



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 27.01.2023

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA

Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

Ajithraja : Petitioner
Vs.

1.The State Rep. by
The Inspector of Police,
All Women Police Station,
Colachel, Nagarcoil,
Kanniyakumari District.

2.XXXX : Respondents

PRAYER : Criminal Original Petition is filed under Section 482 of Cr.P.C. to call for the entire records connected with the case in Spl.S.C.No.71 of 2021 pending on the file of the learned Special Court for Exclusive Trial of Cases under the POCSO Act at Nagercoil, Kanniyakumari District and quash the same insofar as the petitioner is concerned.

For Petitioner : Mr.S.Malaikani

For R-1 : Mr.Sivakumar
Government Advocate (Crl. side)



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

ORDER

The Criminal Original Petition has been filed to quash the proceedings in Spl.S.C.No.71 of 2021 on the file of the learned Special Court for Exclusive Trial of Cases under the POCSO Act at Nagercoil, Kanniyakumari District, for the offences punishable under Section 366 and Sections 5(l), 6, 9(1) and 10 of POCSO Act.

2.The case of the prosecution is that the daughter of the de-facto complainant/victim girl and the petitioner/accused loved each other and on the date of occurrence, the petitioner had kidnapped the victim girl and had committed sexual assault on her. Hence, the second respondent/de-facto complainant, who is the mother of the victim girl, has lodged a complaint before the first respondent and on that basis, FIR came to be registered in Crime No.9 of 2021 and after investigation and filing of the final report, the case was committed to the Sessions Court in Spl.S.C.No.71 of 2021 on the file of the Special Court for Exclusive Trial of Cases under the POCSO Act at Nagercoil, Kanniyakumari District against the petitioner for the offences under Section 366 and Sections 5(l), 6, 9(1) and 10 of POCSO Act.



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

3.The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner would submit that there was a love affair between the petitioner and the victim girl and since the parents of the victim girl were against the love affair, the petitioner eloped with the victim girl, who was 17 years and above. The case came to be registered on the complaint given by the mother. Later, the victim girl has attained majority and due to the intervention of elders and well wishers, there was amicable settlement and thereafter, with the consent of elders in both family, the marriage between the petitioner and the victim girl was solemnized and it was also registered at the office of the Marriage Registrar Office, Boghalur in S.No.HMR/BOGHALUR/7/2022 and presently, they are living together as a husband and wife. Further, there is a good relationship between the family members of the petitioner and the de-facto complainant.

4.The learned Government Advocate (Crl. Side), on instructions, would submit that the victim has now married the petitioner. The marriage between the petitioner and the victim girl has been legally registered by the Marriage Registrar Office, Boghalur in



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

S.No.HMR/BOGHALUR/7/2022. Further, it is represented by the respondent police that the petitioner and the victim girl are living happily at the house of the petitioner.

5.The case is under trial. By passage of time, the parties have decided to bury their hatchet and compromise the dispute amicably among themselves.

6.The petitioner and the second respondent along with the victim girl were also present in person before this Court and they were identified by Mr.Albin Juliet Mary, AWPS, Colachel and their respective counsels. This Court also enquired both the parties and was satisfied that the parties have come to an amicable settlement between themselves.

7.The case has been registered for offence under Section 366 and Sections 5(1), 6, 9(1) and 10 of POCSO Act. It is settled law that the High Court has inherent power under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to quash the criminal proceedings even for the offences which are not compoundable under Section 320 of the Code of



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

Criminal Procedure, where the parties have settled their dispute between themselves. However, while quashing the criminal proceedings, based on the settlement arrived at between the parties, the High Court should act with caution and the power should be exercised sparingly only in order to secure the ends of justice and also to prevent abuse of process of any Court.

8.In *Gian Singh vs. State of Punjab* [2012 (10) SCC 303], the Supreme Court has held as follows:

“....61. The position that emerges from the above discussion can be summarised thus: the power of the High Court in quashing a criminal proceeding or FIR or complaint in exercise of its inherent jurisdiction is distinct and different from the power given to a criminal court for compounding the offences under Section 320 of the Code. Inherent power is of wide plenitude with no statutory limitation but it has to be exercised in accord with the guideline engrafted in such power viz.: (i) to secure the ends of justice, or (ii) to prevent abuse of the process of any court. In what cases power to quash the criminal proceeding or complaint or FIR may be exercised where the offender and the victim have settled their dispute would depend on the facts and circumstances of each case and no category can be prescribed. However, before exercise of such power, the High Court must have due regard to the nature and gravity of the crime.



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

Heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. cannot be fittingly quashed even though the victim or victim's family and the offender have settled the dispute. Such offences are not private in nature and have a serious impact on society.”

9.In *Narinder Singh v. State of Punjab* [2014(6) SCC 466], after considering the *Gian Singh's* case referred to above, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held as follows:

“..29.1. Power conferred under Section 482 of the Code is to be distinguished from the power which lies in the Court to compound the offences under Section 320 of the Code. No doubt, under Section 482 of the Code, the High Court has inherent power to quash the criminal proceedings even in those cases which are not compoundable, where the parties have settled the matter between themselves. However, this power is to be exercised sparingly and with caution.

29.2. When the parties have reached the settlement and on that basis petition for quashing the criminal proceedings is filed, the guiding factor in such cases would be to secure:

- (i) ends of justice, or*
- (ii) to prevent abuse of the process of any court.*

While exercising the power the High Court is to form an opinion on either of the aforesaid two objectives.

29.3. Such a power is not to be exercised in those prosecutions which involve heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. Such offences are not private in nature and have a serious impact on society. Similarly, for the offences alleged to have been committed under special statute 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.

29.4. On the other hand, those criminal cases having overwhelmingly and predominantly civil character, particularly those arising out of commercial transactions or arising out of matrimonial relationship or family disputes should be quashed when the parties have resolved their entire disputes among themselves.

29.5. While exercising its powers, the High Court is to examine as to whether the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal cases would put the accused to great oppression and prejudice and extreme injustice would be caused to him by not quashing the criminal cases.”

10. In *Parbatbhai Aahir v. State of Gujarat* [AIR 2017 SC 4843], the Supreme Court held thus:

“(1) Section 482 Cr.P.C 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 recognizes and preserves powers which inherent in the High Court.

(2) The invocation of the jurisdiction of the High Court to quash a first information report or a criminal proceeding on the



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

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 Cr.P.C. The power to quash under Section 482 is attracted even if the offence is non-compoundable.

(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.

(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.

(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 formulate.

(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



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

punishing persons for serious offences.

(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.

(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.

(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

(10) There is yet an exception to the principle set out in Propositions (8) and (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.”

11. Recently, in *State of Madhya Pradesh v. Laxmi Narayan* [AIR 2019 SC 1296], the Hon'ble Supreme Court, considering all the above judgments, has held as follows:



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

“i) 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;

ii) 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;

iii) similarly, such power is not to be exercised for the offences under the special statutes like 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;

iv) 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.



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

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/delegate 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 paragraphs 29.6 and 29.7 of the decision of this Court in the case of Narinder Singh (supra) should be read harmoniously and to be read as a whole and in the circumstances stated hereinabove;

v) while exercising the power under Section 482 of the Code to quash the criminal proceedings in respect of non-compoundable offences, which are private in nature and do not have a serious impart 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.”



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

12.Keeping the above principles in mind, let us now consider the instant case as to whether it is a fit case to quash the criminal proceedings based on the settlement arrived at between the parties.

13.In the case at hand, though the petitioners are charged with for the offences punishable under Section 366 and Sections 5(1), 6, 9(1) and 10 of POCSO Act, it seems now that, the petitioner and the second respondent have amicably settled their dispute between themselves. The petitioner and the victim girl were in a love affair and now the victim has attained majority and now with the consent of both family members, the marriage was performed and the marriage has also been registered by the Marriage Registrar Office, Boghalur in S.No.HMR/BOGHALUR/7/2022 and now they are living together as a husband and wife. The second respondent is also not interested in prosecuting the criminal proceedings. In view of the compromise between the parties, the possibility of conviction is also remote and bleak. In the above circumstances, continuity of the criminal proceedings would only cause oppression and prejudice to the parties, hence, in order to secure the ends of justice, this Court is inclined to quash the criminal proceedings.



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

WEB COPY

14. Accordingly, this Criminal Original Petition is allowed and as a sequel, the proceedings in Spl.S.C.No.71 of 2021 on the file of the learned Special Court for Exclusive Trial of Cases under the POCSO Act at Nagercoil, Kanniyakumari District, is quashed.

27.01.2023

NCC: Yes/No
Index : Yes/No
Internet : Yes/No
sjj

To

1. The Special Court for Exclusive Trial of Cases
under the POCSO Act at Nagercoil, Kanniyakumari District.
2. The Inspector of Police,
All Women Police Station,
Colachel, Nagarcoil,
Kanniyakumari District.
3. The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.



WEB COPY



Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA, J.

sjj

Crl.O.P.(MD).No.1284 of 2023

27.01.2023