

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRWP No.853 of 2022
Date of Decision: 14.02.2022

Jashanpreet Kaur & another

...Petitioner(s)

Versus

State of Punjab & others.

...Respondent(s)

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: None for the petitioners.

Mr. Harsimar Singh Sitta, AAG, Punjab.

Mr. N.P. Chandel, Advocate
for the husband of petitioner no.1, who is not arrayed as party in this
petition.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

Fearing for their lives and liberty at the hands of the private respondents, the petitioners who claim to have married each other, have come up before this Court seeking protection through the State, by invoking their fundamental rights of life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

2. Notices served upon the official respondents through the State's counsel. Given the nature of the order that this Court proposes to pass, neither the response of official respondents nor the issuance of notices to the private respondents is required.

3. Ld. Counsel has put in appearance on behalf of husband of the petitioner no. 1 and submits that he has not been arraigned as a party and the petitioner no. 1 re-married without divorcing him, leaving him in lurch. Ld. Counsel submits that no protection can be given to such a lady because the apprehended threat is a consequence of her own actions and violations.

4. Although none appeared for the petitioners, but I have gone through the petition and heard counsel for the State as well as the counsel appearing for the husband of the petitioner.

5. The times are changing fast, even in those lands that were left behind and stuck with the old ethos and conservative social milieu. We are governed by the rule of law and follow the Constitutional dharma. In the ever-evolving society, evolving the law with it, the time is to shift perspective from didactics of the orthodox society, shackled with the strong strings of morality supported by religions to one that values an individual's life above all. Every person in the territory of India has an inherent and inalienable fundamental right to life flowing from Article 21 of India's constitution and the State is duty bound to protect life.

6. In Mohd Arif @ Ashfaq v. Registrar, Supreme Court of India, (2014) 9 SCC 737, the Constitutional bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

"[17]. As the determination of this case has to do with the fundamental right to life, which, among all fundamental rights, is the most precious to all human beings, we need to delve into Article 21 which reads as follows:

"21. Protection of life and personal liberty.-No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."

[18]. This Article has its origin in nothing less than the Magna Carta, (the 39th Article) of 1215 vintage which King John of England was forced to sign by his Barons. It is a little known fact that this original charter of liberty was faulted at the very start and did not get off the ground because of a Papal Bull issued by Pope Innocent the third declaring this charter to be void. Strangely, like Magna Carta, Art. 21 did not get off the ground for 28 years after which, unshackled, it has become the single most important fundamental right under the Constitution of India, being described as one of a holy trinity consisting of a 'golden triangle' (see *Minerva Mills v. Union of India*, 1981 1 SCR 206 at 263), and being one of two articles which cannot be eclipsed during an emergency (Article 359 as amended by the Constitution 44th Amendment)."

7. If the allegations of apprehension of threat to their lives turn out to be true, it might lead to an irreversible loss. This Court is not adjudicating on the validity of petitioners' marriage but adhering to its fundamental duty of guarding their lives. Thus, in the facts and circumstances peculiar to this case, it shall be appropriate that the concerned Superintendent of Police, SHO, or any officer to whom such powers have been delegated or have been authorized in this regard, provide appropriate protection to the petitioners for one week from today. However, if the petitioners no longer require the protection, then at their request it may be discontinued even before the expiry of one week. After that, the concerned officers shall extend the protection on day-to-day analysis of the ground realities or upon the oral or written request of the petitioners.

8. This protection is subject to the stringent condition that from the time such

protection is given, the petitioners shall not go outside the boundaries of the place of their residence, except for medical necessities, to buy household necessities, and for bereavements in the families of the persons who are close to them. This restriction saves the petitioners from apprehended risk and ensures that the protection is not flaunted.

9. It is clarified that there is no adjudication on merits and that this order is not a blanket bail in any FIR. It is further clarified that this order shall not come in the way if the interrogation of the petitioners is required in any cognizable case. It shall also be open for the petitioner(s) to approach this Court again in case of any fresh threat perception.

There would be no need for a certified copy of this order, and any Advocate for the Petitioners and State can download this order and other particulars as may be required from the official web page of this Court and attest it to be a true copy. The concerned officer can also verify its authenticity and may download and use the downloaded copy for granting protection.

Petition is allowed to the extent mentioned above. All pending applications, if any, stand disposed.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

February 14, 2022
AK

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes
Whether reportable: **No.**