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

CRM-45757-2024 in/and
CRR(F)-1465-2024
Date of decision: 19.11.2024

Mohit Sharma

...Petitioner

Versus

Neetu Sharma and another

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Ms. Aarushi Mahajan, Advocate
for the applicant/petitioner.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)**CRM-45757-2024**

Allowed as prayed for.

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1. The present petition has been preferred against the impugned order dated 03.10.2024 passed by the learned Family Court, Ludhiana under Section 125 of the Cr.P.C. vide which the maintenance of Rs.16,000/- per month was awarded to the respondents (Rs.10,000/- per month to respondent No.1 and Rs.6,000/- per month to respondent No.2).

2. The marriage between the petitioner and respondent No.1 was solemnised on 26.10.2012 in accordance with Sikh rites and rituals. Out of this wedlock, one female child was born. However, matrimonial dispute ensued between the couple and the 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 03.10.2024 granted maintenance allowance of Rs.16,000/- per month in favour



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of the respondents (Rs.10,000/- per month to respondent No.1 and Rs.6,000/- per month to respondent No.2). Aggrieved by the same, the petitioner has approached this Court by filing the present petition.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner *inter alia* submits that respondent No.1 has herself left the company of the petitioner and his old aged parents without any justifiable reason and she is high qualified with M.A. (B.Ed.) and is working as a Teacher and earning Rs.50,000/- per month which is sufficient to maintain herself and the minor daughter. He further submits that he was working as HR (Manager) in Cremica Industries, Phillaur and was earning handsomely but due to false complaints by respondent No.1 against him and his parents, his services were terminated by the employer of company in the year 2020. Thereafter, he passed LLB degree and got certificate of enrolment as an Advocate and now is practising as junior advocate in the District Courts, Anandpur Sahib, District Roopnagar and earning a small amount of Rs.12,000/- per month in which he has to maintain himself and his old aged parents and thus, he is not able to maintain the respondents.

4. 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



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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.

5. 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.”

6. 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



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

7. 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.

8. 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 (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."



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9. Having heard learned counsel for the petitioner and on perusal of the record, this Court finds no force in the arguments advanced by learned counsel for the petitioner.

10. At the outset, it appears that the petitioner/husband forfeited his right to cross-examine the respondent/wife on account of non-payment of arrears of maintenance despite availing numerous opportunities. Resultantly, her cross-examination was treated as Nil. Although, it transpires that the respondent/wife was drawing a salary of Rs.21,000/- per month from 01.10.2021 to 31.05.2022 while working in SPS Model High School Sadarpur, Garhshankar. However, no evidence was put forth by the petitioner/husband which could establish that the respondent/wife is currently working or has any source of income. Whereas, Ex.PW5/A i.e. certificate issued by New Swan Enterprises has been proved on record as per which, the petitioner/husband is drawing a monthly salary of Rs.48,800/-. Furthermore, it also stands admitted by him that his gross salary for the year 2020-21 was Rs.4,76,224/-. It also transpires that the petitioner/husband tried to conceal the fact that his father is getting pension of Rs.39,858/- per month. Therefore, the contention of the petitioner that he is maintaining his old aged parents does not find any force. It is pertinent to note that the minor child is in the custody of the respondent/wife and the husband has no other liability. In addition, perusal of the case file shows that the learned Court below has taken into account the qualification of the respondent/wife and her capacity to earn while passing the impugned order. Therefore, it is a considered opinion of this Court that the Court below has duly considered the material placed before it for determining the quantum of

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

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

19.11.2024
Neha

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