 16.05.2017

Kulwant Singh

.....Petitioner

Vs

State of Punjab and another

.....Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RAJ MOHAN SINGH

Present: Mr. P.P.S. Duggall, Advocate,
for the petitioner.

Ms. Rimplejeet Kaur, A.A.G., Punjab.

Ms. M.N. Jajoria, Advocate,
for respondent No. 2.

RAJ MOHAN SINGH, J. (oral)

{1}. Prayer in this petition under Section 482 Cr.P.C. is for quashing of FIR No. 151, dated 24.10.2016, under Sections 435, 188 and 427 I.P.C., registered at Police Station Guruhar Sahai, District Ferozepur (Annexure P-1) as well as all the subsequent proceedings arising therefrom on the basis of compromise.

{2}. Vide order dated 13.01.2017, this Court directed both

the parties to appear before the Illaqa Magistrate for recording of their statements in context of genuineness of the compromise in question. Both the parties have appeared before the Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Guruhar Sahai, on 23.01.2017 and their statements have been recorded by the Magistrate.

{3}. As per report submitted by the Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Guruhar Sahai, both the parties have appeared before him and made their respective statements on 23.01.2017, endorsing the factum of compromise. The compromise was found to be genuine and voluntary in nature.

{4}. The extent and sweep of inherent powers of the High Court under Section 482 Cr.P.C., for quashing criminal prosecution on merits as well as on the basis of compromise between the accused and the victim remained question of interpretation since long. The Hon'ble Apex Court after due consideration of judgments in Madhu Limaye vs. State of Maharashtra, AIR 1978 Supreme Court 47, Bhajan Lal vs. State of Haryana and others, AIR 1992 Supreme Court 604 and State of Karnataka vs. L. Muniswamy and others, AIR 1977 Supreme Court 1489, has summed up the controversy in State through Special Cell, New Delhi vs. Navjot Sandhu @ Afshan Guru and others, 2003(2) RCR (CrI.) 860 (SC). The legal position summed up in the said judgment is in the following

manner:-

“Thus, the law is that Article 227 of the Constitution of India gives the High Court the power of superintendence over all courts and tribunals throughout the territories in relation to which it exercises jurisdiction. This jurisdiction cannot be limited or fettered by any Act of the State Legislature. The supervisory jurisdiction extends to keeping the subordinate tribunals within the limits of their authority and to seeing that they obey the law. The powers under Article 227 are wide and can be used, to meet the ends of justice. They can be used to interfere even with an interlocutory order. However, the power under Article 227 is a discretionary power and it is difficult to attribute to an order of the High Court, such a source of power, when the High Court itself does not in terms purport to exercise any such discretionary power. It is settled law that this power of judicial superintendence, under Article 227, must be exercised sparingly and only to keep subordinate courts and tribunals within the bound of their authority and not to correct mere errors. Further, where the statute bans the exercise of revisional powers it would require very exceptional circumstances to warrant interference under Article 227 of the Constitution of India since the power of superintendence was not meant to circumvent statutory law. It is settled law that the jurisdiction under Article 227 could not be exercised "as the

cloak of an appeal in disguise.

Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code starts with the words "Nothing in this Code". Thus the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court under Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code can be exercised even when there is a bar under Section 397 or some other provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code. However, as is set out in Satya Narayan Sharma's case (supra) this power cannot be exercised if there is a statutory bar in some other enactment. If the order assailed is purely of an interlocutory character, which could be corrected in exercise of revisional powers or appellate powers the High Court must refuse to exercise its inherent power. The inherent power is to be used only in cases where there is an abuse of the process of the Court or where interference is absolutely necessary for securing the ends of justice. The inherent power must be exercised very sparingly as cases which require interference would be few and far between. The most common case where inherent jurisdiction is generally exercised is where criminal proceedings are required to be quashed because they are initiated illegally, vexatiously or without jurisdiction. Most of the cases set out herein above fall in this category. It must be remembered that the inherent power is not to be resorted to if there is a specific provision in the Code or any other enactment for redress of the

grievance of the aggrieved party. This power should not be exercised against an express bar of law engrafted in any other provision of the Criminal Procedure Code. This power cannot be exercised as against an express bar in some other enactment.”

{5}. 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.

{6}. 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.”

{7}. Taking into consideration totality of facts and circumstances, this Court is of the view that the case can be considered for quashing of FIR along with subsequent proceedings arising therefrom on the basis of compromise.

{8}. Resultantly, FIR No. 151, dated 24.10.2016, under Sections 435, 188 and 427 I.P.C., registered at Police Station Guruhar Sahai, District Ferozepur (Annexure P-1) and all the subsequent proceedings arising therefrom are hereby quashed.

(RAJ MOHAN SINGH)
JUDGE

May 16, 2017
Apurva

Whether reasoned/speaking : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No