

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

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FAO-2107-2022

Date of decision : 05.07.2022

Veerpal Kaur

Appellant

V/S

Akashdeep Singh

Respondent

**CORAM : HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE RITU BAHRI
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ASHOK KUMAR VERMA**

Present: Mr. Tribhawan Singla, Advocate for the appellant.

Ms. Ritu Punj, Advocate for the respondent.

RITU BAHRI, J. (ORAL)

The present appeal has been filed against the judgment and decree dated 19.07.2021 passed by the Principal Judge, Family Court Barnala, whereby petition filed by the parties under Section 13-B of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (for short 'the 1955 Act') for dissolution of marriage by decree of divorce by mutual consent between the parties, has been allowed.

The parties solemnized marriage on 24.03.2019 at Sardulgarh, Punjab as per Sikh rites. On account of temperamental differences, they started living separately since 20.05.2019. Ultimately, a petition under Section 13-B of the 1955 Act for dissolution of marriage by way of mutual consent was filed before the Court of Principal Judge, Family Court Barnala and the same was allowed vide judgment and decree dated 19.07.2021.

However, after getting decree of divorce with mutual

consent under Section 13-B of the 1955 Act, the parties have now reconciled their differences and have started living together as husband and wife. The present appeal challenging the decree of divorce dated 19.07.2021 has been filed by appellant-wife.

Today, both the parties are present in person in Court with their respective counsel. Both the parties state that now they are staying together happily as husband and wife, therefore, the decree of divorce dated 19.07.2021 granted under Section 13-B of the 1955 Act may be set aside. In this regard, the parties have attached their separate affidavits dated 30.04.2022 with the present appeal as Annexures A-2 and A-3. Copy of the Aadhaar card of the appellant also attached with the present appeal. However, the respondent has filed copy of his Aadhaar Card in the Court today which is taken on record.

A Division Bench of this Court in ***Jyoti V/s. Neeraj Kumar Saini, 2019 (1) R.C.R. (Civil) 748*** has observed as under:-

“5. In this regard, learned counsel for the appellants has referred to a judgment of the division bench of this Court rendered in the case of Krishna Khetarpal, Headmistress, Government Girls High School, Bhuna, Tehsil Fatehabad, District Hisar v. Satish Lal; 1986 (2) PLR 608 in which the same issue had arisen and it has been decided that the appeal against the consent decree passed under Section 13B is appealable under Section 28 of the Act and Sub Section 3 of Section 96 of the CPC has no bar. Since, this issue is no more res integra as already been decided by this Court, therefore, we have entertained the appeal.”

While referring to the judgment passed in ***Krishna Khetarpal's case (supra)***, the Division Bench had examined this issue in detail and held that under Section 28 of the Act, an appeal against the consent decree of divorce under Section 13-B of the Act by either party, was maintainable, as a matter of right. In para 5 of the said judgment,

the Division Bench has observed as under:-

“An appeal against the decree of divorce by mutual consent distinctly is not merely on consent of the parties, for the matrimonial Court is involved in decision making so that it accords not only with provisions of Section 13-B of the Act but also Section 23 of the Act. In sub-section 13-B of the Act, a joint petition by the spouses can be presented to the District Court on the ground that they have been living separately for a period of one year or more before the presentation of the petition and that they have not been able to live together and further that they have mutually agreed that the marriage should be dissolved. The petition then lies in hibernation for six months and under sub-section (2) both the parties have to activate it on the motion to the Court. It is then that the Court enters upon an enquiry into the facts where the marriage has been solemnized and whether the averments in the petition are true and further there are no impediments in the way as conceived of in Section 23 and in particular of sub-section (1)(bb) that such consent has not been obtained by force, fraud or undue influence. Thus a decree for divorce by mutual consent is not based merely on mutuality of the consenting parties but the court's involvement in decision making is inextricably a part of the decree. And since the possibility of an error, legal or factual, entering in the decision making cannot be ruled out, an appeal under Section 28 of the Act has advisedly been provided. Besides, Section 12 of the said Act says that subject to other provisions contained in the said Act and to such rules and the High Court may make in this behalf as proceedings under the said Act shall be regulated, as far as may be, by the Civil Procedure Code, 1908. Thus the proceedings in the appeal are to be regulated as far as may be, by the Civil Procedure Code without altering the substantive right of appeal to the parties concerned. On the above analysis and differentiation, the conclusion is inescapable that an appeal against a consent decree under Section 13B of the Act is appealable under Section 28 of the Act and sub-section (3) of the Section 96 of the Civil Procedure Code is no bar. Similarly any other consent decree passed under the said Act is also appealable.”

In view of the above judgment, this Court is of the view that appeal against the decree of divorce under Section 13-B of the Act is maintainable. In the present case, after passing of the decree of divorce, both the parties are staying together happily.

Keeping in view the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case, since the parties are living together, this Court is of the view that it is never too late to mend ways. Resultantly, the instant appeal is allowed and the impugned judgment & decree dated 19.07.2021 passed by the Principal Judge, Family Court, Barnala, vide which marriage of the parties was dissolved, are set aside.

(RITU BAHRI)
JUDGE

05.07.2022
kothiyal

(ASHOK KUMAR VERMA)
JUDGE

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