



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

CRR(F)-534-2021 (O & M)
Date of decision: 29.08.2024

GURNAM SINGH

...PETITIONER

V/S

GURMINDER KAUR AND OTHERS

...RESPONDENTS

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. H.S. Jugait, Advocate
 for the petitioner.

 Mr. Naveen Batra, Advocate
 for the respondents.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

1. The present petition has been preferred against order dated 01.11.2021 passed by learned Family Court, Rupnagar, Camp Court at Sri Anandpur Sahib under Section 125 of the Cr.P.C., vide which, the maintenance of Rs.8,000/- per month (Rs.4,000/- per month to respondent No.1, Rs.2,000/- per month to respondent Nos.2 and 3 each) was awarded to the respondents, wife and children of the petitioner.

2. The marriage between the petitioner and respondent No.1 was solemnised on 23.11.2008 in accordance with Sikh rites and ceremonies. Out of this wedlock, two children (respondent Nos.2 and 3 herein) were born. However, matrimonial dispute ensued between the couple and respondents filed a petition under Section 125 Cr.P.C. seeking maintenance. The petitioner filed a reply and contested the claim made by the respondents. The learned Family Court vide order dated 01.11.2021 granted maintenance allowance of ₹8,000/- per month in favour of the respondents. Aggrieved by the same, the

petitioner has approached this Court by filing the present petition.



3. Learned counsel for the petitioner *inter alia* contends that petitioner is only working as a driver and he has no source of income to pay the exorbitant amount of maintenance as assessed by learned Family Court. The learned Family Court has fell into grave error by assessing the actual income of the petitioner and he is ready and willing to keep the respondents and the petitioner has made earnest efforts to save his matrimonial life, however, respondent No.1 has left his company without any justifiable cause. As such, in view of the provisions contained in Sub-Section 4 of Section 125 Cr.P.C., the petitioner cannot be held liable for paying any maintenance.

4. *Per contra*, learned counsel for the respondents submits that learned Family Court has passed a well reasoned order and petitioner is in arrears of few amount of more than Rs.8 lacs.

5. Having heard the learned counsel for the parties and after perusing the record with their able assistance, this Court finds no force in the arguments advanced by learned counsel for the petitioner.

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. 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.

9. While dealing with the issue of maintenance *in extenso*, a two Judge bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Rajnish 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 -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."

10. 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 for determining the quantum of maintenance. The perusal of the record reveals that earlier, a compromise was effected between the parties and respondent No.1 had started residing with the petitioner and she had withdrawn her complaint filed under the provisions of Domestic Violence Act, on the basis of compromise Ex.C-66. The petitioner had undertaken in the agreement that he will not maltreat respondent No.1 and will keep her with love and affection and also provide maintenance to her and will bear the household expenses. From the agreement between the parties, it is clear that petitioner has not followed the conditions of said agreement as he has not been treating respondent No.1 with love and affection and has been maltreating her.



As such, the argument of learned counsel for the petitioner that respondent No.1 has left the company of the petitioner without any justifiable cause is required to be deleted. Furthermore, respondent No.1 has no independent source of income. It is trite law that an able-bodied husband is legally and morally bound to maintain his wife. However, if the husband is unemployed or documentary proof qua his income is not available, it can be reasonably assumed that he can work as a labourer and earn the prevalent minimum wage. Reliance in this regard can be placed on judgments rendered by the Hon’ble Supreme Court in *Bhuwan Mohan Singh vs. Meena* 2014(3) R.C.R (Criminal) 723 and this Court in *Amanjot Singh vs. Rajwant Kaur* 2017(1) R.C.R (Criminal) 1070, *Satish @ Bittoo vs. Suresh Devi* 2018(1) Law Herald 595, *Dalip Kumar @ Deepa vs. Sunita and another* 2012(2) R.C.R.(Criminal) 434 and *Sandeep vs. Suman* in CR-1802-2023 decided on 22.03.2023.

11. Thus, 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 which warrants interference by this Court. Accordingly, the present revision petition is dismissed being bereft of any merit.

August 29, 2024
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(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

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