

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

117-2 cases

CRA-S-2202-SB-2004
Date of decision: 23.01.2024

Pritam Singh

.....Appellant

Versus

State of Haryana

..... Respondent

State of Haryana

CRA-S-451-SB-2005

.....Appellant

Versus

Pritam Singh

..... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMAN CHAUDHARY

Present : Mr. Ishnoor Singh, Advocate for
Mr. Vikram Singh, Advocate
for the appellant in CRA-S-2202-SB-2004 and
for the respondent in CRA-S-451-SB-2005.

Mr. Jagdish Manchanda, Addl. A.G., Haryana.

AMAN CHAUDHARY, J.

1. Both these criminal appeals arising out of a common judgment, are thus being decided together.
2. Challenge in CRA-S-2202-SB-2004, filed by the accused-appellant is to the judgment/order dated 19.10.2004, passed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Fast Track Court, Karnal, whereby the appellant was convicted and sentenced as follows:

Offence u/s	Imprisonment	Fine	Default sentence
353 IPC	RI for one year	Rs.500/-	RI for one month
332 IPC	RI for two years	Rs.500/-	RI for one month
333 IPC	RI for three years	Rs.1000/-	RI for two months
506 IPC	RI for one year	Rs.500/-	RI for one month.

All the sentences were ordered to run concurrently.

3. The respondent-State has also filed CRA-S-451-SB-2005, for enhancing the punishment awarded to the accused.
4. Shorn of unnecessary details, the facts are that, Dhanpat Singh-complainant made a statement to the police that on 06.08.2003 at about 01:30 P.M., when he was in the office of the Saw Mill, accused Pritam Singh inflicted injuries to him and slapped on the face of Range Officer-Om Parkash Bishnoi on account of non-releasing his payment. One daily wager worker-Ashok Kumar, who was present at the spot, locked the complainant in a room to protect him from the clutches of the accused. An FIR was registered against the accused-appellant.
5. After completion of investigation, final report under Section 173 Cr.P.C. was presented in the Court against the accused-appellant. On finding a prima facie case, charges under Sections 332, 333, 353, 506 IPC were framed against him, to which he pleaded not guilty and claimed trial.
6. In order to bring home the guilt of the accused, the prosecution examined as many as 10 witnesses. On closure of the prosecution evidence, statement of the accused-appellant was recorded under Section 313 Cr.P.C. He denied all the incriminating circumstances that appeared against him in the prosecution case while pleading innocence and false implication. No evidence was led in his defence.
7. The trial Court came to the conclusion that prosecution has proved its

case, and accordingly convicted and sentenced as mentioned in para No.2 above.

8. Aggrieved accused as well as State are before this Court.

9. Learned counsel for the accused, at the outset, gives up the challenge to the appeal on merits and prays for extending the benefit of probation in view of the fact that he belongs to poor strata of the society; sole breadwinner of the family; first time offender; never misused the concession of bail granted to him and the incident pertains to the year 2003. Reliance is placed on the judgments of this Court in **Jaggu Singh alias Jagbir vs. State of Haryana** 2005 (1) R.C.R. (Criminal) 626; **Buta Singh vs. State of Punjab** 2004 (3) R.C.R. (Criminal) 605 and **Nepal Singh and others vs. State of Haryana and another** 2015 (27) R.C.R. (Criminal) 778.

10. Learned State counsel submits that the trial Court after appreciating the evidence led by the prosecution, has rightly convicted the accused-appellant, but the sentence awarded to him under Section 333 IPC is on the lesser side. Thus, he prays for enhancement of the same.

11. Heard the learned counsel for the parties and perused the record.

12. Evidently, PW3-complainant Dhanpat Singh has specifically deposed that he had received the injuries at the hands of the accused, which is fully corroborated with the medical evidence, proved by PW1 Dr.Iqbal Singh. On going through the evidence on record, the prosecution case is found to be well established. Thus, there is no scope for interference in the findings recorded by the trial Court. As such, the conviction of the appellants is upheld. However, considering the fact situation of this case and there being nothing that has been pointed out which would have persuaded this Court to enhance the sentence for offence under Section 333 IPC. No merit in the appeal of the State is found.

13. As regards the prayer made on behalf of the appellant is concerned, it would be apposite to make a reference to Section 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, which reads thus:

“4. Power of Court to release certain offenders on probation of good conduct.-

(1) When any person is found guilty of having committed an offence not punishable with death or imprisonment for life and the Court by which the person is found guilty is of opinion that, having regard to the circumstances of the case including the nature of the offence and the character of the offender, it is expedient to release him on probation of good conduct, then, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the court may, instead of sentencing him at once to any punishment direct that he be released on his entering into a bond, with or without sureties, to appear and receive sentence when called upon during such period, not exceeding three years, as the Court may direct, and in the meantime to keep the peace and be of good behaviour: Provided that the Court shall not direct such release of an offender unless it is satisfied that the offender or his surety, if any, has a fixed place of abode or regular occupation in the place over which the Court exercises jurisdiction or in which the offender is likely to live during the period for which he enters into the bond.

(2) Before making any order under sub-section (1), the court shall take into consideration the report, if any, of the probation officer concerned in relation to the case.

(3) When an order under sub-section (1) is made, the court may, if it is of opinion that in the interests of the offender and of the public it is expedient so to do, in addition pass a supervision order directing that the offender shall remain under the supervision of a probation officer named in the order during such period, not being less than one year, as may be specified therein, and may in such supervision order, impose such conditions as it deems necessary for the due supervision of the offender.

(4) The court making a supervision order under sub-section (3) shall require the offender, before he is released, to enter into a bond, with or without sureties, to observe the conditions

specified in such order and such additional conditions with respect to residence, abstention from intoxicants or any other matter as the court may, having regard to the particular circumstances, consider fit to impose for preventing a repetition of the same offence or a commission of other offences by the offender.

(5) The court making a supervision order under sub-section (3) shall explain to the offender the terms and conditions of the order and shall forthwith furnish one copy of the supervision order to each of the offenders, the sureties, if any, and the probation officer concerned.”

14. It would be worthwhile to refer to the judgment of **Ratan Lal vs. State of Punjab**, AIR 1965 SC 444, whereby Hon’ble the Supreme Court, regarding the purpose and object of ‘The Probation of Offenders Act, 1958’ had observed and held that, “The Act is a milestone in the progress of the modern liberal trend of reform in the field of penology. It is the result of the recognition of the doctrine that the object of criminal law is more to reform the individual offender than to punish him. Broadly stated the Act distinguishes offenders below 21 years of age and those above that age, and offenders who are guilty of having committed an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life and those who are guilty of a lesser offence. While in the case of offenders who are above the age of 21 years, absolute discretion is given to the court to release them after admonition or on probation of good conduct, subject to the condition laid down in the appropriate provision of the Act, in the case of offenders below the age of 21 years an injunction is issued to the court not to sentence them to imprisonment unless it is satisfied that having regard to the circumstances of the case, including the nature of the offence and the character of the offenders, it is not desirable to deal with them under Ss. 3 and 4 of the Act.”

15. Hon’ble the Supreme Court in **Sitaram Paswan and Anr. vs. State**

of Bihar, AIR 2005 SC 3534, observed that benefit of probation can be extended at the appellate or revisional stage as well, and held that, “For exercising the power which is discretionary, the Court has to consider circumstances of the case, the nature of the offence and the character of the offender. While considering the nature of the offence, the Court must take a realistic view of the gravity of the offence, the impact which the offence had on the victim. The benefit available to the accused under Section 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act is subject to the limitation embodied in the provisions and the word "may" clearly indicates that the discretion vests with the Court whether to release the offender in exercise of the powers under Section 3 or 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act having regard to the nature of the offence and the character of the offender and overall circumstances of the case. The powers under Section 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act vest with the Court when any person is found guilty of the offence committed, not punishable with death or imprisonment for life. This power can be exercised by the Courts while finding the person guilty and if the Court thinks that having regard to the circumstances of the case, including the nature of the offence and the character of the offender, benefit should be extended to the accused, the power can be exercised by the Court even at the appellate or revisional stage and also by this Court while hearing appeal under Article 136 of the Constitution of India.”

16. In **Buta Singh** (supra), the accused was convicted and sentenced under Section 333/34 IPC, this Court considering that he was a first time offender and facing the agony of trial for 13 years, ordered to release him on probation.

17. Reverting to the facts of the present case as regards the prayer made on behalf of the appellant is concerned, this Court considering the mitigating

circumstances and the judgments referred to above, finds that the ends of justice would be adequately met if the appellant is granted the benefit of probation of good conduct.

18. As a consequence to the above, present criminal appeal is hereby disposed of with a direction to grant probation to the appellant for a period of one year, on the following conditions as enshrined under Section of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958:

- (1) He shall execute a bond for good behaviour with two solvent sureties in a sum of Rs.10,000/- which shall be executed before the trial Court within a period of one month from today.
- (2) The said bond shall be in force for a period of one year.
- (3) He shall be subject to the supervision of the Probation Officer and subject to the conditions laid down in the Probation of Offenders Act.

19. It is clarified that in case there is any breach of the aforesaid conditions, the appellant will forthwith be taken into custody and shall have to undergo the sentence awarded to them by the trial Court.

20. The appeal i.e. CRA-S-451-SB-2005 filed by the respondent-State is hereby dismissed.

21. A photocopy of this order be placed on the file of the connected case.

(AMAN CHAUDHARY)
JUDGE

23.01.2024
Hemant

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