

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

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CRM-M-22629-2023

Date of Decision : 02.06.2023

Gurjant Singh

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and another

.....Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ASHOK KUMAR VERMA

Present : Mr. Paras Talwar, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Joginder Pal Ratra, Senior D.A.G., Punjab
for respondent No.1-State.

Mr. Sidharth Sehgal, Advocate
for respondent No.2.

ASHOK KUMAR VERMA, J. (ORAL)

1. The petitioner has filed the present petition under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 for quashing of FIR No.90 dated 15.05.2022 registered under Sections 307, 148 and 149 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and Section 25 of the Arms Act, 1959 at Police Station Samrala, District Khanna, District Ludhiana (**Annexure P-1**) and all consequential proceedings arising therefrom on the basis of compromise (**Annexure P-2**) effected between the private parties.

2. Pursuant to order dated 15.05.2023 passed by this Court, the parties had appeared before learned Additional District and Sessions Judge, Ludhiana to get their statements recorded. Learned Additional District and Sessions Judge, Ludhiana submitted his report along with copies of statements of the parties vide letter dated 31.05.2023 through

learned District and Sessions Judge, Ludhiana which is taken on record. As per the said report, learned Additional District and Sessions Judge, Ludhiana, is satisfied that the compromise has been entered upon by the parties voluntarily and without any pressure.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner has argued that initially, the petitioner was not named in the FIR and later on implicated on the basis of supplementary statement made by the complainant. No injury has been attributed to the petitioner. As the parties have compromised the matter, vide written Compromise (Annexure P-2), no purpose will be served by keeping the proceedings against the petitioner and the impugned FIR (Annexure P-1), may be quashed and set aside.

4. On the other hand, learned State counsel has argued that the offence is non-compoundable, so the petition may be dismissed.

5. To appreciate the arguments of learned counsel appearing on behalf of the parties, I have gone through the entire record in detail.

6. Their Lordships of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Preeti Gupta and another vs. State of Jharkhand and another, (2010) 7 SCC 667***, have held that the ultimate object of justice is to find out the truth and punish the guilty and protect the innocent. The tendency of implicating the husband and all his immediate relations is also not uncommon. At times, even after the conclusion of the criminal trial, it is difficult to ascertain the real truth. Experience reveals that long and protracted criminal trials lead to rancour, acrimony and bitterness in the relationship amongst the parties. The criminal trials lead to immense sufferings for all concerned. Their Lordships have further held that

permitting complainant to pursue complaint would be abuse of process of law and the complaint against the appellants was quashed. Their Lordships have held as under:

*“[27] A three-Judge Bench (of which one of us, Bhandari, J. was the author of the judgment) of this Court in **Inder Mohan Goswami and Another v. State of Uttaranchal & Others, 2007 12 SCC 1** comprehensively examined the legal position. The court came to a definite conclusion and the relevant observations of the court are reproduced in para 24 of the said judgment as under:-*

"Inherent powers under section 482 Cr.P.C. though wide have to be exercised sparingly, carefully and with great caution and only when such exercise is justified by the tests specifically laid down in this section itself. Authority of the court exists for the advancement of justice. If any abuse of the process leading to injustice is brought to the notice of the court, then the Court would be justified in preventing injustice by invoking inherent powers in absence of specific provisions in the Statute."

[28] We have very carefully considered the averments of the complaint and the statements of all the witnesses recorded at the time of the filing of the complaint. There are no specific allegations against the appellants in the complaint and none of the witnesses have alleged any role of both the appellants.

[35] The ultimate object of justice is to find out the truth and punish the guilty and protect the innocent. To find out the truth is a herculean task in majority of these complaints. The tendency of implicating husband and all his immediate relations is also not uncommon. At times, even after the conclusion of criminal trial, it is difficult to ascertain the real truth. The courts have to be extremely careful and cautious in dealing with these complaints and must take pragmatic realities into consideration while dealing with matrimonial cases. The allegations of harassment of husband's close relations who had been living in different cities and never visited or rarely visited the place where the complainant resided would have an entirely different complexion. The allegations of the complaint are required to be scrutinized with great care and circumspection.

[36] Experience reveals that long and protracted criminal trials lead to rancour, acrimony and bitterness in the relationship amongst the parties. It is also a matter of common knowledge that in cases filed by the complainant if the husband or the husband's relations had to remain in

jail even for a few days, it would ruin the chances of amicable settlement altogether. The process of suffering is extremely long and painful.

[38] The criminal trials lead to immense sufferings for all concerned. Even ultimate acquittal in the trial may also not be able to wipe out the deep scars of suffering of ignominy. Unfortunately a large number of these complaints have not only flooded the courts but also have led to enormous social unrest affecting peace, harmony and happiness of the society. It is high time that the legislature must take into consideration the pragmatic realities and make suitable changes in the existing law. It is imperative for the legislature to take into consideration the informed public opinion and the pragmatic realities in consideration and make necessary changes in the relevant provisions of law. We direct the Registry to send a copy of this judgment to the Law Commission and to the Union Law Secretary, Government of India who may place it before the Hon'ble Minister for Law & Justice to take appropriate steps in the larger interest of the society.”

7. Their Lordships of the Hon’ble Supreme Court in ***Jitendra Raghuvanshi and others vs. Babita Raghuvanshi and another, (2013)***

4 SCC 58, have held that criminal proceedings or FIR or complaint can be quashed under section 482 Cr.P.C. in appropriate cases in order to meet ends of justice. Even in non-compoundable offences pertaining to matrimonial disputes, if court is satisfied that parties have settled the disputes amicably and without any pressure, then for purpose of securing ends of justice, FIR or complaint or subsequent criminal proceedings in respect of offences can be quashed. Their Lordships have held as under:-

“[13] As stated earlier, it is not in dispute that after filing of a complaint in respect of the offences punishable under Sections 498A and 406 of IPC, the parties, in the instant case, arrived at a mutual settlement and the complainant also has sworn an affidavit supporting the stand of the appellants. That was the position before the trial Court as well as before the High Court in a petition filed under Section 482 of the Code. A perusal of the impugned order

of the High Court shows that because the mutual settlement arrived at between the parties relate to non-compoundable offence, the court proceeded on a wrong premise that it cannot be compounded and dismissed the petition filed under Section 482. A perusal of the petition before the High Court shows that the application filed by the appellants was not for compounding of non-compoundable offences but for the purpose of quashing the criminal proceedings.

[14] The inherent powers of the High Court under Section 482 of the Code are wide and unfettered. In B.S. Joshi , this Court has upheld the powers of the High Court under Section 482 to quash criminal proceedings where dispute is of a private nature and a compromise is entered into between the parties who are willing to settle their differences amicably. We are satisfied that the said decision is directly applicable to the case on hand and the High Court ought to have quashed the criminal proceedings by accepting the settlement arrived at.

[15] In our view, it is the duty of the courts to encourage genuine settlements of matrimonial disputes, particularly, when the same are on considerable increase. Even if the offences are non-compoundable, if they relate to matrimonial disputes and the court is satisfied that the parties have settled the same amicably and without any pressure, we hold that for the purpose of securing ends of justice, Section 320 of the Code would not be a bar to the exercise of power of quashing of FIR, complaint or the subsequent criminal proceedings.

[16] There has been an outburst of matrimonial disputes in recent times. The institution of marriage occupies an important place and it has an important role to play in the society. Therefore, every effort should be made in the interest of the individuals in order to enable them to settle down in life and live peacefully. If the parties ponder over their defaults and terminate their disputes amicably by mutual agreement instead of fighting it out in a court of law, in order to do complete justice in the matrimonial matters, the courts should be less hesitant in exercising its extraordinary jurisdiction. It is trite to state that the power under Section 482 should be exercised sparingly and with circumspection only when the court is convinced, on the basis of material on record, that allowing the proceedings to continue would be an abuse of the process of the court or that the ends of justice require that the proceedings ought to be quashed. We also make it clear that exercise of such power would depend upon the facts and circumstances of each case and it has to be exercised in appropriate cases in order to do real and substantial justice for the administration of which alone the courts

exist. It is the duty of the courts to encourage genuine settlements of matrimonial disputes and Section 482 of the Code enables the High Court and Article 142 of the Constitution enables this Court to pass such orders.

[17] In the light of the above discussion, we hold that the High Court in exercise of its inherent powers can quash the criminal proceedings or FIR or complaint in appropriate cases in order to meet the ends of justice and Section 320 of the Code does not limit or affect the powers of the High Court under Section 482 of the Code. Under these circumstances, we set aside the impugned judgment of the High Court dated 04.07.2012 passed in M.C.R.C. No. 2877 of 2012 and quash the proceedings in Criminal Case No. 4166 of 2011 pending on the file of Judicial Magistrate Class-I, Indore.”

8. Thus, taking into consideration the law as discussed herein-above, I find that the interest of justice will be met, in case, the proceedings are quashed, as the parties have already compromised the matter, as per written compromise (Annexure P-2), placed on record.

9. Keeping in view the facts and circumstances of the case, report dated 31.05.2023 of learned Additional District and Sessions Judge, Ludhiana and the fact that the compromise will bring peace and harmony between the parties, aforesaid FIR No.90 dated 15.05.2022 (**Annexure P-1**) and all subsequent proceedings arising therefrom, are quashed, qua the petitioner only.

10. Disposed of, accordingly.

(ASHOK KUMAR VERMA)
JUDGE

02.06.2023

Kothiyal

Whether speaking/reasoned Yes/No

Whether reportable Yes/No