



**221 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

CRR(F)-220-2022

Date of decision: 23.07.2024

NEETU KUMARI

...PETITIONER

V/S

MANDAR

...RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Bhupinder Ghai, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Manish Soni, Advocate for the respondent.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR J. (ORAL)

1. The present petition has been preferred against the impugned order dated 17.02.2022, passed by the learned Family Court, Sirsa, vide which, application seeking interim maintenance under Section 125 of the Cr.P.C. has been dismissed.

2. Mr. Bhupinder Ghai, Advocate has put in appearance on behalf of the respondent and filed his power of attorney which is taken on record. Registry is directed to tag the same at the appropriate place.

3. The marriage between the petitioner and the respondent was solemnised on 18.06.2019, in accordance with Hindu rites and rituals at Gurugram. Out of the wedlock, no child was born. However, after some time of marriage, the petitioner got to know about the first marriage of the respondent and in this way, matrimonial dispute ensued between the couple and the petitioner filed a petition under Section 125 Cr.P.C. seeking maintenance. The respondent filed a reply and contested the claim made by the petitioner. The learned Family Court vide order dated 17.02.2022, dismissed



the application filed by the petitioner. Aggrieved by the same, the petitioner has approached this Court by filing the present petition.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioner *inter alia* contends that the respondent concealed the fact of his first marriage from the petitioner. Learned counsel further submits that the respondent is a petroleum engineer having expertise in the field of extraction of oil and '*high pressure-high temperature*' field and further, the respondent is founder of *Manan Oilfield Services Private Limited* providing consultancy to the Satalwart Oil and Gas Companies of the country. Learned counsel further submits that the petitioner has been left with no money or savings and she is in a miserable state and is totally dependent on her elderly father for her basic needs.

5. Learned counsel for the respondent submits that pre-requisite to entertain the petition under Section 125 Cr.P.C. are missing in the present petition. Learned counsel further submits that the respondent was already married with somebody else and there is no marital relationship between the petitioner and respondent and neither both of them lived together as husband and wife. Learned counsel further submits that the petitioner has filed the petition seeking maintenance only to extract money from the respondent.

6. Having heard the learned counsel for the parties, it transpires that there are so many disputed questions of facts, which are to be decided at the time of trial..

7. The object and purpose behind granting interim maintenance is to ensure that the dependent spouse is not reduced to destitution or vagrancy on account of failure of marriage. At the same time, a just and careful balance must be struck to ensure that this provision does not degenerate into a weapon to punish the other spouse. The Courts are required to conduct the maintenance



proceedings while being alive to the legislative intent behind the provision under Section 125 Cr.P.C in its true spirit, which is to provide speedy assistance and social justice to women, children and infirm parents. The provisions of Section 125 Cr.P.C. were enacted as a measure to further social justice and protect dependent women, children and parents, which also fall within the constitutional sweep of Article 15(3) reinforced by Article 39 of the Constitution of India.

8. A three-Judge Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Vimala (K.) v. Veeraswamy (K.) (1991) 2 SCC 375***, speaking through Justice Fatima Beevi, opined that as follows:

“3. Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure is meant to achieve a social purpose. The object is to prevent vagrancy and destitution. It provides a speedy remedy for the supply of food, clothing, and shelter to the deserted wife.”

A two-Judge Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Kirtikant D. Vadodaria v. State of Gujarat (1996) 4 SCC 479***, speaking through Justice Faizan Uddin, opined as follows:

“15. ... While dealing with the ambit and scope of the provision contained in Section 125 of the Code, it has to be borne in mind that the dominant and primary object is to give social justice to the woman, child and infirm parents, etc. and to prevent destitution and vagrancy by compelling those who can support those who are unable to support themselves but have a moral claim for support. The provisions in Section 125 provide a speedy remedy to those women, children and destitute parents who are in distress. The provisions in Section 125 are intended to achieve this



special purpose. The dominant purpose behind the benevolent provisions contained in Section 125 clearly is that the wife, child and parents should not be left in a helpless state of distress, destitution and starvation.”

9. Another objective the legislature has sought to achieve by this provision is to provide interim maintenance *pendente lite* to the applicant spouse during proceedings emerging out of matrimonial disputes so that the she/he can maintain herself/himself, have sufficient funds to pursue the litigation, and not suffer at the instance of the affluent spouse.

10. There is a general tendency on the part of the wife to amplify her needs and the husband to conceal his actual income, making it difficult to determine the earning capacity of the rival claimants with exactitude. The rival claimants must scrupulously bring on record their actual respective earning capacities in order for the Court to arrive at quantum of interim maintenance which is just and fair in terms of principle of equistatus. The quantum of interim maintenance must be justifiable and realistic to provide succour to the dependent spouse and also to avoid occurrence of the two extremes of the interim maintenance being either paltry or extravagant, ensuring that neither of the two is reduced to a life of penury. The adequacy of the interim maintenance allowance has to be determined by the yardstick of the dependent spouse being able to lead a life of reasonable comfort.

11. While dealing with the issue of maintenance *in extenso*, a two Judge bench of the Hon’ble Supreme Court in ***Rajnesh v. Neha and another (2021) 2 SCC 324***, laid down the criteria for determining quantum of maintenance and issued the following directions:

VI Final Directions



130. In view of the foregoing discussion as contained in Part B - 1 to V of this judgment, we deem it appropriate to pass the following directions in exercise of our powers under Article 142 of the Constitution of India:

(a) Issue of overlapping jurisdiction

131. To overcome the issue of overlapping jurisdiction, and avoid conflicting orders being passed in different proceedings, it has become necessary to issue directions in this regard, so that there is uniformity in the practice followed by the Family Courts/District Courts/Magistrate Courts throughout the country. We direct that:

(i) where successive claims for maintenance are made by a party under different statutes, the Court would consider an adjustment or setoff, of the amount awarded in the previous proceeding/s, while determining whether any further amount is to be awarded in the subsequent proceeding:

(ii) it is made mandatory for the applicant to disclose the previous proceeding and the orders passed therein, in the subsequent proceeding;

(iii) if the order passed in the previous proceeding/s requires any modification or variation, it would be required to be done in the same proceeding

(b) Payment of Interim Maintenance



132. *The Affidavit of Disclosure of Assets and Liabilities annexed as Enclosures I, II and III of this judgment, as may be applicable, shall be filed by both parties in all maintenance proceedings, including pending proceedings before the concerned Family Court / District Court / Magistrates Court, as the case may be, throughout the country.*

(c) Criteria for determining the quantum of maintenance

133. *For determining the quantum of maintenance payable to an applicant, the Court shall take into account the criteria enumerated in Part B III of the judgment.*

134. *The aforesaid factors are however not exhaustive, and the concerned Court may exercise its discretion to consider any other factor/s which may be necessary or of relevance in the facts and circumstances of a case.*

(d) Date from which maintenance is to be awarded

135. *We make it clear that maintenance in all cases will be awarded from the date of filing the application for maintenance, as held in Part B-IV above.*

(e) Enforcement/Execution of orders of maintenance

136. *For enforcement/execution of orders of maintenance, it is directed that an order or decree of maintenance may be enforced under Section 28A of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1956; Section 20(6) of the D.V. Act; and Section 128 of Cr.P.C may be applicable. The order of maintenance may be enforced as a money decree of a*



civil court as per the provisions of the CPC more particularly Sections 51, 55, 58, 60 r.w. Order XXI."

12. A perusal of the impugned order passed by the learned Family Court makes it evident that the Court below has duly considered the material placed before it at the time of deciding the application for interim maintenance. The learned Family Court has observed that there are so many disputed questions of facts and it has further observed that it has to look into the documentary as well as oral evidence to come to the conclusion, whether the parties to the petition are in marital relationship or not and if the respondent was already married, whether petitioner was aware of previous first marriage of the respondent at the time of her alleged marriage with the respondent and cogent evidence is required to come to a conclusion. Learned counsel for the petitioner has not been able to indicate any perversity in the impugned order which warrants interference by this Court. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed being bereft of any merit.

13. Nothing observed hereinabove shall be construed to be an expression of opinion by this Court lest it may prejudice the trial. The learned trial Court is directed to proceed with the trial on its own merits, strictly in accordance with law.

July 23, 2024
manisha

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

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|------|---------------------------|--------|
| (i) | Whether speaking/reasoned | Yes/No |
| (ii) | Whether reportable | Yes/No |