

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-4340-2022
Reserved on : 07.02.2022
Pronounced on : 10.02.2022

Sukhdeep Singh ...Petitioner
Versus
State of Punjab ...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. G.S. Sawhney, Advocate for the petitioner.
Mr. Harsimar Singh Sitta, AAG, Punjab.

(Through Video Conferencing)

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
70	05.05.2021	Ladhuwal, District Ludhiana.	363, 366 A of IPC (Section 376 IPC and Section 4 of POCSO Act added later on)

1. The petitioner, incarcerated upon his arrest in the FIR captioned above, came up before this Court under Section 439 of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC) seeking bail.
2. In paragraph 15 of the petition, it is declared that the accused has no criminal history.
3. Ld. Counsel for the petitioner contends that the pre-trial incarceration would cause an irreversible injustice to the petitioner and family.
4. Learned State counsel submits that the allegation are serious in nature and has strongly opposed the bail.

REASONING:

5. The petitioner is a first offender, and one of the relevant factors would be to provide an opportunity to course-correct. Even a prima facie perusal

of paragraphs 5 & 14 of the bail petition needs consideration for bail.

6. As per the FIR, the father of the victim stated that her daughter Rukiya was at home on the previous night upto 11.00 p.m. When the family members found her missing, they made a frantic search. During interrogation with neighbours they came to know that the victim was going with a boy and when confronted she said that she needed to buy medicines. The informant Kasamdeen also told the family members that if that boy is produced before him, he would be able to recognise. After the police was able to trace the victim, they got recorded her statement under Section 164 of Cr.P.C. The victim in her such statement named the petitioner as the person who had allured her, taken her to his village and then forcibly established sexual relations with her. During the trial, the victim testified as PW-1. However, in her examination-in-chief, she did not support the version of her father based on which, the FIR was registered nor did she support her version under Section 164 of Cr.P.C. In fact, she refused to identify the accused in the court and explicitly stated that she has seen her for the first time. On being cross-examined by public prosecutor by putting leading questions, she explained that she had made the statement under Section 164 Cr.P.C. under the police pressure. The father of the victim is testified as PW-2, who turned hostile and Kasamdeen testified as PW-3. Both of them did not support the case at all. Similarly, the statement of PW-4 did not support the case. Although, it is for the trial court to assess the evidentiary value of the statement of the prosecutrix viz-a-viz her previous statement under Section 164 of Cr.P.C. and scientific evidence but for the time being, this Court is concerned with only that whether further incarceration of the petitioner is required or not. Without commenting upon the quality of the evidence which has come during the trial and the overall fact that initially it is the victim who was seen voluntarily going with the petitioner and on being confronted instead of asking for help, she made a false pretext that she was going to buy medicines. Although, such story has not been supported by her and the other witnesses but this is a factor for consideration of bail, an overall analysis of the evidence above, the petitioner makes out a case for bail.

7. In Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v State of Punjab, 1980 (2) SCC 565, (Para

30), a Constitutional Bench of Supreme Court held that the bail decision must enter the cumulative effect of the variety of circumstances justifying the grant or refusal of bail. In Kalyan Chandra Sarkar v Rajesh Ranjan @ Pappu Yadav, 2005 (2) SCC 42, (Para 18) a three-member Bench of Supreme Court held that the persons accused of non-bailable offences are entitled to bail if the Court concerned concludes that the prosecution has failed to establish a prima facie case against him, or despite the existence of a prima facie case, the Court records reasons for its satisfaction for the need to release such person on bail, in the given fact situations. The rejection of bail does not preclude filing a subsequent application. The courts can release on bail, provided the circumstances then prevailing requires, and a change in the fact situation. In State of Rajasthan v Balchand, AIR 1977 SC 2447, (Para 2 & 3), Supreme Court noticeably illustrated that the basic rule might perhaps be tersely put as bail, not jail, except where there are circumstances suggestive of fleeing from justice or thwarting the course of justice or creating other troubles in the shape of repeating offences or intimidating witnesses and the like by the petitioner who seeks enlargement on bail from the Court. It is true that the gravity of the offence involved is likely to induce the petitioner to avoid the course of justice and must weigh when considering the question of jail. So also, the heinousness of the crime. In Gudikanti Narasimhulu v Public Prosecutor, (1978) 1 SCC 240, (Para 16), Supreme Court held that the delicate light of the law favors release unless countered by the negative criteria necessitating that course. In Prahlad Singh Bhati v NCT, Delhi, (2001) 4 SCC 280, Supreme Court highlighted one of the factors for bail to be the public or the State's immense interest and similar other considerations. In Dataram Singh v State of Uttar Pradesh, (2018) 3 SCC 22, (Para 6), Supreme Court held that the grant or refusal of bail is entirely within the discretion of the judge hearing the matter and though that discretion is unfettered, it must be exercised judiciously, compassionately, and in a humane manner. Also, conditions for the grant of bail ought not to be so strict as to be incapable of compliance, thereby making the grant of bail illusory.

8. The possibility of the accused influencing the investigation, tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses, and the likelihood of fleeing justice, can be taken care of by imposing elaborative and stringent conditions. In

Sushila Aggarwal, (2020) 5 SCC 1, Para 92, the Constitutional Bench held that unusually, subject to the evidence produced, the Courts can impose restrictive conditions.

9. Without commenting on the case's merits, in the facts and circumstances peculiar to this case, and for the reasons mentioned above, the petitioner makes a case for bail, subject to the following terms and conditions, which shall be over and above and irrespective of the contents of the form of bail bonds in chapter XXXIII of CrPC, 1973.

10. In Mahidul Sheikh v. State of Haryana, CRM-33030-2021 in CRA-S-363-2020, decided on 14-01-2022, Para 53, this Court observed,

[53]. The pragmatic approach is that while granting bail with sureties, the “Court” and the “Arresting Officer” should give a choice to the accused to either furnish surety bonds or to handover a fixed deposit, or direct electronic money transfer where such facility is available, or creating a lien over his bank account. The accused should also have a further option to switch between the modes. The option lies with the accused to choose between the sureties and deposits and not with the Court or the arresting officer.

11. Given above, provided the accused is not required in any other case, the petitioner shall be released on bail in the FIR mentioned above, subject to furnishing a personal bond of Rs. Ten thousand (INR 10,000/-) and shall furnish one surety of Rs. Twenty-five thousand (INR 25,000/-), to the satisfaction of the concerned Court/ Judicial Magistrate having the jurisdiction over the Police Station conducting the investigation, and in case of non-availability, any nearest Ilaqa Magistrate/duty Magistrate. Before accepting the sureties, the concerned Court must satisfy that if the accused fails to appear in Court, then such surety is capable of producing the petitioner before the Court.

12. In the alternative, the petitioner may furnish a personal bond of Rs. Ten Thousand only (INR 10,000/-), and hand over to the concerned court a fixed deposit(s) for Rs. Ten Thousand only (INR 10,000/-), made in favour of Chief Judicial Magistrate of the concerned district. Said fixed deposit may be made from any of the banks where the stake of the State is more than 50%, or any of the well-established and stable private banks, with the clause of automatic renewal of the principal and the interest reverting to the

linked account.

13. The fixed deposit need not necessarily be made from the applicant's account. If such a fixed deposit is made in physical form, i.e., on paper, then the original receipt shall be handed over to the concerned court. If made online, its printout, countersigned by the accused, shall be given; and the depositor shall get the online liquidation disabled. The applicant shall inform the concerned branch of the bank at the earliest that it has been tendered as surety. Such information be sent either by e-mail or by post/courier about the fixed deposit, whether made on paper or in any other mode, along with its number and FIR number. After that, the applicant shall hand over such proof and endorsement to the concerned police station. Such court shall have a lien over the deposit until the case's closure, or discharged by substitution, or up to the expiry of the period mentioned under S. 437-A CrPC, 1973, as the case may be. Subject to the proceedings under S. 446 CrPC, the entire amount of fixed deposit, less taxes, if any, shall be endorsed/returned to the depositor.

14. It shall be the total discretion of the applicant to choose between surety bonds and fixed deposits. It shall also be open for the applicant to apply to the investigator or the concerned court to substitute fixed deposit with surety bonds and vice-versa.

15. On the reverse page of personal bonds, the attesting officer shall mention the permanent address of the petitioner along with the phone number linked with the AADHAR card, the other phone numbers (if any), and e-mail (if any). In case of any change in the above particulars, the petitioner shall immediately and not later than 30 days from such modification, intimate about the change to the concerned Police Station and the concerned Court.

16. The petitioner to also execute a bond for attendance in the concerned Court(s), as and when asked to do so. The presentation of the personal bond shall be deemed acceptance of the following and all other stipulations, terms, and conditions of this bail order.

17. The petitioner shall join the investigation as and when called by the

Investigating Officer or any Superior Officer; and shall cooperate with the investigation at all further stages as might be required. In the event of failure to do so, it will be open for the prosecution to seek cancellation of the bail. Whenever the investigation occurs within the police premises, the petitioner shall not be called before 8 AM and shall be let off before 6 PM, and shall not be subjected to third-degree, indecent language, inhuman treatment, etc.

18. The petitioner shall not influence, browbeat, pressurize, make any inducement, threat, or promise, directly or indirectly, to the witnesses, the Police officials, or any other person acquainted with the facts and the circumstances of the case, to dissuade them from disclosing such facts to the Police, or the Court, or to tamper with the evidence.

19. Till the completion of the trial, the petitioner shall not contact, call, text, message, remark, stare, stalk, make any gestures or express any unusual or inappropriate, verbal or otherwise objectionable behavior towards the victim and victim's family, either physically, or through phone call or any other social media, through any other mode, nor shall unnecessarily roam around the victim's home.

20. Given the nature of allegations and the other circumstances peculiar to this case, the petitioner shall not enter within a radius of one kilometer from the victim's home till the completion of the trial or till the time the victim attains majority, whichever is earlier. This Court is imposing this condition to rule out any attempt by the accused to incapacitate, influence, or cause any discomfort to the victim. Reference be made to Vikram Singh v Central Bureau of Investigation, 2018 All SCR (Crl.) 458); and Aparna Bhatt v. State of Madhya Pradesh, 2021 SCC Online SC 230.

22. Any Advocate for the petitioner and the Officer in whose presence the petitioner puts signatures on personal bonds shall explain all conditions of this bail order in any language that the petitioner understands.

23. If the petitioner finds bond amount beyond social and financial reach, it may be brought to the notice of this Court for appropriate reduction. Further, if the petitioner finds bail condition(s) as violating fundamental,

human, or other rights, or causing difficulty due to any situation, then for modification of such term(s), the petitioner may file a reasoned application before this Court, and after taking cognizance, even to the Court taking cognizance or the trial Court, as the case may be, and such Court shall also be competent to modify or delete any condition.

24. This order does not, in any manner, limit or restrict the rights of the Police or the investigating agency from further investigation as per law.

25. Any observation made hereinabove is neither an expression of opinion on the merits of the case nor shall the trial Court advert to these comments.

26. The SHO of the concerned police station or the investigating officer shall arrange to send a copy of this order, preferably a soft copy, to the complainant and the victim, within two days. If the victim(s) notice any violation of this order, they may inform the SHO of the concerned police station, the trial court, or even this court.

27. There would be no need for a certified copy of this order for furnishing bonds, and any Advocate for the Petitioner can download this order along with case status from the official web page of this Court and attest it to be a true copy. In case the attesting officer wants to verify the authenticity, such an officer can also verify its authenticity and may download and use the downloaded copy for attesting bonds.

Petition allowed in aforesaid terms. All pending applications, if any, stand disposed.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

February 10, 2022
Manpreet

Whether speaking/reasoned	:	Yes
Whether reportable	:	No.