

**CRR(F)-1044-2023 (O&M)****1**

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

**CRR(F)-1044-2023 (O&M)
Reserved on: 13.08.2024
Pronounced on: 14.08.2024**

VEER BHAN GULATI**...PETITIONER****V/S****KAVITA RANI****...RESPONDENT****CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR**

Present: Mr. Kapish Singla, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Jagdish Manchanda, Advocate
for the respondent.

*********HARPREET SINGH BRAR J. (ORAL)**

1. The present petition has been preferred against the impugned order dated 18.04.2023 passed by the learned Principal Judge, Family Court, Kurukshetra, Camp Court at Shahbad under Section 125 of the Cr.P.C. vide which maintenance of Rs. 4,000/- per month was awarded to the respondent-wife of the petitioner.

2. The marriage between the respondent and one Raj Kumar was solemnized on 03.02.1991 in accordance with Hindu rites and rituals. Out of this wedlock, one female child were born. Raj Kumar died in a road accident on 11.11.1997. Thereafter, respondent got married with the petitioner on 07.07.2003. No child was born from the said wedlock. However, matrimonial dispute ensued between the couple and the respondent filed a petition under Section 125 Cr.P.C. seeking maintenance of Rs. 30,000/- per month. The

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petitioner filed a reply and contested the claim made by the respondent. The learned Family Court vide order dated 18.04.2023 granted maintenance allowance of Rs. 4,000/- per month in favour of the respondent. Aggrieved by the same, the petitioner has approached this Court by filing the present petition.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that marriage of the petitioner was solemnized with the respondent on 07.07.2003. It was a third marriage of the petitioner and second marriage of the respondent. The petitioner is aged about 70 years and is only getting old age pension to the tune of Rs.2,500/- per month. The respondent has admitted in her cross-examination that she is working as a teacher in Vishwas Public School and as per the bank statement of June 2023, she is drawing salary to the tune of Rs. 21,593/-. Besides, at the earlier instance, the settlement was effected with the intervention of the Panchayat and a shop was transferred by the petitioner in the name of the respondent. A sum of Rs. 8,00,000/- was also deposited in the name of the daughter of the respondent. Furthermore, the respondent is also owner of a residential plot.

4. Per contra, learned counsel for the respondent-wife submits that petitioner has misappropriated the entire *istridhan* of respondent and petitioner is doing business of catering at Delhi and earning Rs. 60,000/- per month. He is also having movable and immovable properties in his name and has no dependency except to maintain the petitioner.

5. I have heard the learned counsel for the parties and gone through the case file with their able assistance.



6. The object and purpose behind granting 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 falls within the constitutional sweep of Article 15(3) reinforced by Article 39 of the Constitution of India.

7. 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.”

8. Another objective the legislature has sought to achieve by this provision is to provide 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.

9. 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 maintenance which is just and fair in terms of principle of equistatus. The quantum of maintenance must be justifiable and realistic to provide succour to the dependent spouse and also to avoid occurrence of the two extremes of the maintenance being either paltry or extravagant, ensuring that neither of the two is reduced to a life of penury. The adequacy of the maintenance allowance has to be determined by the yardstick of the dependent spouse being able to lead a life of reasonable comfort.

10. 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 (supra)**, 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 - I 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."

11. Having heard the learned counsel for the parties and after perusing the record with his able assistance, it transpires that respondent-wife is admittedly working in Vishwas Public School and getting salary of Rs. 12,000/-. Moreover, a full and final settlement amount of Rs. 8,00,000/- was also deposited in the name of daughter of respondent. It is evident that the petitioner-wife is well qualified and is currently employed. The facts of the case would be squarely covered by the judgments rendered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Bhushan Kumar Meen v. Mansi Meen @ Harpreet Kaur (2010) 15 SCC 372*** and ***Anu Kaul v. Rajeev Kaul (2009) 13 SCC 209*** and the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court in ***X v. Y*** passed in **MAT. APP. (F.C.) 78/2023** decided on 11.10.2023.

12. In view of the discussion above, the present petition is allowed and the impugned order dated 18.04.2023 is hereby set aside

13. Pending CRM(s), if any, are also disposed of accordingly.

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

Reserved on: 13.08.2024

Pronounced on: 14.08.2024

Ajay Goswami

(i) Whether speaking/reasoned
(ii) Whether reportable

Yes/No
Yes/No