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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRR(F)-1156-2024 (O&M)
Date of decision: 10.09.2024

Barinder Pal Singh Saggu

... Petitioner

Vs.

Sarvjeet Kaur and another

... Respondents

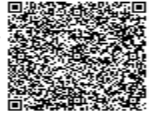
CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Vinay Kumar Begra, Advocate
for the petitioner.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

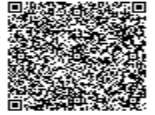
CRM-36379-2024

1. Present application has been filed under Section 5 of the Limitation Act, 1963 read with Section 528 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for condonation of delay of 221 days in filing the revision petition.
2. In view of the averments made in the application, same is allowed and delay of 221 days in filing the revision petition is condoned.

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3. The present revision petition has been preferred against the impugned order dated 31.10.2023 passed by learned Additional Principal Judge, Family Court, Ludhiana, vide which the application filed by the petitioner seeking setting aside of ex-parte judgment dated 27.10.2022 passed in the proceedings under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (for short 'Cr.P.C.'), granting maintenance of Rs.15,000/- per month in favour of the respondents (*Rs.10,000/- per month to respondent No.1 and Rs.5,000/- per month to respondent No.2*), was allowed subject to the condition that the petitioner shall make payment of 50% of the maintenance amount due till date to respondent No.1 within a period of two months from the date of passing of the impugned order.

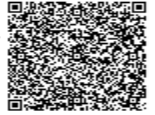
4. The marriage between the petitioner and respondent No.1 was solemnized on 23.09.2018 according to Sikh rites and rituals. Out of this wedlock, one male child i.e. respondent No.2 was born on 16.09.2019. However, matrimonial dispute ensued between the couple and the respondents filed a petition under Section 125 Cr.P.C. seeking maintenance of Rs.50,000/- per month each. The petitioner filed a reply and contested the claim made by the respondents. Thereafter, he failed to appear before learned Family Court and was proceeded against ex-parte. Learned Family Court, vide judgment dated 27.10.2022, granted maintenance allowance of Rs.10,000/- per month in favour of respondent No.1-wife and Rs.5,000/- per



month in favour of respondent No.2-child. Thereafter, the petitioner filed an application for setting aside the ex-parte judgment dated 27.10.2022, which was allowed subject to payment of 50% of the maintenance amount due to be paid to respondent No.1-wife within a period of two months from 31.10.2023, when the impugned order was passed. Aggrieved by the same, the petitioner has approached this Court by filing the present petition.

5. Learned counsel for the petitioner, *inter alia*, contends that the petitioner was proceeded against ex-parte and he was ordered to pay maintenance of Rs.15,000/- per month to the respondents. Thereafter, the petitioner approached learned Family Court seeking setting aside the ex-parte judgment dated 27.10.2022. However, while setting aside the ex-parte judgment dated 27.10.2022, learned Family Court passed an order subject to the condition that the petitioner shall make payment of 50% of the maintenance amount due till date to respondent No.1-wife within a period of two months from the date of passing of the impugned order dated 31.10.2023. It is further contended that mother of the petitioner was bed-ridden being a cancer patient, when he was proceeded against ex-parte and unfortunately, she passed away and he has responsibility to take care of his old-age father. The petitioner tried to save his matrimonial life and preferred a petition under Section 9 of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 seeking restitution of conjugal rights, which was decided ex-parte against respondent No.1.

6. Having heard learned counsel for the petitioner and after



perusing the record with his able assistance, this Court finds no force in the arguments advanced on behalf of the petitioner.

7. 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 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.) Vs. Veeraswamy (K.) (1991) 2 SCC 375***, speaking through Justice Fatima Beevi, opined 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.”

9. Further, a two-Judge Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Kirtikant D. Vadodaria Vs. 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.”

10. 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 she/he can maintain herself/himself, have sufficient funds to pursue the litigation, and not suffer at the instance of the affluent spouse.

11. 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.

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

"VI Final Directions

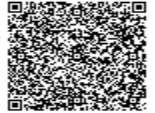
130. In view of the foregoing discussion as contained in Part B -1 to V of this judgment, we deem it appropriate to pass the following directions in exercise of our powers under Article 142 of the Constitution of India:

(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.

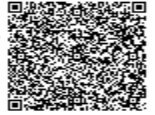
(d) Date from which maintenance is to be awarded

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.

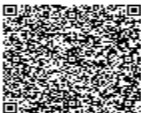
(e) Enforcement/Execution of orders of maintenance

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."

13. A perusal of the record indicates that the petitioner had been



making the payment of arrears of maintenance to the respondents and he was arrested in a case registered under Sections 498-A & 406 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and at the time of his bail, he made part payment of Rs.50,000/- to the respondents. Thereafter, respondent No.1 filed several execution applications to recover the arrears of maintenance and till date, only Rs.1.65 lac have been paid to her. The petitioner is having sufficient means and he is running a business of music and fashion under the name and style of M/s Shaazza Production. Learned Family Court relied upon Income Tax Return of the petitioner for the assessment year 2019-2020 Ex.PA, according to which his income for the said period was Rs.3.29 lacs per annum. Further, as per Income Tax Return for the assessment year 2020-2021 Ex.PB, gross income of the petitioner was Rs.3.90 lacs per annum and almost similar income was assessed for the subsequent assessment year 2021-2022. On the basis of aforementioned Income Tax Returns, learned Family Court, vide ex-parte judgment dated 27.10.2022, rightly assessed income of the petitioner and granted maintenance of Rs.10,000/- per month to respondent No.1 and Rs.5,000/- per month to respondent No.2. While determining the quantum of maintenance, a careful and just balance has been drawn, keeping in view the spiralling inflation rates and high cost of living corresponding to the reasonable needs of the respondents. Learned counsel for the petitioner has not been able to indicate any perversity in the impugned order dated 31.10.2023, which warrants interference by this Court. Accordingly, the



present petition is dismissed being bereft of any merit.

14. All the pending miscellaneous application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

10.09.2024
vishnu

[HARPREET SINGH BRAR]
JUDGE

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