

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH, BILASPUR

CRMP No. 43 of 2018

1. Harinarayan Sonchhatra S/o Santram Aged About 28 Years,
 2. Santram Sonchhatra S/o Jaitram Aged About 56 Years,
 3. Shakun Bai Sonchhatra W/o Santram Aged About 50 Years,
 4. Shivnarayan S/o Santram Sonchhatra Aged About 26 Years,
 5. Satyanarayan Sonchhatra S/o Santram Sonchhatra Aged About 24 Years,
 6. Sheshnarayan S/o Santram Sonchhatra Aged About 21 Years,
- All are Dhobi By Caste R/o Behind Gas Godown, Kapil Nagar,
Sarkanda, P. S. Sarkanda District Bilaspur Chhattisgarh

---- Petitioners

Versus

1. State Of Chhattisgarh Through The Police Station Sarkanda,
Bilaspur, District Bilaspur Chhattisgarh
2. Smt. Aasha Sonchhatra, W/o Harinarayan Sonchhatra Aged
About 26 Years R/o Kapil Nagar, Sarkanda, P. S. Sarkanda District
Bilaspur Chhattisgarh

---- Respondents

For petitioners - Shri Atanu Ghosh, Advocate.
For Respondent/State –Shri Sangarsh Pandey, Dy.G.A.
For respondent No.2/complainant-Ms. Raashi Tiwari, Advocate.

Hon'ble Shri Justice Goutam Bhaduri

Order

25/07/2018

Heard.

1. Instant petition is against the order dated 6/11/2017 whereby an application filed by the petitioners under Section 320(2) of the Cr.P.C. for compromising the case has been partly allowed wherein offence under section 323 read with 34 of IPC was compounded whereas offence under Section 498-A of IPC prayer to compound the same was dismissed.
2. As per the case of the parties, petitioner No.1 Harinarayan Sonchhatra was married to respondent No.2 in the year 2014. Subsequently, marriage could not go along as it was alleged that she was subjected to cruelty for demand of dowry and also was subjected to assault which led to report whereby offence under section 498-A, 323 read with 34 of IPC was registered

under Crime No.560/2015. After charge sheet was filed case was pending before the court below. During pendency of this case an application was filed by the parties on the ground of compromise. It is stated by both the counsel that the petitioners as also respondent that they are living together, therefore offence under section 498-A of IPC be quashed.

3. During the course of hearing statement of the complainant Aasha Sonchhatra was recorded before the Additional Registrar (Judicial) wherein she has stated that she has entered into compromise, therefore she do not want to further prosecute her complaint under Section 498-A of IPC for which criminal case is pending bearing number 4068/2015 before the JMFC.

4. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Gian Singh v. State of Punjab & Another¹** has laid down the following principles :

“61. 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

1 (2012) 10 SCC 303

predominantly 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.

5. Further, in case of ***Parbatbhai Aahir @ Parbatbhai Bhimsinhbhai Karmur & Ors. Vs. State of Gujarat & Ors.*** reported in **(2017) 9 SCC 641** their Lordship again reiterated the view taken in case of *Gian Singh* (supra) and has laid down the following propositions :

“15. The broad principles which emerge from the precedents on the subject, may be summarised in the following propositions :

(i) Section 482 preserves the inherent powers of the High Court to prevent an abuse of the process of any court or to secure the ends of justice. The provision does not confer new powers. It only recognises and preserves powers which inhere in the High Court;

(ii) The invocation of the jurisdiction of the High Court to quash a First Information Report or a criminal proceeding on the ground that a settlement has been arrived at between the offender and the victim is not the same as the invocation of jurisdiction for the purpose of compounding an offence. While compounding an offence, the power of the court is governed by the provisions of Section 320 of the Code of

Criminal Procedure, 1973. The power to quash under Section 482 is attracted even if the offence is non-compoundable.

(iii) In forming an opinion whether a criminal proceeding or complaint should be quashed in exercise of its jurisdiction under Section 482, the High Court must evaluate whether the ends of justice would justify the exercise of the inherent power;

(iv) While the inherent power of the High Court has a wide ambit and plenitude it has to be exercised; (i) to secure the ends of justice or (ii) to prevent an abuse of the process of any court;

(v) The decision as to whether a complaint or First Information Report should be quashed on the ground that the offender and victim have settled the dispute, revolves ultimately on the facts and circumstances of each case and no exhaustive elaboration of principles can be formulated;

(vi) In the exercise of the power under Section 482 and while dealing with a plea that the dispute has been settled, the High Court must have due regard to the nature and gravity of the offence. Heinous and serious offences involving mental depravity or offences such as murder, rape and dacoity cannot appropriately be quashed though the victim or the family of the victim have settled the dispute. Such offences are, truly speaking, not private in nature but have a serious impact upon society. The decision to continue with the trial in such cases is founded on the overriding element of public interest in punishing persons for serious offences;

(vii) As distinguished from serious offences, there may be criminal cases which have an overwhelming or predominant element of a civil dispute. They stand on a distinct footing in so far as the exercise of the inherent power to quash is concerned;

(viii) Criminal cases involving offences which arise from commercial, financial, mercantile, partnership or similar transactions with an essentially civil flavour may in appropriate situations fall for quashing where parties have settled the dispute;

(ix) In such a case, the High Court may quash the criminal proceeding

if in view of the compromise between the disputants, the possibility of a conviction is remote and the continuation of a criminal proceeding would cause oppression and prejudice; and

(x) There is yet an exception to the principle set out in propositions (viii) and (ix) above. Economic offences involving the financial and economic well-being of the state have implications which lie beyond the domain of a mere dispute between private disputants. The High Court would be justified in declining to quash where the offender is involved in an activity akin to a financial or economic fraud or misdemeanour. The consequences of the act complained of upon the financial or economic system will weigh in the balance.

6. Considering the submission made by learned counsel for the parties, further taking into fact the inter-se relation between the parties, no purpose would be served to continue with the criminal case. In view of the statement made by the respondent/complainant and applying the aforesaid principles laid down by the Supreme Court, proceeding of criminal case bearing Criminal Case No.4068/2015 pending before JMFC Bilaspur under Section 498-A read with 34 is quashed. Accordingly, petition stands allowed and petitioners are acquitted of the charges.

Sd/-

(Goutam Bhaduri)

JUDGE