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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRR-331-2019

Date of Decision: 12.02.2024

Pargat Singh

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

.....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Niharika Almadi, Advocate
for Mr. Hitesh Verma, Advocate for the petitioner

Mr. Subhash Godara, AAG Punjab

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

1. This revision has been preferred against the judgment dated 23.01.2019 passed by learned Sessions Judge, Barnala vide which judgment of conviction dated 24.01.2017 passed by Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Barnala in FIR No. 301 dated 29.10.2013 under Section 279, 304-A, 427 of the IPC registered at Police Station City Barnala was upheld. The petitioner was sentenced as under:-

Offence	Sentence
Section 304-A of the IPC	Rigorous imprisonment of 2 years and a fine of Rs. 1000/-, in default of which simple imprisonment of 7days
Section 279 of the IPC	Rigorous imprisonment of 6 months

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

2. The facts, in brief, are that on 29.10.2013 complainant Ravinderjit Singh was traveling on a scooter along with his father Ajit Singh when a bus bearing number PB-03-W-2114 being rashly and negligently driven by the petitioner, came from Bajakhana side at a very high speed and struck them.

The injured were taken to Dayanand Medical College and Hospital Ludhiana whereas Ajit Singh succumbed to his injuries.

3. The prosecution examined as many as 10 witnesses to prove its case. All incriminating evidence was put to the petitioner-accused in his statement recorded under Section 313 of Cr.P.C. wherein he pleaded false implication and claimed innocence, however, he did not lead any evidence his defence.

4. On assessing all material available on record, the petitioner was convicted by the learned trial Court vide judgment dated 24.01.2017. Aggrieved by the same, the petitioner preferred an appeal before the lower Appellate Court, which was dismissed vide judgment dated 23.01.2019. The sentence of the petitioner was suspended by this Court during the pendency of the present petition vide order dated 06.02.2019.

CONTENTIONS

5. Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that he is not assailing the impugned judgment of conviction dated 24.01.2017 on merits and restricts his prayer to modification of the order of quantum of sentence to that of the sentence already undergone by the petitioner as has already undergone a period of 3 months 20 days of custody. No other case is pending against him prior to the registration of the present complaint and he has not been involved in any other criminal case after suspension of his sentence in the present case by this Court vide order dated 06.02.2019.

6. Per contra, learned State counsel opposes the prayer of the petitioner as the learned trial Court has passed a well-reasoned judgment based on correct appreciation of evidence available on record, which has been upheld

by the learned lower Appellate Court and as such, he does not deserve any leniency.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

7. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the paper-book with their able assistance.

8. In **Deo Narain Mandal v. State of UP (2004) 7 SCC 257**, a three Judge bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court has opined that awarding of sentence is not a mere formality in criminal cases. When a minimum and maximum term is prescribed by the statute with regard to the period of sentence, a discretionary element is vested in the Court. Background of each case, which includes factors like gravity of the offence, manner in which the offence is committed, age of the accused, should be considered while determining the quantum of sentence and this discretion is not to be used arbitrarily or whimsically. After assessing all relevant factors, proper sentence should be awarded bearing in mind the principle of proportionality to ensure the sentence is neither excessively harsh nor does it come across as lenient. Further, a two Judge Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Ravada Sasikala v. State of AP AIR 2017 SC 1166**, has reiterated that the imposition of sentence also serves a social purpose as it acts as a deterrent by making the accused realise the damage caused not only to the victim but also to the society at large. The law in this regard is well settled that opportunities of reformation must be granted and such discretion is to be exercised by evaluating all attending circumstances of each case by noticing the nature of the crime, the manner in which the crime was committed and the conduct of the accused to strike a balance between the efficacy of law and the chances of reformation of the accused.

9. As per the custody certificate produced by the learned State counsel, details of custody period of the petitioner are tabulated as under:-

Sr No.	Particulars	Period	Duration
1.	Custody under trial	08.09.2014 to 17.11.2014 and 24.01.2017 to 13.02.2017	3 months
2.	Custody after conviction	23.01.2019 to 12.02.2019	20 days
3.	Interim bail	-	-
4.	Actual custody period after conviction		20 days
5.	Actual undergone period		3 months 20 days
6.	Earned remission	-	-
7.	Total sentence including remission		3 months 20 days

10. A perusal of the judgment of conviction passed by the learned trial Court and the learned lower Appellate Court indicates no perversity in their finding and the same are based on correct appreciation of evidence available on record. Learned counsel for the petitioner has not assailed the judgment of conviction on merits, rather he has restricted his prayer only qua quantum of sentence.

CONCLUSION

11. The FIR in the present case was lodged on 29.10.2013 and the petitioner has been facing the agony of trial for the last about 11 years. Since his conviction, the petitioner has grown into a law-abiding citizen and desires to live a peaceful life. He is not involved in any other criminal activity after his conviction in the present case and during the pendency of the present revision. As per his custody certificate, there are no other criminal cases

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pending against him. Out of the total sentence of 2 year, he has undergone actual sentence of 3 months 20 days. Accordingly, this Court is of the opinion that it would be in the interest of justice, if the sentence of rigorous imprisonment of 2 year awarded to the petitioner is reduced to the period already undergone by him.

12. Consequently, the present revision is disposed of in the following terms:-

- i
- The judgment dated 23.01.2019 passed by the learned Sessions Judge, Barnala confirming the conviction of the petitioner is upheld, however, the order of sentence is modified to the extent that the sentence of rigorous imprisonment for 2 year along with default mechanism awarded to the petitioner is reduced to the period of sentence already undergone by him.
- ii
- The sentence of fine of an amount of Rs 1000/- imposed upon the petitioner by the trial Court is increased to Rs.10,000/-. The petitioner is directed to deposit the increased amount of fine in the trial Court within one month from the date of receipt of certified copy of this order and in case of default of payment of fine, the petitioner shall be liable to be taken into custody and made to undergo rigorous imprisonment for one month.

13. Pending miscellaneous application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

12.02.2024
Ajay Goswami

Whether speaking/reasoned	Yes/No
Whether Reportable	Yes/No