

**CRM-M-29987-2022 (O&M)****1****223 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH****CRM-M-29987-2022 (O&M)****Date of Decision: 06.11.2024****KULWINDER KAUR****...PETITIONER****Versus****STATE OF PUNJAB AND ANOTHER****...RESPONDENTS****CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR****Present:** Mr. Amit Dhawan, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Sandeep Kumar, DAG Punjab.

Mr. Sahil Soi, Advocate
for respondent No. 2.**********HARPREET SINGH BRAR J. (ORAL)**

1. The present petition has been filed under Section 482 of Cr.P.C. seeking quashing of impugned order dated 05.03.2019 passed by learned Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Nakodar (Annexure P-5), whereby the petitioner has been summoned under Section 319 of Cr.P.C. to face trial in case bearing FIR No. 76 dated 12.05.2014 registered under Sections 406, 498-A of Indian Penal Code at Police Station Lohian, District Jalandhar as well as the impugned order dated 31.05.2022, passed by learned Additional Sessions Judge, Jalandhar (Annexure P-7), vide which criminal revision filed by the petitioner against the order of learned Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Nakodar has been dismissed.

2. Brief facts of the case are that the marriage between the complainant/respondent No. 2 and brother-in-law of the petitioner-Daljit Singh was solemnized on 06.01.2012. However, matrimonial dispute ensued between the couple and the FIR (supra) was registered on the allegations that accused have harassed the complainant-Jaswant Kaur on account of demand of dowry.

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3. Learned counsel for the petitioner *inter alia* contends that petitioner is married sister-in-law (*Jethani*) of respondent No. 2 and in the initial inquiry report dated 18.04.2014 conducted by In-Charge, Women Cell, Jalandhar(Rural), the petitioner-Kulwinder Kaur, her husband-Paramjit Singh and her brother Major Singh were found innocent. But later on, prosecution moved an application under Section 319 of Cr.P.C. before learned Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Nakodar seeking summoning of the petitioner Kulwinder Kaur, her husband Paramjit Singh and her brother Major Singh to face trial in the instant FIR and learned trial Court without appreciating the material available on record, allowed the said application and summoned the petitioner and her husband to face trial for the offences under Sections 406 and 498-A of Indian Penal Code. However, the said application was dismissed qua Major Singh i.e. brother of the petitioner. Being aggrieved against the said order, the petitioner preferred a revision petition before the Court of Sessions, Jalandhar but learned Additional Sessions Judge, Jalandhar vide order dated 31.05.2022, dismissed the revision preferred by the petitioner. Learned counsel for the petitioner further contends that said impugned orders are liable to be set aside on the ground that complainant has levelled only vague and preposterous allegations against the petitioner. Learned Courts below have also failed to appreciate the fact that petitioner along with her husband were residing separately from the complainant/respondent No. 2 as well as her father-in-law and mother-in-law and thus, they did not interfere in the matrimonial life of complainant and her husband.

4. Per contra, learned counsel for the complainant-respondent No. 2 vehemently opposed the prayer made by learned counsel for the petitioner on the ground that husband of the complainant-respondent No. 2 is running from the

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process of law and has already been declared proclaimed offender by the trial Court and if the FIR(supra) is quashed qua the petitioner, husband of the complainant, will never surrender himself to the Court of law.

5. Having heard the learned counsel for the parties and after perusing the record with their able assistance, it is transpires that the petitioner is the sister-in-law (*jethani*) of the complainant-respondent No. 2 and only generic and omnibus allegations have been levelled against them. Moreover, the petitioner along with her husband had been residing separately from the complainant-respondent No. 2 and her husband and she has nothing to do with the matrimonial life of complainant and her husband-Daljit Singh. A two Judge bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Preeti Gupta vs. State of Jharkhand (2010) 7 SCC 667*** quashed the complainant against the sister-in-law of the complainant noting that the sole purpose of filing the complaint was to humiliate her and allowing criminal prosecution to continue would amount to an abuse of process of law. Speaking through Justice Dalveer Bhandari, the following was observed:

“34. Before parting with this case, we would like to observe that a serious relook of the entire provision is warranted by the legislation. It is also a matter of common knowledge that exaggerated versions of the incident are reflected in a large number of complaints. The tendency of over implication is also reflected in a very large number of cases.

35. 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.”



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6. A two Judge bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Girdhar Shankar Tawde vs. State of Maharashtra (2002) 5 SCC 177***, speaking through Justice Umesh C. Banerjee, opined as follows:

“18... In any event the wilful act or conduct ought to be the proximate cause in order to bring home the charge under section 498-A and not de hors the same. To have an event sometime back cannot be termed to be a factum taken note of in the matter of a charge under section 498-A. The legislative intent is clear enough to indicate in particular reference to Explanation (b) that there shall have to be a series of acts in order to be a harassment within the meaning of Explanation (b). The letters by themselves though may depict a reprehensible conduct, would not, however, bring home the charge of section 498-A against the accused. Acquittal of a charge under section 306, as noticed hereinbefore, though not by itself a ground for acquittal under section 498-A, but some cogent evidence is required to bring home the charge of section 498-A as well, without which the charge cannot be said to be maintained...”

7. A three Judge bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Abhishek vs. State of Madhya Pradesh 2023(4) R.C.R.(Criminal) 239*** quashed the FIR under Section 498-A of the IPC against the mother-in-law and brother-in-law of the complainant and observed that the allegations are mostly general and omnibus in nature without any specific details as to how and when her brother-in-law and mother-in-law who lived in different cities altogether subjected her to harassment for dowry. Such allegations are found to be incongruous and difficult to comprehend. Speaking through Justice Sanjay Kumar, the scope of Section 482 Cr.P.C. qua quashing of FIR stemming from offence under Section 498-A was also deliberated upon and the following observations were made:

“12. The contours of the power to quash criminal proceedings under Section 482 Cr.P.C., 1973 are well defined. In V. Ravi Kumar vs. State represented by Inspector of Police, District Crime Branch, Salem, Tamil Nadu and others [(2019) 14 SCC 568], this Court affirmed that where an accused seeks quashing of the FIR, invoking the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court, it is wholly impermissible for the High Court to enter into the factual arena to adjudge the correctness of the allegations in the complaint. In M/s. Neeharika Infrastructure (P). Ltd. v. State of Maharashtra and others [Criminal Appeal No.330 of 2021, decided on 13.04.2021], a 3-Judge Bench of this Court elaborately considered the scope and extent of the power under Section 482 Cr.P.C., 1973 It was ob-



served that the power of quashing should be exercised sparingly, with circumspection and in the rarest of rare cases, such standard not being confused with the norm formulated in the context of the death penalty. It was further observed that while examining the FIR/complaint, quashing of which is sought, the Court cannot embark upon an enquiry as to the reliability or genuineness or otherwise of the allegations made therein, but if the Court thinks fit, regard being had to the parameters of quashing and the self-restraint imposed by law, and more particularly, the parameters laid down by this Court in R.P. Kapur v. State of Punjab (AIR 1960 SC 866) and State of Haryana and others v. Bhajan Lal and others [(1992) Supp (1) SCC 335], the Court would have jurisdiction to quash the FIR/complaint.

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15. Earlier, in Neelu Chopra and another v. Bharti [(2009) 10 SCC 184], this Court observed that the mere mention of statutory provisions and the language thereof, for lodging a complaint, is not the 'be all and end all' of the matter, as what is required to be brought to the notice of the Court is the particulars of the offence committed by each and every accused and the role played by each and every accused in the commission of that offence. These observations were made in the context of a matrimonial dispute involving Section 498A IPC.

16. Of more recent origin is the decision of this Court in Mahmood Ali and others v. State of U.P. and others (Criminal Appeal No. 2341 of 2023, decided on 08.08.2023) on the legal principles applicable apropos Section 482 Cr.P.C., 1973. Therein, it was observed that when an accused comes before the High Court, invoking either the inherent power under Section 482 Cr.P.C., 1973 or the extraordinary jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution, to get the FIR or the criminal proceedings quashed, essentially on the ground that such proceedings are manifestly frivolous or vexatious or instituted with the ulterior motive of wreaking vengeance, then in such circumstances, the High Court owes a duty to look into the FIR with care and a little more closely. It was further observed that it will not be enough for the Court to look into the averments made in the FIR/complaint alone for the purpose of ascertaining whether the necessary ingredients to constitute the alleged offence are disclosed or not as, in frivolous or vexatious proceedings, the Court owes a duty to look into many other attending circumstances emerging from the record of the case over and above the averments and, if need be, with due care and circumspection, to try and read between the lines."

8. Time and again, the Courts have highlighted the tendency of roping in all and sundry members of the husband's family in cases filed under Section 498-A of the IPC. Recently, a two Judge bench the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Mahalakshmi and others vs. State of Karnataka Criminal Appeal No. 494/2023*** decided on 30.11.2023 quashed the criminal proceedings under Section 498-A of the IPC against the husband's sisters and cousins and observed that if the allegations are not serious and substantiated, and there is no clear evidence of accused's involvement in the complainant's marital life, they cannot be implicated under Section 498-A of the IPC.



9. As such, it is evident that the petitioner had no involvement in the matrimonial life of complainant and her husband-Daljit Singh and she has only been roped in the FIR(supra) by the complainant, out of personal spite, in order to wreak vengeance upon her in-laws family.
10. Accordingly, this petition is allowed and orders dated 05.03.2019 passed by learned Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Nakodar (Annexure P-5), whereby the petitioner has been summoned under Section 319 of Cr.P.C. to face trial in case bearing FIR No. 76 dated 12.05.2014 registered under Sections 406, 498-A of Indian Penal Code at Police Station Lohian, District Jalandhar as well as the order dated 31.05.2022 passed by learned Additional Sessions Judge, Jalandhar (Annexure P-7), vide which criminal revision filed by the petitioner has been dismissed, are hereby quashed qua the petitioner.
11. Pending miscellaneous application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

06.11.2024
Ajay Goswami

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