



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

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CRR(F)-650-2022

Date of decision: 03.09.2024

Priya Sharma and others

....Petitioners

V/s

Varun Sharma

....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Prateek Sodhi, Advocate with
Ms. Jasmine, Advocate for the petitioners.
None for the respondent.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. Present revision petition has been preferred against the order dated 19.05.2022 passed by the Additional Principal Judge, Family Court, Amritsar (hereinafter to be referred as the 'concerned Family Court') praying for modification of the said order for enhancing the quantum of interim maintenance awarded by the said order. Vide the impugned order; the petitioner No.1-wife (herein) has been awarded interim maintenance at the rate of Rs.2,000/- per month whereas respondent Nos.2 and 3 have been awarded interim maintenance at the rate of Rs.1,000/- and Rs.500/- per month respectively to be paid by the respondent (herein) from the date of the application along with Rs.3300/- as litigation expenses. The petitioner No.1 (herein) had filed a petition, under Section 125 of Cr.P.C., 1973 before the Family Court, Amritsar stating that she is the wife of the respondent (herein) and respondent Nos.2 and 3 are the minor children of the respondent and are unable to maintain themselves and hence the interim maintenance ought to be awarded to them.



2. Learned counsel for the petitioners has argued that the Family Court has gravely erred while assessing the interim maintenance as also without appreciating the fact that the petitioner No.1-wife has no source of income as she is a homemaker and has no movable and immovable property in her name. Learned counsel has further argued that the Family Court has assessed the income of the respondent (herein) on the lower side while assessing the grant of interim maintenance. A paltry sum of Rs.3500/- per month (i.e. Rs.2,000/- to petitioner No.1-wife and Rs.1,000/- and Rs.500/- to respondent Nos.2 and 3 respectively) as interim maintenance has been granted to the petitioners without appreciating the facts and circumstances of the case and well settled principles of law. According to the learned counsel, the respondent is a man of means as he is running a cloth shop and is also a property dealer and as such he is earning handsomely and hence the respondent deserves to be fastened with liability to pay interim maintenance at the rate of Rs.30,000/- per month. Hence, it has been prayed that the quantum of interim maintenance awarded vide impugned order is inadequate and the same deserves to be modified and enhanced accordingly.

3. None has caused appearance on behalf of the respondent-husband.

4. I have heard learned counsel for the petitioners and have perused the record.

5. It would be apposite to refer herein to a judgment passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court titled as ***Rajnish vs. Neha & Anr.: 2021(2) SCC 324***; relevant whereof reads as under:-

“II Payment of interim Maintenance

- (i) *The proviso to Section 24 of the HMA (inserted vide Act 49 of 2001 w.e.f. 24.09.2001), and the third proviso to Section 125 Cr.P.C.,*



1973 (inserted vide Act 50 of 2001 w.e.f. 24.09.2001) provide that the proceedings for interim maintenance, shall as far as possible, be disposed of within 60 days’ from the date of service of notice on the contesting spouse. Despite the statutory provisions granting a time-bound period for disposal of proceedings for interim maintenance, we find that application remain pending for several years in most of the cases. The delays are caused by various factors, such as tremendous docket pressure on the Family Courts, repetitive adjournments sought by parties, enormous time taken for completion of pleadings at the interim stage itself, etc. Pendency of applications for maintenance at the interim stage for several years defeats the very object of the legislation.

(ii) At present, the issue of interim maintenance is decided on the basis of pleadings, where some amount of guess-work or rough estimation takes place, so as to make a prima facie assessment of the amount to be awarded. It s often seen that both parties submit scanty material, do not disclose the correct details, and suppress vital information, which makes it difficult for the Family Courts to make an objective assessment for grant of interim maintenance. While there is a tendency on the part of the wife to exaggerate her needs, there is a corresponding tendency by the husband to conceal his actual income.

74. It has therefore, become necessary to lay down a procedure to streamline, the proceedings, since a dependant wife, who has no other source of income, has to take recourse to borrowings from her parents/relatives during the interregnum to sustain herself and the minor children, till she begins receiving interim maintenance.

xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx

(j) The concerned Family Court /District Court/Magistrate’s Court must make an endeavour to decide the I.A. for Interim Maintenance by a reasoned order, within a period of four to six months at the latest, after the Affidavits of Disclosure have been filed before the court.

xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx

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



xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx”

6. Vide the impugned order passed by the Family Court, the aspect of interim maintenance has been decided. It goes without saying that a decision upon the aspect (especially quantum) of interim maintenance, being result of some element of estimation, has to be construed accordingly as the entitlement of the applicant (making a plea for grant of interim maintenance) cannot be based upon exact arithmetical calculations at such stage. The order granting interim maintenance, indubitably, is subject to final adjudication and it is a provisional step subject to final determination to be made at the conclusion of proceedings. In other words, the interim maintenance is only tentative & is subject to fixation of final maintenance.

7. The facts of the instant case reflect that vide the impugned order; the petitioner No.1 (herein), who is the wife of the respondent and petitioner Nos.2 and 3, who are the minor children of the respondent, have been granted interim maintenance at the rate of Rs.3500/- per month (i.e. Rs.2,000/- to petitioner No.1-wife and Rs.1,000/- and Rs.500/- to respondent Nos.2 and 3 respectively). The plea of the petitioner-wife that the Family Court ought to have granted higher amount of interim maintenance i.e. Rs.30,000/- per month considering the fact that respondent has no other liability except to maintain the petitioners as also the fact that the respondent-husband possesses a stable and substantial source of income is a question to be determined during the course of final adjudication of the petition before the Family Court and not at this stage. In the considered opinion of this Court, the interim maintenance amount awarded must be reasonable and realistic. Moreover, while going through the affidavit filed



by the respondent (herein) regarding assets and liabilities, which is appended as Annexure P-5 with the present petition, it transpired that the monthly income of the respondent, who is plying e-auto rickshaw on rent, is earning approximately Rs.17,000/- per month. Out of the said amount, Rs.9,000/- per month is being paid to the owner of the e-auto rickshaw. In the considered opinion of this Court, the interim maintenance awarded to the wife should neither be so extravagant which becomes oppressive and unbearable for the husband. In the instant case, the amount of Rs.3500/- per month, which has been directed to be paid by the respondent (herein), vide the impugned order cannot be said to be on the lower side considering the income of the respondent-husband (herein) and is rather just and appropriate in the facts/circumstances of the present case.

Decision

8. In view of the above, the interim maintenance granted by the Family Court does not call for any interference. Accordingly, the instant petition is hereby dismissed.
9. Any observations made and/or submissions noted hereinabove shall not have any effect on merits of the case and the Family Court shall proceed further, in accordance with law, without being influenced therefrom.
10. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

September 03, 2024
Ajay

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