

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-21837-2022
Reserved on: 29.07.2022
Date of Pronouncement: 30.09.2022

Harpreet Singh @ Happy & another
...Petitioner (s)
Versus
State of Punjab & another
...Respondent(s)

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Vivek Salathia, Advocate
for the petitioner(s).

Mr. Amitoj Singh Dhaliwal, DAG, Punjab.

Mr. Deepanshu Sodhi, Advocate
for respondent no.2.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
121	9.8.2011	Cantonment, District Amritsar	323, 324, 326, 341, 34 IPC

Criminal Case no. before trial Court	CHI/88646/2013 decided on 2.1.2018
---	------------------------------------

The petitioners, who stand convicted in the trial for the FIR captioned above, have come up before this Court under Section 482 CrPC for quashing the judgment of conviction dated 2.1.2018, sentence, charges, and the FIR, based on the compromise with the victim.

2. The gist of the allegations against the petitioners is of causing serious injuries to the victim.
3. The petitioners and the victim have entered into an out of Court compromise. They have annexed the copy of the compromise with this petition as Annexure P-3.

4. Subsequent to that, the petitioners have come up before this Court to quash the FIR, and in the quashing petition, the victim have been impleaded as respondent.

5. On the prayer of the parties in the present petition, the Court had permitted the parties to appear before the concerned Court to record their statements. As per the concerned Court's report dated 8.7.22, the victim Talwinder Singh @ Dharminder Singh, without any threat, consented to the quashing of FIR and consequent proceedings.

ANALYSIS & REASONING:

6. Despite the severe opposition of the State's counsel to this compromise, the following aspects would be relevant to conclude this petition: -

- a) The accused and the private respondent(s) have amicably settled the matter between them in terms of the compromise deed and the statements recorded before the concerned Court;
- b) A perusal of the documents reveal that the settlement has not been secured through coercion, threats, social boycotts, bribes, or other dubious means;
- c) The victim has willingly consented to the nullification of criminal proceedings;
- d) There is no objection from the private respondents in case present FIR and consequent proceedings are quashed;
- e) In the given facts, the occurrence does not affect public peace or tranquillity, moral turpitude or harm the social and moral fabric of the society or involve matters concerning public policy;
- f) The rejection of compromise may also lead to ill will. The pendency of trial affects career and happiness;
- g) There is nothing on the record to prima facie consider the accused as an unscrupulous, incorrigible, and professional offender;
- h) The purpose of criminal jurisprudence is reformatory in nature and to work to bring peace to family, and society;
- i) The exercise of the inherent power for quashing the conviction, sentence and all previous proceedings are justified to secure the ends of justice.

7. The parties are residents of the same area and have entered into compromise for the sake of cordiality and peace. When the parties have buried their hatchets, the continuation of criminal proceedings will not advance the reformatory purposes of jurisprudence just for the sake of deterrence and the trial would be futile exercise resulting in loss of material time and resources as the injured are likely to not support the case of prosecution.

8. In the present case, the offences under sections 324 and 326 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) are not compoundable under Section 320 of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC). However, in the facts and circumstances peculiar to this case, the prosecution qua the non-compoundable offences can be closed by quashing the FIR and consequent proceedings.

JUDICIAL PRECEDENTS ON QUASHING OF CONVICTION BASED ON COMPROMISE:

9. In Ram Pujan and ors. v. State of U.P., 1973 AIR(SC) 2418, a three-judge bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court, based on the post-conviction compromise reduced the sentence under section 326 IPC to that of already undergone.

10. In Ram Prasad and Another v. State of Uttar Pradesh, Cr.A Nos. 308-309 of 1980, decided on April 21, 1980, Hon'ble Supreme Court converted the conviction from 307 IPC to 324 IPC and after that based on compromise, accepted the compounding of offence under section 324 IPC and acquitted the appellants.

11. In Ramji Lal v. State of Haryana, (1983) 1 SCC 368, Hon'ble Supreme Court, in a matter arising against the conviction under section 325 IPC, held,

[5]. All the offences for which the appellants are convicted are compoundable and the compromise can be entered into with the permission of the court. Looking to the chastened attitude of the accused and the commendable attitude of the injured complainant, in order to restore harmony in the society, we accept the compromise. We grant permission to enter into the compromise and accept the same. We accordingly allow the appeal and set aside the conviction and sentence imposed on both the appellants. If they are on bail, their bail-bonds will be cancelled. If they are in jail, they will be released from the jail forthwith.

12. In Mohd. Rafi v. State of U.P., 1998(2) R.C.R.(Criminal) 455, Supreme Court, the convict had gone to Hon'ble Supreme Court against his conviction by the trial Court under Sections 323 and 325 of IPC, which was upheld by Sessions and High Court. After that, the convict and the victim entered into an out-of-court compromise. Hon'ble Supreme Court analyzed the parties' affidavits filed in support of the compromise and observed that parties had willingly and voluntarily settled the matter. To maintain good relations, Hon'ble Supreme Court granted permission to them to compound the said offenses and order the acquittal.

13. In Surendra Nath Mohanty and another Vs. State of Orissa, 1999 5 SCC 238. These decisions indicate that the effect of compromise after conviction for a non-compoundable offence has to be taken into consideration only for the purpose of reducing the sentence and not for setting aside the conviction on that count.

14. In Parameswari v. Vennila, (2000) 10 SCC 348, the appellants before Hon'ble Supreme Court had been convicted under Section 494 read with Section 109 of IPC. After that, they arrived at a settlement with the complainant, in the presence of panchayatdars of their village, and placed on record the duly signed compromise, and parties filed a joint application for permission to compound the offences. While observing that the offence involved was compoundable with the wife's consent and permission of the Court, Hon'ble Supreme Court granted permission to compound the offence, and resultantly the appellants stood acquitted of the offence for which they have been held guilty.

15. In M.D. Balal Mian v. State of Bihar, 2001 AIR (SCW) 5190, out of three convicts, one was convicted under Section 376 IPC, and the other two were convicted only under Sections 325 & 323 of IPC. After the High Court confirmed the conviction and sentence, all three convicts approached Hon'ble Supreme Court. Although Hon'ble Supreme Court did not find any scope for granting special leave by the convict challenging his conviction under section 376 IPC, however, granted the other permission to the other two convicts to compound the offences under Section 320 (8) of the Criminal Procedure Code and acquitted both of them.

16. In Vuyyuru Ramachandra Rao v. State of Andhra Pradesh, 2001 AIR (SCW) 2396, the appellant had approached the Hon'ble Supreme Court against upholding the conviction under section 354 IPC. The victim of molestation came to terms with the convict and applied to compound the offence. Hon'ble Supreme Court allowed such application for compounding and resultantly acquitted the appellant under Section 320 (8) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

17. In Ramachandra Singh v. State of Bihar, 2003(10) SCC 234, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

[5]. We have heard learned counsel for the appellants and the state and taken into, consideration the fact and circumstances of the case. In view of the compromise it appears that grievance, if any, of the complainant Kamlesh Kumari Devi is over. Indeed in view of the compromise the accused appellants stand acquitted of the offence under Section 323 Indian Penal Code. In such circumstances the sentence passed by the trial Court and maintained by the High Court deserves to be modified so far as offence under Section 498A Indian Penal Code is concerned.

[6]. The appeal is partly allowed. The conviction of appellant Nos. 1 and 2 under Section 498A Indian Penal Code is maintained, but the sentence of imprisonment passed on them for offence under Section 498-A is reduced to the period already undergone. In so far as appellant No. 3 is concerned, in our opinion, it will meet the ends of justice if he is dealt with

under Section 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, and released on probation of good conduct. The sentence of imprisonment passed on appellant No. 3 is set aside and it is directed that he shall be released on his entering into a bond with one surety in an amount of Rs. 5000/- to appear before the trial Court and receive sentence on being called upon during a period of one year and in the meantime to keep the peace and be of good behaviour.

18. In *K. Kandasamy v. K.P.M.V.P. Chandrasekaran*, (2005) 4 SCC 349, based on the compromise, Hon'ble Supreme Court acquitted the appellants/convicts of the offence under Section 500 Indian Penal Code.

19. In *Khursheed and others v. State of U.P.*, Appeal (crl.) 1302 of 2007, decided on 28-9-2007, the appellants were convicted by Trial Court under sections 325, 323 read with 34 IPC. Their appeal against conviction was dismissed by the Sessions Court and revision petition was also dismissed by High Court. The convicts approached the Apex Court and Hon'ble Supreme Court held,

[12]. An offence of causing grievous hurt punishable under Section 325 IPC is covered by sub-section (2) of Section 320 of the Code. It is thus clear that an offence punishable under Section 325 IPC is also compounded with the permission of the Court.

[13]. The parties have compounded the offences. As stated in the compromise deed, Gurfan Ahmad, complainant and his mother Kulsoom @ Bhoori (injured) did not want any action against the appellants (accused). The parties are neighbours, their houses are situated adjacent to each other and they have been living peacefully for last many years and there is no dispute among them. It is further stated that to continue sweet relationship and harmony, complainant side does not want to take any action against the accused. A prayer is, therefore, made to accept the compromise.

[14]. On the facts and in the circumstances of the case, and considering the Deed of Compromise and having heard learned counsel for the parties, in our opinion, ends of justice would be met if we grant necessary permission for compounding an offence punishable under Section 325 read with Section 34 IPC as required by sub-section (2) of Section 320 of the Code. The offence punishable under Section 323 IPC has already been compounded by the parties.

[15]. Sub-section (8) of Section 320 states that the compounding of offence under the section shall have an effect of acquittal of the accused with whom the offence has been compounded. The resultant effect of compounding of offences would be that the accused should be acquitted. In other words, once the offences have been compounded and the requisite permission is granted by the Court, the accused must be acquitted.

20. In Dr.Arvind Barsaul etc. v. State of Madhya Pradesh, (2008) 5 SCC 794, after the conviction under section 498-A IPC, the victim wife and the convict husband had compromised their disputes, and sought setting aside of conviction based on the compromise. Hon'ble Supreme Court holds as follows,

[10]. We have heard learned counsel for the parties at length. The parties have compromised and the complainant Smt. Sadhna Madnawat categorically submitted that she does not want to prosecute the appellants. Even otherwise also, in the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case and in the interest of justice, in our opinion, continuation of criminal proceedings would be an abuse of the process of law. We, in exercise of our power under Article 142 of the Constitution, deem it proper to quash the criminal proceedings pending against the appellants emanating from the FIR lodged under section 498A Indian Penal Code. The appeal is accordingly disposed of.

21. In Manoj &Anr. v. State of Madhya Pradesh, Cr. A No. 1530 of 2008, Hon'ble Supreme Court, based on compromise, accepted the compounding of the offence under section 324 IPC and acquitted the appellants.

22. In Md. Abdul SufanLaskar v. State of Assam, (2008) 9 SCC 333, based on a compromise, Hon'ble Supreme Court set aside the conviction and sentence under section 324 IPC. Hon'ble Supreme Court took similar views in Mathura Singh v. State of U.P., 2009(13) SCC 420 and in GampaGovindu v. State of Andhra Pradesh thr. Public Prosecutor, 2008(sup) Cri. L.R. 440: Law Finder Doc Id # 521064.

23. In C.Muniappan Vs. State of Tamil Nadu, 2009 13 SCC 790, after the conviction and sentence under section 302 IPC, the deceased's family had compromised the matter with the accused. Rejecting the compromise, Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that once the parties have settled their disputes, they could live in peace, but that cannot be a ground to pass a judgment of acquittal.

24. In Gampa Govindu v. State of Andhra Pradesh, Law Finder Doc Id # 521064; 2008(1) OriLR839, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

[3]. The Trial Court convicted the sole appellant under Section 326 of the Indian Penal Code [hereinafter referred to as "I.P.C."] and sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of three years and to pay fine of Rupees one thousand; in default, to undergo further simple imprisonment for a period of one month. On appeal being preferred, the Sessions Court confirmed the conviction and sentence. When the matter was taken to the High Court in revision, the conviction and sentence under Section 326 I.P.C. have been set aside and the appellant has been convicted under Section 324 I.P.C. and sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of one year. Before this Court, a joint petition of compromise has been filed wherein it has been stated that the

parties have settled their disputes; as such, they be permitted to compound the offence. In our view, the prayer is just and must be granted. Accordingly, the criminal appeal is allowed and the conviction and sentence awarded against the appellant are set aside, in view of the compounding.

25. In Hirabhai Jhaverbhai v. State of Gujarat, (2010) 6 SCC 688, permitting the parties to compromise the conviction under section 324 IPC, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds, "The injured complainant and two other injured are permitted to compound the offence punishable under Section 324 Indian Penal Code. In view of sub-section (8) of Section 320 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the composition of offence under section 324 Indian Penal Code shall have the effect of an acquittal of the appellant with whom the offence has been compounded."

26. In Surat Singh v. State of Uttaranchal (Now Uttarakhand), 2012(12) SCC 772, Hon'ble Supreme Court, based on compromise, permitted the parties to compound their offences under section 354 and 506 IPC.

27. In Jeetu Vs. State of Chhattisgarh, 2013 11 SCC 489 it is the duty of the appellate Court to arrive at its own independent conclusion after examining the material on record. This exercise has however to be conducted after considering the material on record. There is no power conferred by the Code either on the appellate Court/revisonal Court to acquit an accused convicted for a commission of a non-compoundable offence only on the ground that compromise has been entered into between the convict and the informant/complainant.

28. In Dasan v. State of Kerala, (2014) 12 SCC 666, the Hon'ble Supreme Court converted the conviction from 326 IPC to 325 IPC and, based on compromise, accepted the compounding of the offence under section 325 IPC and acquitted the appellant.

In Padmalayan v. Sarasan, (2014) 13 SCC 798, Hon'ble Supreme Court permitted post-conviction compromise for offence under section 324 IPC.

29. In Sathiyamoorthy v. State, 2014(3) R.C.R.(Criminal) 867, after observing that after the compromise they have been staying peacefully in the village. It is in the interest of both sides to bury the hatchet and lead a peaceful life, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

[6]. Offences under Sections 341 and 325 are compoundable. In view of the settlement they can be permitted to be compounded. However, offences under Sections 148 and 149 of the IPC are not compoundable. Hence, permission to compound them cannot be granted. However, since the accused and the victim have entered into a compromise, we

feel that it would be in the interest of both sides to reduce the sentence awarded to the accused under Sections 325 and 341 of the IPC to the sentence already undergone.

[7]. In ***Ram Lal and anr. v. State of J & K, 2000(1) R.C.R.(Criminal) 92 : (1999)2 SCC 213*** the accused were convicted for offence under Section 326 of the IPC, which is non-compoundable. Looking to the fact that the parties had arrived at a settlement and victim had no grievance, this Court reduced the sentence for the offence under Section 326 to sentence already undergone by the appellants-accused. We are inclined to follow similar course.

8. In the result, the appeal is partly allowed. The offences under Sections 341 and 325 of the IPC, for which the appellants are convicted, are permitted to be compounded because they are compoundable. The appellants are acquitted of the said offences. The appellants are stated to have undergone more than six months imprisonment. So far as offences under Sections 148 and 149 of the IPC are concerned, the conviction of the appellants for the said offences is reduced to the sentence already undergone by them subject to the appellants paying L 30,000/- as compensation to victim-Murugesan. Compensation be paid within three months from the date of this judgment.

30. In *Deva Ram v. State of Rajasthan*, (2014) 13 SCC 275, the appellant was convicted by Trial Court under section 420 IPC. His appeal against conviction was dismissed by the Sessions Court and revision petition was also dismissed by High Court. The convict approached the Apex Court and Hon'ble Supreme Court held,

[5]. We are informed that out of two years imprisonment the appellant has undergone six months imprisonment. Offence under Section 420 of the IPC is compoundable with the permission of the court by the person who is cheated. Since the parties are related to each other and they have decided to accord a quietus to their disputes and live peacefully, we permit them to compound the offence. Hence, the offence under Section 420 of the IPC for which the appellant was convicted is compounded because it is compoundable with the permission of the court. The appellant is acquitted of the said charge.

31. In *Ravinder Kaur v. Anil Kumar*, (2015) 8 SCC 286, Hon'ble Supreme Court, in a matter arising out of conviction, permitted the compounding of offence under section 494 IPC.

In *Shankar Yadav v. State of Chhattisgarh*, Cr.A 982 of 2017 Law Finder Doc Id # 877762, Hon'ble Supreme Court while permitting post-conviction compromise, by holding the offence to fall under section 324 IPC, held,

[8]. Having regard to the facts and circumstances of the case, we see no reasons to refuse permission to the parties who have compromised the offences which were compoundable under the Code as it stood in 1998. If it is so, compounding can be permitted

and the appellants-accused can be acquitted in view of Section 320 (8) of the Cr.P.C., which expressly enacts that where the composition of an offence under this section is recorded by the court, it shall have effect of an acquittal of the accused with whom the offence has been compounded. We order accordingly.

32. In Sube Singh v. State of Haryana, 2013 (4) RCR (Cri) 102, a Division Bench of this Court holds,

[17]. The magnitude of inherent jurisdiction exercisable by the High Court under Section 482 Criminal Procedure Code with a view to prevent the abuse of law or to secure the ends of justice, however, is wide enough to include its power to quash the proceedings in relation to not only the non-compoundable offences notwithstanding the bar under Section 320 Criminal Procedure Code but such a power, in our considered view, is exercisable at any stage save that there is no express bar and invoking of such power is fully justified on facts and circumstances of the case.

[21]. In the light of these peculiar facts and circumstances where not only the parties but their close relatives (including daughter and son-in-law of respondent No. 2) have also supported the amicable settlement, we are of the considered view that the negation of the compromise would disharmonize the relationship and cause a permanent rift amongst the family members who are living together as a joint family. Non-acceptance of the compromise would also lead to denial of complete justice which is the very essence of our justice delivery system. Since there is no statutory embargo against invoking of power under Section 482 Criminal Procedure Code after conviction of an accused by the trial Court and during pendency of appeal against such conviction, it appears to be a fit case to invoke the inherent jurisdiction and strike down the proceedings subject to certain safeguards.

In Maya Sanjay Khandare v. State of Maharashtra, 5-1-2021, Bom, 2021 (1) RCR(Cri) 450, a three-member bench of Bombay High Court observed as follows:

(A) In a prosecution which has culminated in a conviction, whether the power u/s 482 Cr.P.C. ought to be exercised for quashing the prosecution/conviction altogether, (instead of maintaining it and considering the issue of modification of the sentence) upon a settlement between the convict and the victim/complainant?

[33] While answering Question (A) we may observe in the light of the settled legal position as under :

At the conclusion of the criminal trial the Court on finding the evidence on record led by the prosecution to be sufficient to prove the guilt of the accused would proceed to convict the accused. The remedy of challenging the order of conviction is available to the accused by way of an appeal. Any compromise entered into post-conviction for a non-compoundable offence

cannot by itself result in acquittal of the accused. Similarly, the Court has no power to compound any offence that is non-compoundable and not permitted to be compounded under Section 320 of the Code. The compromise entered into therefore is just a mitigating factor that can be taken into account while hearing the appeal/revision challenging the conviction and which factor has to be taken into consideration while imposing appropriate punishment/sentence. It is not permissible to set aside the judgment of conviction at the appellate/revisional stage only on the ground that the parties have entered into a compromise. In a given case the appellate Court/revisional Court also has the option of not accepting the compromise. Thus if the judgment of conviction cannot be set aside in an appeal/revision only on the ground that the parties have entered into a compromise similar result cannot be obtained in a proceeding under Section 482 of the Code.

Hence, we hold that ordinarily the contention that the convict and the informant/complainant have entered into a compromise after the judgment of conviction can be raised only before the appellate/revisional Court in proceedings challenging such conviction. It would be a sound exercise of discretion under Section 482 of the Code and in accordance with the law of the land to refuse to quash criminal proceedings post-conviction for a non-compoundable offence only on the ground that the parties have entered into a compromise. Instead the Court can permit the convicted party to bring to the notice of the appellate/revisional Court the aspect of compromise. Having said so, it is only in rarest of rare cases that the Court may quash the criminal proceedings post-conviction for a non-compoundable offence on settlement between the convict and the informant/complainant. To illustrate, where a jurisdictional issue going to the root of the matter is raised for challenging the conviction or in matrimonial disputes where the parties have agreed to settle their differences, jurisdiction under Section 482 of the Code could be exercised. Such exercise of jurisdiction should be limited to the rarest of rare cases when found necessary to prevent the abuse of the process of the Court or to secure the ends of justice. Thus while holding that inherent power under Section 482 of the Code could be exercised for quashing criminal proceedings even at the appellate/revisional stage as held in **Kiran T. Ingale**[(Kiran Tulshiram Ingale vs. Anupama P. Gaikwad and Ors., 2006 2 MhLJ(Cri) 402)] such exercise of jurisdiction should be limited to the extent stated hereinabove. The ratio of the decision in **Kiran T. Ingale** (supra) has to be applied subject to aforesaid limitations. Further, the expression "criminal proceedings" would cover the entire journey of the proceedings commencing from its initiation till the proceedings culminate giving it seal of finality. Question (A) is answered accordingly.

33. In Shakuntala Sawhney v Kaushalya Sawhney, (1979) 3 SCR 639, at P 642, Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that the finest hour of Justice arises propitiously when parties, who fell apart, bury the hatchet and weave a sense of fellowship or reunion.

34. In Yogendra Yadav v State of Jharkhand, 21.7.2014, Supreme Court holds,

[4]. Now, the question before this Court is whether this Court can compound the offences under Sections 326 and 307 of the IPC which are non-compoundable. Needless to say that offences which are non-compoundable cannot be compounded by the court. Courts draw the power of compounding offences from Section 320 of the Code. The said provision has to be strictly followed (*Gian Singh v. State of Punjab*, 2012(4) R.C.R.(Criminal) 543 : 2012(4) Recent Apex Judgments (R.A.J.) 549 : (2012)10 SCC 303). However, in a given case, the High Court can quash a criminal proceeding in exercise of its power under section 482 of the Code having regard to the fact that the parties have amicably settled their disputes and the victim has no objection, even though the offences are non-compoundable. In which cases the High Court can exercise its discretion to quash the proceedings will depend on facts and circumstances of each case. Offences which involve moral turpitude, grave offences like rape, murder etc. cannot be effaced by quashing the proceedings because that will have harmful effect on the society. Such offences cannot be said to be restricted to two individuals or two groups. If such offences are quashed, it may send wrong signal to the society. However, when the High Court is convinced that the offences are entirely personal in nature and, therefore, do not affect public peace or tranquillity and where it feels that quashing of such proceedings on account of compromise would bring about peace and would secure ends of justice, it should not hesitate to quash them. In such cases, the prosecution becomes a lame prosecution. Pursuing such a lame prosecution would be waste of time and energy. That will also unsettle the compromise and obstruct restoration of peace.

35. This Court has inherent powers under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to interfere in this kind of matter.

36. In the entirety of the case and judicial precedents, I am of the considered opinion that the continuation of these proceedings will not serve any fruitful purpose whatsoever. Given above, because of the compromise, and in the facts and circumstances peculiar to this case the above captioned judgment of conviction and sentence, charges, and FIR, are hereby quashed qua the petitioners. However, the fine amount is forfeited to the State as cost incurred by it. The bail bonds of the petitioners are accordingly discharged. All pending application(s), if any, stand closed.

Petition allowed.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

30.09.2022
AK

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes
Whether reportable: No.