

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

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**CRM-M-14748-2019(O&M)
Date of decision: 10.03.2022**

KULDEEP SINGH AND ANOTHER **... Petitioners**

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB AND ANOTHER **... Respondents**

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

Present: Mr. Parvinder Singh, Advocate for the petitioners.

Ms. A.K. Khurana, DAG, Punjab.

Mr. Saurav Bhatia, Advocate for respondent No.2.

VINOD S. BHARDWAJ.J.(Oral)

1. The petitioner has approached this Court seeking quashing of FIR No.0029 dated 11.03.2018 registered under Sections 406, 420 IPC at Police Station Kathgarh, District Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Annexure P-1) and all subsequent proceedings arising therefrom on the strength of compromise dated 26.02.2019 (Annexure P-2) entered between the parties.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that there was a minor altercation amongst the petitioner and respondent No.2 (complainant) resulting in registration of the FIR No.0029 dated 11.03.2018 registered under Sections 406, 420 IPC at Police Station Kathgarh, District Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar and that with the intervention of the respectables from both the sides, the matter has been settled and amicably resolved. It is further submitted that the compromise amongst the parties was effected on account of free will and without any pressure and coercion.

3. Vide order dated 08.11.2021, the parties were directed to appear before the Illaqa Magistrate to get their statements recorded and the Illaqa Magistrate was further directed to send the report regarding the genuineness of the compromise and to also intimate whether any criminal proceedings against the petitioners are pending.

4. In compliance to the said order, a report from the Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Balachaur has been received vide letter No.739 dated 15.02.2022. The Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Balachaur has reported as under:-

“It is submitted that in this case FIR was registered on the statement of complainant Kulwinder Kaur on 11.03.2018 under Section 406/420 of IPC, P.S. Kathgarh. However, with the intervention of the respectable persons a compromise was effected between them. Statements of the complainant and Daljit Singh (power of attorney hold of accused Kuldeep Singh and Daler Singh) have been recorded separately regarding the compromise. ASI Rampal who investigated the case suffered a statement that none of the accused in this case is declared as Proclaimed Offender.

As per the statements so got recorded by both sides, it reveals that the compromise is genuine, voluntary, without any coercion and without any undue influence and the same has been effected with the free will and consent of the parties. Complainant and Daljit Singh (power of attorney hold of accuse Kuldeep Singh and Daler Singh) have been identified by his respective counsel.

5. 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:

“ (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.*

6. 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 mis-demeanour. The consequences of the act complained of upon the financial or economic system will weigh in the balance.

7. 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.

8. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of **“Ramgopal and another versus State of Madhya Pradesh”** reported as **2021 SCC online SC 83**, that the matters which can be categorized as personal in nature or in the matters 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 extraordinary 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 parameters 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.*

9. A perusal of the FIR shows that under the allegations are in reference to offences relating to Sections 406/420 IPC. It is more in the nature of a dispute relating to the property. The complainant alleges that the petitioners had collected money for sending the husband of the complainant abroad and to get him a job there. The money is stated to have been

received by the petitioners for the said purpose, however, the petitioners neither facilitated the emigration of the husband of the complainant nor returned the money. Eventually, with the intervention of respectable from both the side, the matter was compromised amongst the parties on 26.02.2019. The amount allegedly claimed to have been paid by the complainant has since then been returned. The settlement having been executed in the year 2019, there is no untoward incident between the parties thereafter. The nature and gravity of the offence cannot be leveled as one involving mental depravity or as would be shocking to the conscience of the society. The trial is still at the initial stages when the parties have agreed to give a quietus to the dispute and to live happily. No interest of justice shall be advanced by incarceration of the petitioners and to force them to undergo rigors of criminal prosecution.

10. Considering the facts of the instant case and noticing the principles laid down by the Apex Court in “Gian Singh Versus State of Punjab and another”, (2012) 10 SCC 303, “Ramgopal and another versus State of Madhya Pradesh” reported as 2021 SCC online SC 834 and also by the Full Bench of this Court in “Kulwinder Singh and others versus State of Punjab and another”, 2007 (3) RCR (Criminal) 1052, that the dispute involved in the instant case pertains to offence under Section 406 and 420 IPC which cannot be perceived as falling within the prohibited category or as an offence that is heinous and grossly shocking to the conscience of the Court or having a wide pervasive impact on the social or public order, the instant petition is allowed and the case FIR No.0029 dated 11.03.2018 registered under Sections 406, 420 IPC at Police Station Kathgarh, District Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar and all subsequent proceedings arising

therefrom **are hereby quashed**, in light of the compromise dated 26.02.2019 (Annexure P-2). However, the same would be subject to payment of costs of Rs. 10,000/- by each petitioner to be deposited with the **‘Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar Clerks Association’** within one month from the date of receipt of certified copy of this order.

Petition is allowed.

(VINOD S. BHARDWAJ)
JUDGE

MARCH 10, 2022

Vishal Sharma

Whether speaking/reasoned	:	Yes/No
Whether Reportable	:	Yes/No