

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

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**CRM-M-11215-2020 (O&M)
Date of decision: 15.02.2022**

AJIT SINGH AND ORS

...Petitioners

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB AND OTHERS

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VINOD S. BHARDWAJ

Present : Mr. Balbir Singh Jaswal, Advocate
for the petitioners.

Ms. A.K. Khurana, DAG Punjab.

Mr. Ramesh Sharma, Advocate
for respondent No.2 and 3.

VINOD S. BHARDWAJ. J. (ORAL)

By means of the instant petition, the jurisdiction of this Court under Section 482 Cr.P.C. has been invoked seeking quashing of FIR No.192 dated 25.05.2016 under Sections 323, 295-A, 506, 147 and 149 of the IPC registered at Police Station Civil Lines, District Amritsar and all other consequential proceedings arising therefrom, on the basis of compromise dated 27.05.2020 (Annexure P-2) entered between parties.

2 Vide order dated 14.10.2021 of this Court, the parties were directed to appear before the learned trial Court/Illaq Magistrate on 08.11.2021 to get their statements recorded regarding the compromise arrived at between the parties and a report in this regard was called for.

3. Pursuant to the said order, report has been received from the learned Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, Amritsar vide Endst No.181 dated 13.12.2021. As

per the report, compromise has indeed been effected between the parties and the same is without any pressure or coercion and out of their free will. The trial Court has annexed the statements of the parties in original along with its report

4. Learned State counsel does not dispute the factum of the compromise amongst the parties and does not have any serious objection to the resolution of the dispute amongst the parties.

5. Mr. Ramesh Sharma, Advocate appears on behalf of respondent No.2 and 3 and reiterates the settlement and his concurrence to the FIR and all the other consequential proceeding being quashed.

6. The Full Bench of this Court in the matter of “***Kulwinder Singh and others versus State of Punjab and another***” reported as (***Punjab and Haryana High Court***) : 2007 (3) RCR (Criminal) 1052 has been observed as under:

“(27) *Shri R.S. Cheema, learned Senior Advocate, who assisted the Bench as Amicus Curiae, highlighted the inadequacies of the criminal justice system in order to propound and promote the principle that under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C., the High Court can effectively exercise its power in an appropriate case and intervene to quash an F.I.R. even when the case discloses a non-compoundable offence and where the parties have voluntarily entered into a compromise. To illustrate, he submitted that the Legislature, in its wisdom, is seeking to introduce a pre-bargaining in the country and in this scenario, to curtail the power under Section 482 by reading into the provisions of law the non-existing lines would, indeed, be a travesty of justice, especially in view of the fact that there is a wide spread tendency in the society now to use the arm of criminal law to settle civil disputes and he reiterated certain contingencies which were also placed before the Bench during the course of hearing in Dharambir's case (supra). Some of the guidelines were as follows:*

- a. *Cases arising from matrimonial discord, even if other offences are introduced for aggravation of the case.*
- b. *Cases pertaining to property disputes between close relations,*

which are predominantly civil in nature and they have a genuine or belaboured dimension of criminal liability. Notwithstanding a touch of criminal liability, the settlement would bring lasting peace and harmony to larger number of people.

- c. Cases of dispute between old partners or business concerns with dealings over a long period which are predominantly civil and are given or acquire a criminal dimension but the parties are essentially seeking a redressal of their financial or commercial claim.*
- d. Minor offences as under Section 279 IPC may be permitted to be compounded on the basis of legitimate settlement between the parties. Yet another offence which remains non-compoundable is Section 506(II) IPC, which is punishable with 7 years imprisonment. It is the judicial experience that an offence under Section 506 IPC in most cases is based on the oral declaration with different shades of intention. Another set of offences, which ought to be liberally compounded, are Sections 147 and 148 IPC, more particularly where other offences are compoundable. It may be added here that the State of Madhya Pradesh vide M.P. Act No. 17 of 1999 (Section 3) has made Sections 506(II) IPC, 147 IPC and 148 IPC compoundable offences by amending the schedule under Section 320 Cr.P.C.*
- e. The offences against human body other than murder and culpable homicide where the victim dies in the course of transaction would fall in the category where compounding may not be permitted. Heinous offences like highway robbery, dacoity or a case involving clear-cut allegations of rape should also fall in the prohibited category. Offences committed by Public Servants purporting to act in that capacity as also offences against public servant while the victims are acting in the discharge of their duty must remain non-compoundable. Offences against the State enshrined in Chapter-VII (relating to army, navy and air force) must remain non-compoundable.*

f. That as a broad guideline the offences against human body other than murder and culpable homicide may be permitted to be compounded when the court is in the position to record a finding that the settlement between the parties is voluntary and fair.

While parting with this part, it appears necessary to add that the settlement or compromise must satisfy the conscience of the court. The settlement must be just and fair besides being free from the undue pressure, the court must examine the cases of weaker and vulnerable victims with necessary caution."

(28) To conclude, it can safely be said that there can never be any hard and fast category which can be prescribed to enable the Court to exercise its power under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. The only principle that can be laid down is the one which has been incorporated in the Section itself, i.e., "to prevent abuse of the process of any Court" or "to secure the ends of justice".

*(29) In **Mrs. Shakuntala Sawhney v. Mrs. Kaushalya Sawhney and Ors.**, Hon'ble Krishna Iyer, J. aptly summoned up the essence of compromise in the following words:*

"The finest hour of justice arrives propitiously when parties, despite falling apart, bury the hatchet and weave a sense of fellowship of reunion."

(30) The power to do complete justice is the very essence of every judicial justice dispensation system. It cannot be diluted by distorted perceptions and is not a slave to anything, except to the caution and circumspection, the standards of which the Court sets before it, in exercise of such plenary and unfettered power inherently vested in it while donning the cloak of compassion to achieve the ends of justice.

(31) No embargo, be in the shape of Section 320(9) of the Cr.P.C., or any other such curtailment, can whittle down the power under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C.

(32) The compromise, in a modern society, is the sine qua non of harmony and orderly behaviour. It is the soul of justice and if the power under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. is used to enhance such a

compromise which, in turn, enhances the social amity and reduces friction, then it truly is "finest hour of justice". Disputes which have their genesis in a matrimonial discord, landlord-tenant matters, commercial transactions and other such matters can safely be dealt with by the Court by exercising its powers under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. in the event of a compromise, but this is not to say that the power is limited to such cases. There can never be any such rigid rule to prescribe the exercise of such power, especially in the absence of any premonitions to forecast and predict eventualities which the cause of justice may throw up during the course of a litigation.

(33) The only inevitable conclusion from the above discussion is that there is no statutory bar under the Cr.P.C. which can affect the inherent power of this Court under Section 482. Further, the same cannot be limited to matrimonial cases alone and the Court has the wide power to quash the proceedings even in non-compoundable offences notwithstanding the bar under Section 320 of the Cr.P.C., in order to prevent the abuse of law and to secure the ends of justice.

(34) The power under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. is to be exercised Ex-Debitia Justitia to prevent an abuse of process of Court. There can neither be an exhaustive list nor the defined para-meters to enable a High Court to invoke or exercise its inherent powers. It will always depend upon the facts and circumstances of each case. The power under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. has no limits. However, the High Court will exercise it sparingly and with utmost care and caution. The exercise of power has to be with circumspection and restraint. The Court is a vital and an extra-ordinary effective instrument to maintain and control social order. The Courts play role of paramount importance in achieving peace, harmony and ever-lasting congeniality in society. Resolution of a dispute by way of a compromise between two warring groups, therefore, should attract the immediate and prompt attention of a Court which should endeavour to give full effect to the same unless such compromise is abhorrent to lawful composition of the society or would promote savagery.

7. The legal principles as laid down for quashing of the judgment were also approved by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of '**Gian Singh Versus State of Punjab and another, (2012) 10 SCC 303**'. Still further, the broad principles for exercising the powers under Section 482 were summarized by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of '**Parbatbhai Aahir @ Parbatbhai Bhimsinhbhai Karmur and others versus State of Gujarat and another**' (2017) 9 SCC 641', the same are extracted as under:

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

16.1 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;

16.2 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.

16.3 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;

16.4 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;

16.5 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;

16.6 *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;*

16.7 *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;*

16.8 *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;*

16.9 *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*

16.10 *There is yet an exception to the principle set out in propositions 16.8 and 16.9 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.*

8. It is evident that in view of the amicable resolution of the issues amongst the parties, no useful purpose would be served by continuation of the proceedings. The furtherance of the proceedings is likely to be a waste of judicial

time and there appears to be no chances of conviction.

9. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has held in the matter of '**Ramgopal And Another Vs State of Madhya Pradesh, 2021 SCC Online SC 834'**', that the matters which can be categorized as personal in nature or in the matter in which the nature of injuries do not exhibit mental depravity or commission of an offence of such a serious nature that quashing of which would override public interest, the Court can quash the FIR in view of the settlement arrived at amongst the parties. The observation of the Hon'ble Supreme Court is extracted as under:-

19. We thus sum-up and hold that as opposed to Section 320 Cr.P.C. where the Court is squarely guided by the compromise between the parties in respect of offences 'compoundable' within the statutory framework, the extra-ordinary power enjoined upon a High Court under Section 482 Cr.P.C. or vested in this Court under Article 142 of the Constitution, can be invoked beyond the metes and bounds of Section 320 Cr.P.C. Nonetheless, we reiterate that such powers of wide amplitude ought to be exercised carefully in the context of quashing criminal proceedings, bearing in mind: (i) Nature and effect of the offence on the conscious of the society; (ii) Seriousness of the injury, if any; (iii) Voluntary nature of compromise between the accused and the victim; & (iv) Conduct of the accused persons, prior to and after the occurrence of the purported offence and/or other relevant considerations.

20. Having appraised the afore-stated para-meters and weighing upon the peculiar facts and circumstances of the two appeals before us, we are inclined to invoke powers under Article 142 and quash the criminal proceedings and consequently set aside the conviction in both the appeals. We say so for the reasons that: Firstly, the occurrence(s) involved in these appeals can be categorized as purely personal or having overtones of criminal proceedings of private nature; Secondly, the nature of injuries incurred, for which the Appellants have been convicted, do not appear to exhibit their mental depravity or commission of an offence

of such a serious nature that quashing of which would override public interest; Thirdly, given the nature of the offence and injuries, it is immaterial that the trial against the Appellants had been concluded or their appeal(s) against conviction stand dismissed; Fourthly, the parties on their own volition, without any coercion or compulsion, willingly and voluntarily have buried their differences and wish to accord a quietus to their dispute(s); Fifthly, the occurrence(s) in both the cases took place way back in the years 2000 and 1995, respectively. There is nothing on record to evince that either before or after the purported compromise, any untoward incident transpired between the parties; Sixthly, since the Appellants and the complainant(s) are residents of the same village(s) and/or work in close vicinity, the quashing of criminal proceedings will advance peace, harmony, and fellowship amongst the parties who have decided to forget and forgive any ill-will and have no vengeance against each other; and Seventhly, the cause of administration of criminal justice system would remain un-effected on acceptance of the amicable settlement between the parties and/or resultant acquittal of the Appellants; more so looking at their present age.

10. A perusal of the FIR shows that the allegations resulting in registration of present case owes its origin to the turban of the complainant having been pulled down in a scuffle amongst the parties and on the allegations against the accused of having kicked the turban. The aforesaid dispute is in the nature of private dispute and not having the overture of a public disorder or disruption of public tranquillity. Besides, the petitioners as well as the respondents are residents of the same village and have settled the dispute amongst themselves to give a quietus to ill-will and spite. The case in question had been registered in the year 2016 and a period of nearly 06 years has been passed since registration thereof. The report sent by the learned JMIC, Amritsar does not show that the proceedings in the case have made any progress. It would thus be in the fitness of things that the petition be allowed.

11. In view of the report of the learned Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, Amritsar and the principles laid down by the Apex Court in **Gian Singh Vs. State of Punjab and others (2012) 10 SCC 303**, as well as **Ramgopal And Another Vs State of Madhya Pradesh 2021 SCC Online SC 834** and also by the Full Bench of this Court in **Kulwinder Singh and others Vs. State of Punjab and another, 2007(3) RCR (Criminal) 1052**, the instant petition is allowed. The aforesaid FIR No.192 dated 25.05.2016 under Sections 323, 295-A, 506, 147 and 149 of the IPC registered at Police Station Civil Lines, District Amritsar and all other consequential proceedings arising therefrom, **are hereby quashed** in view of compromise dated 27.02.2020 (Annexure P-2). However, the same would be subject to payment of costs of Rs. 10,000/- to be deposited with the '**Poor Patients Welfare Fund**' of the **Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh**, within one month from receipt of certified copy of this order.

Petition is allowed.

(VINOD S. BHARDWAJ)
JUDGE

February 15, 2022

S.Sharma(syr)

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