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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-6479-2020 (O&M)
Date of decision: 05.04.2024

Harvinder Singh Rai and others

... Petitioners

Vs.

Manjit Singh

... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Shubham Mehta, Advocate for
Mr. Vivek Salathia, Advocate
for the petitioners.

Ms. Navjot Kaur, Advocate
for the respondent.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

1. The instant petition has been filed under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (for short 'Cr.P.C.') for quashing of Criminal Complaint bearing case No.COMA/09/2019 dated 12.04.2019 (Annexure P-1) titled as *Manjit Singh Vs. Harvinder Singh Rai and others*, under Section 12 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (for short 'the Act') and the order dated 12.04.2019 passed by the learned Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Sultanpur Lodhi, District

Kapurthala, vide which the petitioners have been summoned to face the trial.

2. The brief facts of the case are that petitioners No.2 & 3 were searching for a suitable match for their son i.e. petitioner No.1 and one of their relatives namely Satnam Singh met them in Australia, when he was there for attending a marriage. He persuaded the families of the petitioners and the respondent for the marriage of daughter of the respondent and petitioner No.1. The petitioners visited India on 05.07.2015 and after daughter of the respondent agreed, on 08.07.2015, ring ceremony was performed at Royal Treat Restaurant, Phagwara, expenses for which were borne by petitioner No.2 and marriage of petitioner No.1 and daughter of the respondent was solemnized on 20.07.2015 according to Sikh rites and rituals. Thereafter, both went for honeymoon, where daughter of the respondent did not consummate the marriage on one pretext or another. On 12.08.2015, the petitioners left India for Australia. When petitioner No.1 tried to contact his wife i.e. daughter of the respondent, she asked to apply for a spouse visa and he suggested her to visit Australia initially on tourist visa. On 15.10.2015, petitioner No.1 transferred some amount to his wife through Western Union in order to make her convenient to come to Australia. On 23.11.2015, after granting tourist visa of Australia to wife of petitioner No.1, on 12.12.2015, she went there. During her stay in Australia, petitioner No.1 noticed that she had a fake facebook ID in the

name of Angel Prabhdeep Khera and found that she was in relation with one Prabhjot Kalkat, who died on 29.01.2014, with whom she was already engaged. Daughter of the respondent/wife of petitioner No.1 shared on Facebook that she is planning to come to Australia only to obtain PR in order to open a Saloon with her lover Jatin Walia. When confronted to the aforesaid facts, she did not give satisfactory reply and said that she had performed marriage with petitioner No.1 only to get the citizenship of Australia. On 27.01.2016, she left the Australia. Thereafter, the petitioners apprised the respondent about these facts and he assured to convince his daughter, but nothing has been done. On 05.10.2016, when daughter of the respondent tried to enter into house of the petitioners and used filthy language towards mother of petitioner No.1, a complaint was made to the police and thereafter, she left the house. Thereafter, petitioner No.1 filed an application to obtain Domestic Violence Order from the Court at Australia against daughter of the respondent, but the same was withdrawn on 06.07.2017. In the meantime, daughter of the respondent lodged an FIR under Section 498-A of IPC at Police Station NRI, District Kapurthala and the petitioners approached the NRI Wing of Punjab Police by lodging an online complaint to conduct fair and impartial investigation and after conducting the investigation, the allegations levelled against the petitioners in the FIR were not established and recommended for cancellation of the same. Thereafter, petitioner No.1 filed a Divorce Petition before Federal

Circuit Court of Australia and vide order dated 26.06.2018, the same was allowed by granting divorce to the parties. Now, in order to harass the petitioners, daughter of the respondent filed the complaint (*supra*).

3. Having heard the learned counsel for the parties and after perusing the record with their able assistance, this Court is of the considered view that a petition under Section 482 of Cr.P.C. is not maintainable qua proceedings arising out of Section 12 of the Act as concluded by a Co-ordinate Bench in ***Jaspal Kaur alias Pinki and others Vs. State of Punjab and others*** in CRM-M-19553-2023 decided on 24.04.2023, after dealing with the issue *in extenso*.

4. A two Judge Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Kamatchi v. Lakshmi Narayanan, 2022 SCC Online SC 446***, speaking through Justice U. U. Lalit, has opined that the ratio of law laid down in ***Adalat Prasad v. Rooplal Jindal & Others, (2004) 7 SCC 338*** would not be applicable to proceedings instituted under Section 12 read with Section 13 of the Act. The relevant observations are reproduced as under:

“29. It is thus clear that the High Court wrongly equated filing of an application under Section 12 of the Act to lodging of a complaint or initiation of prosecution. In our considered view, the High Court was in error in observing that the application under Section 12 of the Act ought to have been filed within a period of one year of the alleged acts of domestic violence.

30. It is, however, true that as noted by the Protection Officer in his Domestic Inspection Report dated 2.08.2018, there appears to be a period of almost 10 years after 16.09.2008, when nothing was alleged by the appellant against the

husband. But that is a matter which will certainly be considered by the Magistrate after response is received from the husband and the rival contentions are considered. That is an exercise which has to be undertaken by the Magistrate after considering all the factual aspects presented before him, including whether the allegations constitute a continuing wrong.

31. Lastly, we deal with the submission based on the decision in Adalat Prasad. The ratio in that case applies when a Magistrate takes cognizance of an offence and issues process, in which event instead of going back to the Magistrate, the remedy lies in filing petition under Section 482 of the Code. The scope of notice under Section 12 of the Act is to call for a response from the respondent in terms of the Statute so that after considering rival submissions, appropriate order can be issued. Thus, the matter stands on a different footing and the dictum in Adalat Prasad would not get attracted at a stage when a notice is issued under Section 12 of the Act.”

5. A perusal of the aforesaid observations makes it evident that scope of notice under Section 12 read with Section 13 of the Act is to elicit a reply from the respondent in order to pass an appropriate order. Thus, application under Section 12 of the Act cannot be treated as a complaint for initiation of prosecution. Similarly, the notice under Section 13 of the Act is not akin for taking cognizance of an offence or issuance of process by the jurisdictional Magistrate. Further, a two Judge Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Kunappareddy Vs. Kunappareddy Swarna Kumari, (2016) 11 SCC 774*** has authoritatively held that proceedings under Section 12 of the Act are civil in nature and opined as follows:

“11. We have already mentioned the prayers which were made by respondent no.1 in the original petition and prayer ‘A’ thereof relates to Section 9. However, in prayer ‘B’, the respondent no.1 also sought relief of grant of monthly maintenance to her as well as her children. This prayer falls

within the ambit of Section 20 of the DV Act. In fact, prayer 'A' is covered by Section 18 which empowers the Magistrate to grant such a protection which is claimed by the respondent no.1. Therefore, the petition is essentially under Sections 18 and 20 of the DV Act, though in the heading these provisions are not mentioned. However, that may not make any difference and, therefore, no issue was raised by the appellant on this count. In respect of the petition filed under Sections 18 and 20 of the DV Act, the proceedings are to be governed by the Code, as provided under Section 28 of the DV Act. At the same time, it cannot be disputed that these proceedings are predominantly of civil nature.

12. In fact, the very purpose of enacting the DV Act was to provide for a remedy which is an amalgamation of civil rights of the complainant i.e aggrieved person. Intention was to protect women against violence of any kind, especially that occurring within the family as the civil law does not address this phenomenon in its entirety. It is treated as an offence under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code. The purpose of enacting the law was to provide a remedy in the civil law for the protection of women from being victims of domestic violence and to prevent the occurrence of domestic violence in the society. It is for this reason, that the Scheme of the Act provides that in the first instance, the order that would be passed by the Magistrate, on a complaint by the aggrieved person, would be of a civil nature and if the said order is violated, it assumes the character of criminality."

6. Since there was an apparent cleavage in the opinion between different Benches with regard to nature of proceedings under Section 12 of the Act and jurisdiction of High Court under Section 482 Cr.P.C vis-a-vis Article 227 of the Constitution, the matter was referred to a Full Bench of Madras High Court in **Arul Daniel and others Vs. Suganya, 2022 SCC Online Mad 5435**. After analyzing various judicial precedents including judgments rendered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Kamatchi Vs. Lakshmi Narayanan (supra)** and **Kunapareddy Vs. Kunapareddy**

Swarna Kumari and anr. (*supra*), the Full Bench answered the reference to the following effect:

(i) *An application made under Section 12 of DV Act read with Rule 6(1) of DV Rules is not a complaint as defined under Section 2 (d) of Cr.P.C.*

(ii) *The procedure for cognizance prescribed under Section 190 Cr.P.C is not applicable to a proceeding under DV Act. The respondents before Magistrate are not accused, thus, a notice fixing a date of hearing is issued under Section 13 of DV Act. It is a notice and not summons under Section 61 Cr.P.C.*

(iii) *A proceeding under Chapter IV of DV Act is not a criminal proceeding and a Magistrate exercises civil jurisdiction while granting one or more reliefs under Sections 18-23 of DV Act. A Magistrate exercising jurisdiction under Section 12 of DV Act is not a criminal Court.*

(iv) *A petition under Section 482 of Cr.P.C. is not maintainable against an application under Section 12 of DV Act. The proceedings under Section 12 of DV Act, are civil proceedings, thus, petition under Section 482 of Cr.P.C. is not maintainable. A petition under Article 227 of the Constitution of India is maintainable on limited ground of patent lack of jurisdiction.*

(v) *Personal appearance of respondents should not be ordinarily insisted upon, if the parties are effectively represented through a counsel.*

(vi) *If the respondent does not appear either in person or through a counsel, in reply of notice under Section 13, the Magistrate may proceed to determine the application ex parte.*

(vii) *It is not mandatory for the Magistrate to issue notice to all parties arrayed as respondents in an application under Section 12 of DV Act. The Magistrate should apply his mind and in all cases involving distant relatives and other third parties. The Magistrate must set out reasons that have compelled him to issue notice to such parties.*

(viii) *As there is no process as contemplated under Section 204 Cr.P.C in a proceeding under DV Act, the principle laid down in Adalat Prasad (*supra*) is not applicable.*

(ix) *It is open to an aggrieved respondent to approach*

Magistrate and raise the issue of maintainability and other preliminary issues.

(x) An aggrieved party may take recourse to section 25 which authorizes Magistrate to alter, modify or revoke any order under the Act.

(xi) It is open to respondents, at any stage of the proceeding, to apply to Magistrate to have their names deleted from the array of respondents, if they have been improperly joined as parties.

(xii) The Magistrate can draw sustenance from the power under Order I Rule 10 (2) of C.P.C. A judicious use of power would ensure that the proceedings under DV Act do not generate into a weapon of harassment and would prevent the process of Court from being abused by joining all and sundry as parties to the lis.

(xiii) Neither revision to High Court under Section 397 Cr.P.C. nor a petition under Section 482 Cr.P.C is maintainable against an order of Sessions Court under Section 29 of DV Act because appeal is continuation of original proceeding and original proceeding bears a civil character, thus, it is impossible to term an appeal arising out of such a case as a criminal proceeding.”

7. In view of the above-mentioned judgments, a Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in **Jaspal Kaur** (*supra*), culled out the following principles:

*“(i) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Act are civil in nature. Notice issued under Section 13 of the Act is not a summons under Section 61 of Cr.P.C. The principle laid down by Hon'ble Supreme Court in Adalat Prasad (*supra*) is not applicable to notice issued under Section 13 of DV Act.*

(ii) Petition under Section 482 Cr.P.C is not maintainable against petition under Section 12 or notice issue under Section 13 of DV Act.

(iii) An order passed by Sessions Court under Section 29 is continuation of civil proceedings, thus, revision under Section 397 or petition under Section 482 assailing order passed by Sessions Court under Section 29 is not maintainable.

(iv) Magistrate is supposed to apply his mind at the time of issuing notice under Section 13 of DV Act and in case an

application is moved by respondent on the ground of maintainability or jurisdiction or for deletion from the array of respondents, Magistrate is supposed to adjudicate the application.”

8. Learned counsel for the petitioners, on being confronted with settled law on the issue at hand, could not controvert that the present petition under Section 482 Cr.P.C. challenging the proceedings emanating from the provisions of Section 12 of the Act are not maintainable. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

9. However the petitioners would be at liberty to invoke appropriate remedy on the same cause of action, in accordance with law, for redressal of grievances raised in the present petition.

05.04.2024
vishnu

[HARPREET SINGH BRAR]
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No