



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRR(F)-385-2017 (O&M)
Reserved on: 18.07.2024
Pronounced on: 19.07.2024

Sunita

...Petitioner

Versus

Amit

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Sarfraj Hussain, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Munish Behl, Advocate
for the respondent.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J.

1. Present petition has been preferred for enhancement of maintenance granted vide impugned order dated 01.04.2017 passed by learned District Judge, Family Court, Gurugram, under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (for short 'Cr.P.C.'), vide which maintenance to the tune of Rs.3,500/- per month was awarded to the petitioner i.e. wife of the respondent.
2. Briefly, the facts are that the marriage of the petitioner-wife with the respondent-husband was solemnised on 02.03.2006 in accordance with Hindu rites and rituals. A female child was born out of this wedlock. At the time



of the wedding, the parents of the petitioner gave ample dowry articles and gifts to the respondent and his family members. However, soon after the wedding, the respondent and his family members started taunting the petitioner and kept demanding more dowry from her. Upon expressing her reservation in fulfilling the demands of the respondent, she was physically assaulted and turned out of the matrimonial home and since then, she is living in her paternal home. The petitioner filed a petition under Section 125 Cr.P.C. seeking maintenance. The respondent filed a reply and contested the claim made by petitioner. Learned Family Court, vide order dated 01.04.2017, granted maintenance allowance of Rs.3,500/- per month to the petitioner. Aggrieved by the same, the petitioner has approached this Court for enhancement of the amount of maintenance, by filing the present petition.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner, *inter alia*, contends that the petitioner has been awarded a meagre amount of Rs.3,500/- per month despite the fact that the respondent owns a mobile shop and is also involved in the business of building material and shuttering. Further, the respondent has a rental income as well. Moreover, it is settled law that the wife is entitled to maintenance on the principle of equistatus i.e. the lifestyle that the petitioner would have enjoyed, if she continued to live with the respondent. The maintenance granted in the present case is not only inadequate but completely disproportionate to the income of the respondent. Lastly, he avers that the petitioner admittedly has no source of income and is dependent on her parents to



sustain herself.

4. Per contra, learned counsel for the respondent argues that that no dowry articles and gifts were received by the respondent and his relatives. Further, the petitioner is capable of maintaining herself as she is a skilled tailor and is earning more than Rs.10,000/- per month. The respondent, on the other hand, is employed as a driver, who is also looking after his aged parents and his minor daughter. Additionally, the petitioner withdrew herself from the society of the respondent of her own volition.

5. Having heard learned counsel for the parties and after perusal of record of the case 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 fall 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.) Vs. 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.”

8. 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.”

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 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 -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."

10. From perusal of the record, it transpires that the minor daughter is residing with the respondent and he is taking care of her and he has to take care of his old age parents. The petitioner is earning Rs.10,000/- per month by doing tailoring work. Further perusal of the impugned order passed by learned Family Court makes it evident that the Court below has duly considered the material

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placed before it for 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 petitioner. 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 petition is dismissed being bereft of any merit.

[HARPREET SINGH BRAR]
JUDGE

19.07.2024
vishnu

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