

IN THE HIGH COURT AT CALCUTTA

(Criminal Revisional Jurisdiction)

APPELLATE SIDE

Present:

The Hon'ble Justice Shampa Dutt (Paul)

CRR 1894 of 2019

Ratan Majumder & Ors.

Vs

The State of West Bengal & Anr.

For the Petitioners : Mr. Abir Chakraborty.

For the State : Mr. Sudip Ghosh,
: Mr. Bitasok Banerjee.

For the Opposite Party : None.

Heard on : 27.02.2023

Judgment on : 18.04.2023

Shampa Dutt (Paul), J.:

1. The present revision has been preferred praying for quashing and/or setting aside of proceedings in connection with G.R. Case No. 466 (1) 18, corresponding to Charge Sheet No. 09/19, dated 30/03/2019 arising out of Dum Dum GRPS. Case No. 89 of 2018 dated 18/11/18 under Sections 306/34 of the Indian Penal Code, presently pending before the Learned Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (4th Court, Railway) at Sealdah, and all orders passed therein including order dated 22/4/19 whereby the Learned Magistrate was pleased to take cognizance of the purported Charge Sheet submitted by the investigating agency and direct issuance of notice to the petitioners/accused persons.
2. The petitioner's case is that the petitioners no. 1, 3 and 4 are businessmen and the petitioner No. 2 is the wife of petitioner No. 1. The petitioners have to deal with various people in connection with their business, and in the same manner in the year 2012, the petitioners have come into contact with one Sukamal Bose being resident as well as businessman of the same locality where the petitioners reside.
3. The said Sukamal Bose (deceased husband of the De Facto Complainant) was the proprietor of one Firm functioning under the name and style of M/S Shubham Construction having its Office at No. 06 Nandan Nagar, Police Station Belgharia, Kolkata – 700 083. The said

person had approached the petitioners No. 1 and 3 to jointly invest Rupees 8,00,000 (Eight Lacs) 4,00,000 (Four Lacs) each in his construction business on certain terms and conditions, and pursuant to such understanding, an agreement dated 16/01/2012 was executed in between the said Sukamal Bose and the petitioners No. 1 and 3 which was notarized on 18/01/2012.

4. That pursuant to the said agreement dated 16/01/2012 the petitioners No. 1 and 3 had advanced an amount of Rupees Eight Lacs (8,00,000) to the said Sukamal Bose for construction of an apartment at 18, Sahid Mahal Deshapriya Nagar, Belgharia, Kolkata – 700 056.
5. A separate agreement for sale of a Flat on the 3rd Floor of Holding No. 1188, Ward No. 21 Verner Lane measuring about 600 Square feet was signed by and in between the petitioner No. 2 and the said Sukamal Bose. On 22/08/2014, pursuant to such agreement, the petitioner no. 2 had advanced a further amount of Rupees 10,75,000 (Ten Lacs Seventy Five Thousand) to the said Sukamal Bose. That in terms of the said agreement dated 22/08/2014 the said Sukamal Bose had undertaken to handover the possession of the said flat to the petitioner no. 2 within 30/04/2015.
6. The petitioner no. 4 had also made an advance of Rupees 17,50,000 (Rupees Seventeen Lacs Fifty Thousand only) to the said Sukamal Bose for purchase of one residential flat in the year 2012.

7. The said Sukamal Bose (deceased husband of the de facto complainant) subsequently failed to construct the flats in terms of agreement dated 16/01/2012 and has also failed to return the loan amount of Rupees Eight Lacs (8,00,000) given to him by the petitioners no. 1 and 3 jointly.
8. He also failed to hand over the flat to petitioner No. 2 as per terms of agreement dated 22/08/2014 within the stipulated period i.e. 30/04/15 and till 18/05/16 despite several reminders.
9. In response to such reminders he had handed over one Cheque bearing No. 493009 of Punjab and Sind Bank for Rupees 7,00,000 (Rupees Seven Lacs only), and three Cheques of Syndicate Bank bearing Cheque No. 570641 for Rupees 3,00,000 (Rupees Three Lacs Only), Cheque No. 569237 for Rupees 2,50,000 (Rupees Two Lacs Fifty Thousand Only) Cheque No. 569236 for Rupees 5,00,000 (Rupees Five Lacs only) as security, towards the said advance amount given to him by the petitioner No. 4.
10. That having no other alternative the petitioner No. 2 filed an application under Section 12 of the Consumer Protection Act, before the District Consumer Forum at Barasat being C.C. No. 298 of 2016 for appropriate reliefs against the said Sukamal Bose, as the said person failed to construct the building as promised and thus also failed to deliver possession of the same.
11. That during pendency of the said application being C.C. No. 298 of 2016 the said Sukamal Bose died in a rail accident on 18/08/16 in

between Dum Dum and Belgharia Railway Station. The said incident resulted in registration of Dum Dum GRPS U/D Case No. 137/16 dated 18/08/16.

12. That after the death of the said Sukamal Bose, Rina Bose (the defacto complainant and wife of deceased Sukamal Bose) and her son were substituted in place of the deceased Sukamal Bose as his legal heirs in C.C. No. 298 of 2016 pending before the District Consumer Forum at Barasat.
13. During pendency of the said Case i.e. C.C. No. 298 of 2016, after conclusion of all the arguments, suddenly on 14/11/18, that is two days before passing of the Final Judgment, the de-facto complainant filed an application being M.A. 329/2018 praying for taking further evidence on the ground that she has discovered one Suicide Note and one promissory Note written by the deceased Sukamal Bose.
14. After hearing all the parties, the Learned Forum, Vide Order dated 15/11/18 was pleased to reject and dismiss the application filed by the defacto complainant and a further date i.e. 05/12/18 was fixed for delivery of the judgment.
15. The petitioner no. 4 being hopeful by such progress in the case filed by the petitioner No. 2 was also taking preparation to adopt appropriate measures as per law, for recovery of the money advanced by him to the said Sukamal Bose (deceased husband of the de facto complainant), by filing petition before the Consumer Forum and as such he has also been

falsely implicated in the instant case at the behest of the de facto complainant with a motive to restrict him from seeking lawful relief before the said forum.

16. Vide order dated 5/12/18 the Learned Consumer Forum was pleased to allow the said application filed by the petitioner No. 2 being C.C. No. 298 of 2016 directing the opposite parties to execute the deed of conveyance in question within 45 days from the date of passing of the order after receiving the rest amount from the complainant amounting to rupees 4,85,000 (Four Lacs Eighty Five Thousand only) i.d. the complainant would be at liberty to execute the same through Learned Consumer Forum as per law. Alternatively the O.Ps were jointly and severally liable to refund the rupees 10,75,000/- (Ten Lacs Seventy Five Thousand only) to the complainant within 45 days along with interest @ 8% per annum from the date of filing of the case in default the interest component will be @10% P.A. instead of @ 8% P.A. The O.Ps were also directed to pay compensation to the tune of Rupees 5000/- to the complainant as compensation due to harassment, mental agony and pain in default the complainant was at liberty to put the decree in execution as per law.
17. That as per de-facto complainant the incident which led to the registration of the First information Report in brief is as follows :-

“The de facto complainant has discovered a purported suicide note of deceased Sukamal Bose on 01/11/18, (the husband of the de facto complainant), from which the de facto complainant has learnt that the petitioners have

pressurized and instigated deceased Sukamal Bose to commit suicide on 18/08/16 such incident resulted in registration of Dum Dum GRPS U/D Case No. 137/16 Dated 18/08/16”.

18. Based on the aforesaid impugned complaint, the Dum Dum GRPS. Case No. 89 of 2018 dated 18/11/18 was registered for investigation.
19. On 22/04/19 the Learned Magistrate has taken cognizance.
20. That as per knowledge of the petitioners, the handwriting expert of Questioned Document Examination Bureau, of CID, West Bengal, after comparing the writings, couldn't form any opinion about the handwriting of the alleged suicide note to the effect that whether or not it was actually written by the alleged victim.
21. **Mr. Abir Chakraborty, learned counsel for the petitioners** has submitted that the Learned Magistrate erred in law by taking cognizance of the alleged offence without considering the aforementioned facts which made the said order legally untenable and otherwise bad in law.
22. There is no representation on behalf of the opposite party no.2 as the addressee has left the address as given.
23. **Mr. Sudip Ghosh, learned counsel for the State** has placed the case diary.
24. **From the materials on record the following facts are before this court:-**
 - i. There was a development agreement between the parties.
 - ii. Money had been advanced to the deceased by the petitioners.

- iii. As deceased could not complete the construction within the prescribed period, petitioners sent a lawyer's notice.
 - iv. The deceased asked for some time to complete the construction.
 - v. The petitioners filed a case in the consumer forum during the pendency of which the deceased died in a rail accident.
 - vi. **A suicide note was discovered by the opposite party no. 2/wife of the deceased around, 14/11/18, which mentions the petitioners.**
 - vii. **The signature on the suicide note has been proved to be that of the deceased, though the opinion on the handwriting is not conclusive.**
25. The **following judgments** have been relied upon by the petitioner:-
- 1) Swamy Prahaladdas vs State of M.P. and Anr., 1995 Supp (3) SCC 438.
 - 2) Netai Dutta vs State of W.B., (2005) 2 SCC 659.
 - 3) Gangula Mohan Reddy vs State of Andhra Pradesh, (2010) 1 SCC 750.
 - 4) Daniel Durairaj vs State of Puducherry Rep. by Inspector of Police, Thirunallaru Police, 2015 SCC OnLine Mad 8802.
26. **The present case is for quashing of the proceedings under Section 306/34 of Indian Penal Code.**

27. The Supreme Court in **Daxaben Vs The State of Gujarat & Ors.**,

Criminal Appeal No.....of 2022, on July 29, 2022, held that:-

“14. The proposition of law enunciated and/or re-enunciated in the judgments cited above are well settled. Whether the acts alleged would constitute an offence, would depend upon the facts and circumstances of the case. Each case has to be judged on its own merits.

16. It is not necessary for this Court to go into the question of whether there was any direct or indirect act of incitement to the offence of abetment of suicide, since the High Court has not gone into that question. Suffice it to mention that even an indirect act of incitement to the commission of suicide would constitute the offence of abetment of suicide under Section 306 of the IPC.

*20. In the aforesaid judgment, the High Court referred to an order dated 6 th December 2019 passed by a three Judge Bench of this Court in CrI. Appeal No.1852 of 2019 (**New India Assurance Co. Ltd. v. Krishna Kumar Pandey**) where this Court held that in a revision arising out of conviction, the High Court could not have sealed the right of the employer to take disciplinary action against the accused for misconduct in accordance with the Service Rules.*

*21. In **Krishna Kumar Pandey** (supra) this Court referred with approval, to the judgment of this Court in **State of Punjab v. Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar and Ors.** where this Court held that the High Court was not denuded of inherent power to recall a judgment and/or order which was without jurisdiction, or in violation of principles of natural justice, or passed without giving an opportunity of hearing to a party affected by the order or where an order was obtained by abusing the process of Court which would really amount to its being without jurisdiction. Inherent powers can be exercised to recall such orders.*

24. Be that as it may, since the initial order dated 20th October 2020 is also under challenge in these appeals, it is really not necessary for this Court to delve deeper into the question of whether a final order passed under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. quashing an FIR could have, at all, been recalled by the High Court, in the absence of any specific provision in the Cr.P.C. for recall and/or review of such order. The High Court has, in effect, held

that in exceptional circumstances, such orders can be recalled, in exercise of the inherent power of the High Court, to prevent injustice.

25. The only question in this appeal is whether the Criminal Miscellaneous Applications filed by the accused under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. could have been allowed and an FIR under Section 306 of the IPC for abetment to commit suicide, entailing punishment of imprisonment of ten years, could have been quashed on the basis of a settlement between the complainant and the accused named in the FIR. The answer to the aforesaid question cannot, but be in the negative.

28. In **Monica Kumar (Dr.) v. State of U.P.**, this Court held that inherent jurisdiction under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C has to be exercised sparingly, carefully and with caution and only when such exercise is justified by the tests specifically laid down in the section itself.

29. In exceptional cases, to prevent abuse of the process of the Court, the High Court might in exercise of its inherent powers under Section 482 quash criminal proceedings. However, interference would only be justified when the complaint did not disclose any offence, or was patently frivolous, vexatious or oppressive, as held by this Court in **Mrs. Dhanalakshmi v. R. Prasanna Kumar**.

30. In **Municipal Corporation of Delhi v. Ram Kishan Rohtagi and Others.**, a three-Judge Bench of this Court held:-

“6. It may be noticed that Section 482 of the present Code is the ad verbatim copy of Section 561- A of the old Code. This provision confers a separate and independent power on the High Court alone to pass orders *ex debito justitiae* in cases where grave and substantial injustice has been done or where the process of the court has been seriously abused. It is not merely a revisional power meant to be exercised against the orders passed by subordinate courts. It was under this section that in the old Code, the High Courts used to quash the proceedings or expunge uncalled for remarks against witnesses or other persons or subordinate courts. Thus, the scope, ambit and range of Section 561-A (which is now Section 482) is quite different from the powers conferred by the present Code under the provisions of Section 397. It may be that in some cases there may be overlapping but such cases would be few and far between. It is well settled

that the inherent powers under Section 482 of the present Code can be exercised only when no other remedy is available to the litigant and not where a specific remedy is provided by the statute. Further, the power being an extraordinary one, it has to be exercised sparingly. If these considerations are kept in mind, there will be no inconsistency between Sections 482 and 397(2) of the present Code.

7. The limits of the power under Section 482 were clearly defined by this Court in Raj Kapoor v. State [(1980) 1 SCC 43 : 1980 SCC (Cri) 72] where Krishna Iyer, J. observed as follows : [SCC para 10, p. 47 : SCC (Cri) p. 76]

“Even so, a general principle pervades this branch of law when a specific provision is made : easy resort to inherent power is not right except under compelling circumstances. Not that there is absence of jurisdiction but that inherent power should not invade areas set apart for specific power under the same Code.”

8. Another important consideration which is to be kept in mind is as to when the High Court acting under the provisions of Section 482 should exercise the inherent power insofar as quashing of criminal proceedings are concerned. This matter was gone into in greater detail in Smt. Nagawwa v. Veeranna Shivalingappa Konjalgi [(1976) 3 SCC 736 : 1976 SCC (Cri) 507 : 1976 Supp SCR 123 : 1976 Cri LJ 1533] where the scope of Sections 202 and 204 of the present Code was considered and while laying down the guidelines and the grounds on which proceedings could be quashed this Court observed as follows : [SCC para 5, p. 741 : SCC (Cri) pp. 511-12]

“Thus it may be safely held that in the following cases an order of the Magistrate issuing process against the accused can be quashed or set aside:

(1) where the allegations made in the complaint or the statements of the witnesses recorded in support of the same taken at their face value make out absolutely no case against the accused or the complaint does not disclose the essential ingredients of an offence which is alleged against the accused;

(2) where the allegations made in the complaint are patently absurd and inherently improbable so that no prudent person can ever reach a conclusion that there is sufficient ground for proceeding against the accused;

(3) where the discretion exercised by the Magistrate in issuing process is capricious and arbitrary having been

based either on no evidence or on materials which are wholly irrelevant or inadmissible; and

(4) where the complaint suffers from fundamental legal defects, such as, want of sanction, or absence of a complaint by legally competent authority and the like.

The cases mentioned by us are purely illustrative and provide sufficient guidelines to indicate contingencies where the High Court can quash proceedings.”

9. Same view was taken in a later decision of this Court in *Sharda Prasad Sinha v. State of Bihar* [(1977) 1 SCC 505 : 1977 SCC (Cri) 132 : (1977) 2 SCR 357 : 1977 Cri LJ 1146] where Bhagwati, J. speaking for the Court observed as follows : [SCC para 2, p. 506 : SCC (Cri) p. 133]

“It is now settled law that where the allegations set out in the complaint or the charge-sheet do not constitute any offence, it is competent to the High Court exercising its inherent jurisdiction under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to quash the order passed by the Magistrate taking cognizance of the offence.

10. It is, therefore, manifestly clear that proceedings against an accused in the initial stages can be quashed only if on the face of the complaint or the papers accompanying the same, no offence is constituted. In other words, the test is that taking the allegations and the complaint as they are, without adding or subtracting anything, if no offence is made out then the High Court will be justified in quashing the proceedings in exercise of its powers under Section 482 of the present Code.”

31. As held by this Court in ***State of Andhra Pradesh v. Gourieshetty Mahesh***, the High Court, while exercising jurisdiction under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C, would not ordinarily embark upon an enquiry into whether the evidence is reliable or not or whether there is reasonable possibility that the accusation would not be sustained.

32. In ***Paramjeet Batra v. State of Uttrakhand***, this Court held:—

“12. While exercising its jurisdiction under Section 482 of the Code the High Court has to be cautious. This power is to be used sparingly and only for the purpose of preventing abuse of the process of any court or otherwise to secure ends of justice. Whether a complaint discloses a criminal offence or not depends upon the nature of facts alleged therein. Whether essential ingredients of criminal

offence are present or not has to be judged by the High Court. ...”

33. In *Madhavrao Jiwarelrao Scindia v. Sambhajirao Chandrojlrao Angre*, a three Judge Bench of this Court summarized the law with regard to quashing of criminal proceedings under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. This Court held:—

“7. The legal position is well settled that when a prosecution at the initial stage is asked to be quashed, the test to be applied by the court is as to whether the uncontroverted allegations as made *prima facie* establish the offence. It is also for the court to take into consideration any special features which appear in a particular case to consider whether it is expedient and in the interest of justice to permit a prosecution to continue. This is so on the basis that the court cannot be utilised for any oblique purpose and where in the opinion of the court chances of an ultimate conviction are bleak and, therefore, no useful purpose is likely to be served by allowing a criminal prosecution to continue, the court may while taking into consideration the special facts of a case also quash the proceeding even though it may be at a preliminary stage.”

34. In *Inder Mohan Goswami v. State of Uttaranchal*, this Court observed:—

“46. The court must ensure that criminal prosecution is not used as an instrument of harassment or for seeking private vendetta or with an ulterior motive to pressurise the accused. On analysis of the aforementioned cases, we are of the opinion that it is neither possible nor desirable to lay down an inflexible rule that would govern the exercise of inherent jurisdiction. Inherent jurisdiction of the High Courts under Section 482 CrPC though wide has to be exercised sparingly, carefully and with caution and only when it is justified by the tests specifically laid down in the statute itself and in the aforementioned cases. In view of the settled legal position, the impugned judgment cannot be sustained.”

35. It is a well settled proposition of law that criminal prosecution, if otherwise justified, is not vitiated on account of malafides or vendetta. As said by Krishna Iyer, J. in ***State of Punjab v. Gurdial Singh*** “if the use of the power for the fulfilment of a legitimate object the actuation or catalysation by malice is not *legicidal*.”

36. In **Kapil Agarwal & Ors. v. Sanjay Sharma & Others**, this Court observed that Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. is designed to achieve the purpose of ensuring that criminal proceedings are not permitted to degenerate into weapons of harassment.

37. Offence under Section 306 of the IPC of abetment to commit suicide is a grave, non-compoundable offence. Of course, the inherent power of the High Court under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. is wide and can even be exercised to quash criminal proceedings relating to non-compoundable offences, to secure the ends of justice or to prevent abuse of the process of Court. Where the victim and offender have compromised disputes essentially civil and personal in nature, the High Court can exercise its power under Section 482 of the CrPC to quash the criminal proceedings. In what cases power to quash an FIR or a criminal complaint or criminal proceedings upon compromise can be exercised, would depend on the facts and circumstances of the case.

38. However, before exercising its power under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C. to quash an FIR, criminal complaint and/or criminal proceedings, the High Court, as observed above, has to be circumspect and have due regard to the nature and gravity of the offence. Heinous or serious crimes, which are not private in nature and have a serious impact on society cannot be quashed on the basis of a compromise between the offender and the complainant and/or the victim. Crimes like murder, rape, burglary, dacoity and even abetment to commit suicide are neither private nor civil in nature. Such crimes are against the society. In no circumstances can prosecution be quashed on compromise, when the offence is serious and grave and falls within the ambit of crime against society.

39. Orders quashing FIRs and/or complaints relating to grave and serious offences only on basis of an agreement with the complainant, would set a dangerous precedent, where complaints would be lodged for oblique reasons, with a view to extract money from the accused. Furthermore, financially strong offenders would go scot free, even in cases of grave and serious offences such as murder, rape, brideburning, etc. by buying off informants/complainants and settling with them. This would render otiose provisions such as Sections 306,

498A, 304-B etc. incorporated in the IPC as a deterrent, with a specific social purpose.

40. In Criminal Jurisprudence, the position of the complainant is only that of the informant. Once an FIR and/or criminal complaint is lodged and a criminal case is started by the State, it becomes a matter between the State and the accused. The State has a duty to ensure that law and order is maintained in society. It is for the state to prosecute offenders. In case of grave and serious noncompoundable offences which impact society, the informant and/or complainant only has the right of hearing, to the extent of ensuring that justice is done by conviction and punishment of the offender. An informant has no right in law to withdraw the complaint of a noncompoundable offence of a grave, serious and/or heinous nature, which impacts society.

41. In **Gian Singh v. State of Punjab**, this Court discussed the circumstances in which the High Court quashes criminal proceedings in case of a non-compoundable offence, when there is a settlement between the parties and enunciated the following principles:-

“58. Where the High Court quashes a criminal proceeding having regard to the fact that the dispute between the offender and the victim has been settled although the offences are not compoundable, it does so as in its opinion, continuation of criminal proceedings will be an exercise in futility and justice in the case demands that the dispute between the parties is put to an end and peace is restored; securing the ends of justice being the ultimate guiding factor. No doubt, crimes are acts which have harmful effect on the public and consist in wrongdoing that seriously endangers and threatens the well-being of the society and it is not safe to leave the crime-doer only because he and the victim have settled the dispute amicably or that the victim has been paid compensation, yet certain crimes have been made compoundable in law, with or without the permission of the court. In respect of serious offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc., or other offences of mental depravity under IPC or offences of moral turpitude under special statutes, like the Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity, the settlement between the offender and the victim can have no legal sanction at all. However, certain offences which overwhelmingly and predominantly bear

civil flavour having arisen out of civil, mercantile, commercial, financial, partnership or such like transactions or the offences arising out of matrimony, particularly relating to dowry, etc. or the family dispute, where the wrong is basically to the victim and the offender and the victim have settled all disputes between them amicably, irrespective of the fact that such offences have not been made compoundable, the High Court may within the framework of its inherent power, quash the criminal proceeding or criminal complaint or FIR if it is satisfied that on the face of such settlement, there is hardly any likelihood of the offender being convicted and by not quashing the criminal proceedings, justice shall be casualty and ends of justice shall be defeated. The above list is illustrative and not exhaustive. Each case will depend on its own facts and no hard-and-fast category can be prescribed”.

42. In *Narinder Singh v. State of Punjab*, this Court held that in case of heinous and serious offences, which are generally to be treated as crime against society, it is the duty of the State to punish the offender. Hence, even when there is a settlement, the view of the offender and victim will not prevail since it is in the interest of society that the offender should be punished to deter others from committing a similar crime.

43. In *State of Maharashtra v. Vikram Anantrai Doshi*, this Court held:-

“26. ... availing of money from a nationalised bank in the manner, as alleged by the investigating agency, vividly exposits fiscal impurity and, in a way, financial fraud. The modus operandi as narrated in the charge-sheet cannot be put in the compartment of an individual or personal wrong. It is a social wrong and it has immense societal impact. It is an accepted principle of handling of finance that whenever there is manipulation and cleverly conceived contrivance to avail of these kinds of benefits it cannot be regarded as a case having overwhelmingly and predominatingly civil character. The ultimate victim is the collective. It creates a hazard in the financial interest of the society. The gravity of the offence creates a dent in the economic spine of the nation. ...”

44. In *CBI v. Maninder Singh*, this Court held:-

“17. ... In economic offences the Court must not only keep in view that money has been paid to the bank which has been defrauded but also the society at large. It is not a case of simple assault or a theft of a trivial amount; but

the offence with which we are concerned was well planned and was committed with a deliberate design with an eye on personal profit regardless of consequence to the society at large. To quash the proceeding merely on the ground that the accused has settled the amount with the bank would be a misplaced sympathy. If the prosecution against the economic offenders are not allowed to continue, the entire community is aggrieved.”

45. In *State of Tamil Nadu v. R. Vasanthi Stanley*, this Court held:-

“14. ... Lack of awareness, knowledge or intent is neither to be considered nor accepted in economic offences. The submission assiduously presented on gender leaves us unimpressed. An offence under the criminal law is an offence and it does not depend upon the gender of an accused. True it is, there are certain provisions in CrPC relating to exercise of jurisdiction under Section 437, etc. therein but that altogether pertains to a different sphere. A person committing a murder or getting involved in a financial scam or forgery of documents, cannot claim discharge or acquittal on the ground of her gender as that is neither constitutionally nor statutorily a valid argument. The offence is gender neutral in this case. We say no more on this score.

15. ... A grave criminal offence or serious economic offence or for that matter the offence that has the potentiality to create a dent in the financial health of the institutions, is not to be quashed on the ground that there is delay in trial or the principle that when the matter has been settled it should be quashed to avoid the load on the system. ...”

46. In *Parbatbhai Aahir Alias Parbathbhai Bhimsinhbhai Karmur and Others v. State of Gujrat and Another*, a threeJudge Bench of this Court quoted *Narinder Singh* (supra), *Vikram Anantrai Doshi* (supra), *CBI v. Maninder Singh* (supra), *R. Vasanthi Stanley* (supra) and held:-

“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 insofar 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.”

47. In *State of Madhya Pradesh v. Laxmi Narayan & Ors.*, a three-Judge Bench discussed the earlier judgments of this Court and laid down the following principles:-

“15. Considering the law on the point and the other decisions of this Court on the point, referred to hereinabove, it is observed and held as under:

15.1. That the power conferred under Section 482 of the Code to quash the criminal proceedings for the non-compoundable offences under Section 320 of the Code can be exercised having overwhelmingly and predominantly the civil character, particularly those arising out of commercial transactions or arising out of matrimonial relationship or family disputes and when the parties have resolved the entire dispute amongst themselves;

15.2. Such power is not to be exercised in those prosecutions which involved heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. Such offences are not private in nature and have a serious impact on society;

15.3. Similarly, such power is not to be exercised for the offences under the special statutes like the Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity are not to be quashed merely on the basis of compromise between the victim and the offender;

15.4. Offences under Section 307 IPC and the Arms Act, etc. would fall in the category of heinous and serious

offences and therefore are to be treated as crime against the society and not against the individual alone, and therefore, the criminal proceedings for the offence under Section 307 IPC and/or the Arms Act, etc. which have a serious impact on the society cannot be quashed in exercise of powers under Section 482 of the Code, on the ground that the parties have resolved their entire dispute amongst themselves. However, the High Court would not rest its decision merely because there is a mention of Section 307 IPC in the FIR or the charge is framed under this provision. It would be open to the High Court to examine as to whether incorporation of Section 307 IPC is there for the sake of it or the prosecution has collected sufficient evidence, which if proved, would lead to framing the charge under Section 307 IPC. For this purpose, it would be open to the High Court to go by the nature of injury sustained, whether such injury is inflicted on the vital/delicate parts of the body, nature of weapons used, etc. However, such an exercise by the High Court would be permissible only after the evidence is collected after investigation and the charge-sheet is filed/charge is framed and/or during the trial. Such exercise is not permissible when the matter is still under investigation. Therefore, the ultimate conclusion in paras 29.6 and 29.7 of the decision of this Court in *Narinder Singh* [(2014) 6 SCC 466: (2014) 3 SCC (Cri) 54] should be read harmoniously and to be read as a whole and in the circumstances stated hereinabove;

15.5. While exercising the power under Section 482 of the Code to quash the criminal proceedings in respect of noncompoundable offences, which are private in nature and do not have a serious impact on society, on the ground that there is a settlement/compromise between the victim and the offender, the High Court is required to consider the antecedents of the accused; the conduct of the accused, namely, whether the accused was absconding and why he was absconding, how he had managed with the complainant to enter into a compromise, etc.”

48. In *Arun Singh and Others v. State of Uttar Pradesh Through its Secretary and Another*, this Court held:-

“14. In another decision in *Narinder Singh v. State of Punjab* (2014) 6 SCC 466 : (2014) 3 SCC (Cri) 54] it has been observed that in respect of offence against the society it is the duty to punish the offender. Hence, even

where there is a settlement between the offender and victim the same shall not prevail since it is in interests of the society that offender should be punished which acts as deterrent for others from committing similar crime. On the other hand, there may be offences falling in the category where the correctional objective of criminal law would have to be given more weightage than the theory of deterrent punishment. In such cases, the court may be of the opinion that a settlement between the parties would lead to better relations between them and would resolve a festering private dispute and thus may exercise power under Section 482 CrPC for quashing the proceedings or the complaint or the FIR as the case may be.

15. Bearing in mind the above principles which have been laid down, we are of the view that offences for which the appellants have been charged are in fact offences against society and not private in nature. Such offences have serious impact upon society and continuance of trial of such cases is founded on the overriding effect of public interests in punishing persons for such serious offences. It is neither an offence arising out of commercial, financial, mercantile, partnership or such similar transactions or has any element of civil dispute thus it stands on a distinct footing. In such cases, settlement even if arrived at between the complainant and the accused, the same cannot constitute a valid ground to quash the FIR or the charge-sheet.

16. Thus the High Court cannot be said to be unjustified in refusing to quash the charge-sheet on the ground of compromise between the parties."

49. *In exercise of power under Section 482 of the Cr.P.C., the Court does not examine the correctness of the allegation in the complaint except in exceptionally rare cases where it is patently clear that the allegations are frivolous or do not disclose any offence.*

50. *In our considered opinion, the Criminal Proceeding cannot be nipped in the bud by exercise of jurisdiction under Section 482 of the Cr. P.C. only because there is a settlement, in this case a monetary settlement, between the accused and the complainant and other relatives of the deceased to the exclusion of the hapless widow of the deceased. As held by the three-Judge Bench of this Court in **Laxmi Narayan & Ors.** (supra), Section 307 of the IPC falls in the category of heinous and serious offences and are to be treated as crime against society and not against the individual alone. On a parity of reasoning,*

offence under section 306 of the IPC would fall in the same category. An FIR under Section 306 of the IPC cannot even be quashed on the basis of any financial settlement with the informant, surviving spouse, parents, children, guardians, care-givers or anyone else. It is clarified that it was not necessary for this Court to examine the question whether the FIR in this case discloses any offence under Section 306 of the IPC, since the High Court, in exercise of its power under Section 482 CrPC, quashed the proceedings on the sole ground that the disputes between the accused and the informant had been compromised.”

28. **In the said case the Court set aside the order of the High Court quashing a proceedings under Section 306 IPC in view of settlement between the parties.**
29. **In the present case, the petitioners are named in the suicide note and the signature on the note has been proved to be that of the deceased.**
30. **The case has to thus proceed towards trial to be decided in accordance with law.**
31. **There is prima facie materials in this case against the petitioners to go to trial.**
32. Quashing a case of such a nature will cause miscarriage of justice **(Daxaben Vs The State of Gujarat & Ors. (Supra)).**
33. **CRR 1894 of 2019 is dismissed.**
34. There will be no order as to costs.
35. All connected Application stand disposed of.
36. Interim order if any stands vacated.

37. Copy of this judgment be sent to the learned Trial Court forthwith for necessary compliance.
38. Urgent certified website copy of this judgment, if applied for, be supplied expeditiously after complying with all, necessary legal formalities.

(Shampa Dutt (Paul), J.)