

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

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CRWP-11825-2022

Date of Decision: December 20, 2022

Harwinder Singh and another

...Petitioners

Versus

State of Punjab and others

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMAN CHAUDHARY

Present:- Mr. Manpreet Ghuman, Advocate for the petitioners.

AMAN CHAUDHARY, J.(Oral)

The present petition has been filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India for issuance of direction to respondent Nos.2 and 3 to protect life and liberty of the petitioners at the hands of respondent Nos.4 and 5, as they are living in-relationship against the wishes of their family members.

Learned counsel for the petitioners while referring to the petition and the Aadhar Cards of the petitioners (Annexures P-1 and P-2 respectively) submits that the dates of birth of petitioner Nos.1 and 2 are 19.03.1983 and 06.05.2001 respectively. It is further submitted that petitioner No.1-Harwinder Singh is already married, having 14 years old son and is residing with the wife of the petitioner No.1 and petitioner No.1 is paying Rs.15,000/- per month to the wife. Petitioner No.2 is unmarried. Learned counsel further submits that the petitioners are in a 'live-in relationship', on account of which respondents No.4 and 5 are giving threats to them.

Learned counsel for the petitioners states that the petitioners

would be satisfied if respondent No.2- Senior Superintendent of Police, Mohali, is directed to look into the representation dated 09.12.2022 (Annexure P-3), made to him by the petitioners in this regard and take appropriate action on the same.

Notice of motion to respondent Nos. 1 to 3 only.

At the asking of the Court, Mr. Manipal Singh Atwal, DAG, Punjab, accepts notice on behalf of respondent Nos. 1 to 3 and states that he has no objection in case respondent No.2 is directed to look into the representation of the petitioners on the aspect of threat perception and to take appropriate action, in accordance with law. Since no order that may prejudice the interest of the private respondents is proposed to be passed, therefore, there is no necessity of issuing notice to them to seek their response at this stage.

This Court has heard learned counsel for the parties.

The issue as to whether the marriage is must for providing protection to a couple 'live-in relationship', keeping in view the fundamental rights ensured under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, has been considered by the different Benches of this Court in **CRWP-4521-2021** titled as **“Pardeep Singh and another vs. State of Haryana and others”** decided on 18.5.2021; **CRWP-8081-2021** titled as **“Goutam Kumar and another vs. State of Punjab and others”** decided on 26.8.2021 and also the Division Benches in **LPA 769-2021** titled as **“Ishrat Bano and another vs. State of Punjab and others”** decided on 3.9.2021 and in **LPA 1678-2014** titled as **“Rajwinder Kaur and another vs. State of Punjab and others”** decided on 9.10.2014.

A Coordinate Bench of this Court in **Pardeep Singh's case** (**supra**) while granting protection to the petitioners therein where they were residing in live-in relationship, has held as under:

“The Constitution of India is the Supreme Law of the land. Right to life and liberty is enshrined therein and is treated as a basic feature. The said right includes the right of an individual to full development of his/her potential in accordance with his/her choice and wish and for such purpose, he/she is entitled to choose a partner of his/her choice. The individual also has the right to formalize the relationship with the partner through marriage or to adopt the non-formal approach of a live-in relationship. The concept of live-in-relationships has crept into our society from western nations and initially, found acceptance in the metropolitan cities, probably because, individuals felt that formalization of a relationship through marriage was not necessary for complete fulfillment. Education played a great role in development of this concept. Slowly, the concept has percolated into small towns and villages also as is evident from this petition. This shows that social acceptance for live-in-relationships is on the increase. In law, such a relationship is not prohibited nor does it amount to commission of any offence and thus, in my considered view such persons are entitled to equal protection of laws as any other citizen of the country. The law postulates that the life and liberty of every individual is precious and must be protected irrespective of individual views.

Let us examine the issue from another viewpoint. The Constitutional Courts grant protection to couples, who have married against the wishes of their respective parents. They seek protection of life and

liberty from their parents and family members, who disapprove of the alliance. An identical situation exists where the couple has entered into a live-in-relationship. The only difference is that the relationship is not universally accepted. Would that make any difference ? In my considered opinion, it would not. The couple fears for their safety from relatives in both situations and not from the society. They are thus, entitled to the same relief. No citizen can be permitted to take law in his own hands in a country governed by Rule of Law.

The petition is accordingly, disposed of with direction to respondent No.2 to consider the representation dated 9.5.2021 (Annexure P3) and to provide appropriate protection, if found necessary. It shall be ensured that no harm comes either to the lives or liberty of the petitioners.”

In **Rajwinder Kaur's case (supra)**, the Division Bench has held as under:-

“We have no reason to doubt that the fundamental right to life and liberty is so sacrosanct and stands at such a high pedestal that it must be protected even in the absence of an incident like solemnization of a valid marriage between the parties. While the appellants might be required to satisfy an appropriate forum regarding the validity of their marriage but even in the absence of such validation, the State is obligated to protect their life and liberty. We, thus, modify the order passed by the learned Single Judge and dispose of this appeal with a direction to the respondent-police-authorities to ensure that no harm is caused by anyone to the life and liberty of the appellants. The police-authorities shall, however,

verify the age of the appellants and if any further remedial action is required to be taken on such verification, the same shall be taken forthwith.”

Thus, in view of the law laid down in **Pardeep Singh's case (supra)** and **Rajwinder Kaur's case (supra)**, this Court is of the view that even in case the petitioners are in a “Live-in Relationship”, the protection qua the life and liberty of the petitioners being sacrosanct stands at the highest pedestal. Thus, the petitioners are entitled to be granted protection of life and liberty.

Resultantly, in view of the above, as also on account of the limited prayer made by the learned counsel for the petitioners and without commenting upon the aspect of the nature of relationship between the petitioners or expressing any opinion on merits of the case, the present petition is disposed of with a direction to respondent no.2 to look into the representation dated 09.12.2022 (Annexure P-3) and if any threat perception is found, to take appropriate action in accordance with law.

It is, however, clarified that if the petitioners are found to have been involved in any other case, in that eventuality, this order shall not preclude the competent authority from taking any action against the petitioners in accordance with law.

December 20, 2022

Rimpal

(AMAN CHAUDHARY)
JUDGE

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