

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
CRIMINAL MISCELLANEOUS No.87897 of 2024

Arising Out of PS. Case No.-262 Year-2022 Thana- SONBERSA District- Sitamarhi

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1. Ram Sundar Mahto Son of Late Uchit Mahto (father-in-law)
 2. Nirmal Devi @ Nirmla Devi Wife of Ram Sundar Mahto (Mother-in-law) both are R/O Vill.- Mushharniya(Birta), P.S.- Sonbarsa, Dist.- Sitamarhi.
 3. Ramesh Mahto Son of Bhola Mahto (brother-in-law) Nandosi
 4. Sudha Devi Wife of Ramesh Mahto, Married sister in law/Nandan. Petitioners no.3 and 4 are R/O Vill.- Malahi, P.S.- Bela, Dist.- Sitamarhi.

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The State of Bihar
2. Anita Devi Wife of Dilip Kumar, D/O Raj Kamal Prasad R/O Vill.- Sirsiya Bazar, P.S.- Bela, Dist.- Sitamarhi.

... .. Opposite Party/s

Appearance :

For the Petitioner/s	:	Mr.Sanjay Kumar, Advocate
For the Opposite Party/s	:	Ms.Pushpa Sinha, APP
For OP NO.2	:	Mr. Santosh Kumar, Advocate

CORAM: HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE PURNENDU SINGH
ORAL JUDGMENT

Date : 03-11-2025

Heard learned counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioners, learned APP for the State and learned counsel for the opposite party no.2.

2. The present application has been filed under Section 482 of CrPC for quashing the order dated 12.09.2024 passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, Sitamarhi in G.R. No.2381/2022 arising out of Sonbarsa P.S. Case No. 262/2022, by which learned Judicial Magistrate has taken cognizance of offence against the petitioners under Sections 341, 323, 342, 504, 498(A), 494/34 of the Indian Penal Code



and Sections 3 and 4 of D.P. Act.

3. The allegation is of subjecting the complainant – opposite party no.2 to various sorts of torture due to non-fulfillment of the demand of the dowry.

4. Learned counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioners submitted that the learned District Court has not considered that the allegation is not against the society. He further submitted that the material available on record don't disclose any criminal element and without considering this aspect, the order taking cognizance against the petitioner cannot sustain in the eye of law. He further submitted that petitioner no. 1 is father-in-law, petitioner no.2 is mother-in-law, petitioner no.3 is brother-in-law and petitioner no.4 is married sister-in-law of opposite party no.2. Learned counsel further submitted that marriage is a sacred ceremony but little matrimonial skirmish suddenly erupts into hatred and the parties ponder to reconcile their dispute outside the court.

5. Both the parties submitted that matter be referred for mediation

6. Heard the parties.

7. It is commonly seen in the society that the entire family members, as well as, relatives are made accused along



with the husband to face criminal prosecution. The Apex Court has demarcated the manner in which the complaints are entertained by the learned District Court.

8. The law in respect of matrimonial dispute between husband and wife is well settled at the same time, the Apex Court has held that the family members of husband should not be roped unnecessarily and face vexatious criminal trial.

9. From perusal of the complaint, it is evident that there is no specific allegation against the petitioners no. 1, 3 and 4, who are father-in-law, brother-in-law and married sister-in-law of the opposite party no. 2. So far as petitioner no.2, who is mother-in-law of the opposite party no.2 is concerned, her complicity in the alleged offence cannot be denied. In light of the recent judgment of Apex Court in the case of *Navneesh Aggarwal & Ors. v. State of Haryana & Anr.* reported in **2025 INSC 963**, I find that no case under Section 498A of IPC and Sections 3 and 4 of D.P. Act is made out against petitioner nos. 1, 3 and 4. Accordingly, the entire proceedings and order taking cognizance dated 12.09.2024 passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, Sitamarhi in G.R. No.2381/2022 arising out of Sonbarsa P.S. Case No. 262/2022 is hereby **set aside and quashed to the extent it relates to petitioners no. 1, 3 and 4.**



10. So far as the petitioner no.2 is concerned, a reference can be taken to law laid down by the Apex Court in case of ***Naushey Ali & Ors. Vs. State of Uttar Pradesh & Anr.*** reported in ***(2025) 4 SCC 78***, considering the entirety of matters, particularly dealing with the misuse of Section 498 of IPC, referring to its earlier judgment, finally concluded that offences arising out of matrimonial dispute particularly relating to dowry etc. or a family dispute where wrong is committed to the victim by the offenders and his family, can be settled amicably.

11. The matrimonial dispute is not an offense against the society rather a matrimonial dispute is a private conflict between spouses and does not inherently constitute an offence against society, as has been held in the case of ***B.S. Joshi v. State of Haryana***, reported in, ***(2003) 4 SCC 675***, in paragraph nos. 12 and 13 by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, which is as under:-

“ 12. The special features in such matrimonial matters are evident. It becomes the duty of the court to encourage genuine settlements of matrimonial disputes.

*13. The observations made by this Court, though in a slightly different context, in ***G.V. Rao v. L.H.V. Prasad [(2000) 3 SCC 693 : 2000 SCC (Cri) 733]*** are very apt for determining the approach required to be kept in view in a matrimonial dispute by the courts. It was said that there has been an outburst of matrimonial disputes in recent times. Marriage is a sacred ceremony, the main purpose of which*



is to enable the young couple to settle down in life and live peacefully. But little matrimonial skirmishes suddenly erupt which often assume serious proportions resulting in commission of heinous crimes in which elders of the family are also involved with the result that those who could have counselled and brought about rapprochement are rendered helpless on their being arrayed as accused in the criminal case. There are many other reasons which need not be mentioned here for not encouraging matrimonial litigation so that the parties may ponder over their defaults and terminate their disputes amicably by mutual agreement instead of fighting it out in a court of law where it takes years and years to conclude and in that process the parties lose their “young” days in chasing their “cases” in different courts.

12. Recently also, the Apex Court in the case of ***Mange Ram Vs. State of Madhya Pradesh & Another (Special Leave Petition (Criminal) No.10817 of 2024)***, in paragraph nos. 25, 31 and 32 has reiterated that in cases, particularly, related to dowry, opportunity be given to the parties first to reconcile, which *inter alia* are as follows:-

“25. This Court, in Dara Lakshmi Narayana vs. State of Telangana, (2025) 3 SCC 735, has made it clear that family members of the husband ought not to be unnecessarily roped into criminal proceedings arising out of matrimonial discord. The Court observed that it has become a recurring tendency to implicate every member of the husband’s family, irrespective of their role or actual involvement, merely because a dispute has arisen between the spouses. It was further held that where the allegations are bereft of specific particulars, and particularly where the relatives sought to be prosecuted are residing separately or have had no connection with the matrimonial home, allowing the prosecution to proceed would amount to an abuse of the process of law. The Court noted that criminal law is not to be deployed as an instrument of harassment, and that judicial scrutiny must be



exercised to guard against such misuse.

31. We also refer to Gian Singh vs. State of Punjab, (2012) 10 SCC 303 wherein this Court observed that where the High Court quashes a criminal proceeding having regard to the fact that the dispute between the offender and the victim has been settled, although the offences are not compoundable, it does so as in its opinion, continuation of criminal proceedings will be an exercise in futility and justice in the case demands that the dispute between the parties is put to an end and peace is restored, securing the ends of justice being the ultimate guiding factor. In this regard, a specific reference was made to offences arising out of matrimony, particularly relating to dowry, etc. or a family dispute, where the wrong is basically to the victim but the offender and the victim have settled all disputes between them amicably, irrespective of the fact that such offences have not been made compoundable. The High Court may, within the framework of its inherent power, quash the criminal proceeding or criminal complaint or FIR if it is satisfied that on the face of such settlement, there is hardly any likelihood of the offender being convicted and by not quashing the criminal proceedings, justice shall be casualty and ends of justice shall be defeated.

32. In Naushey Ali vs. State of U.P., (2025) 4 SCC 78, one of us (Viswanathan, J.) observed in paragraph 32 that proceeding with the trial, when the parties have amicably resolved the dispute, would be futile and the ends of justice require that the settlement be given effect to by quashing the proceedings. It would be a grave abuse of process particularly when the dispute is settled and resolved.”

13. The petitioner no. 2, who is mother-in-law of the opposite party no. 2, desires that she wants to settle the dispute amicably. This Court finds it proper in the interest of the parties, as there is no objection to arrive at a mutual terms and conditions of settlement, that certain time is required.



14. The parties seek to settle their strained matrimonial relationship amicably, the learned District Court shall also strive till last to settle the dispute outside the Court.

15. Petitioner no. 2 along with her son and opposite party no. 2 have agreed to appear before the learned District Court on 01.12.2025 at 10:30 AM.

16. Learned District Court is directed to take necessary steps to refer the matter before the learned Mediator of the District Mediation Center.

17. Learned Mediator of the District Mediation Center concerned shall make his/her best efforts to settle the dispute between the parties amicably and thereafter submit his/her report before the concerned learned District Court, well within a period of four months, till then, no coercive action shall be taken against the petitioner no.2 in connection with the aforesaid case.

18. In case, the parties resolve their dispute amicably, then the proceeding is required to be dropped in light of the law laid down by the Apex Court as referred hereinabove.

19. In case of failure on the part of the petitioner no. 2 to appear on 01.12. 2025 before the learned District Court or any date fixed by the learned Mediator, the interim protection



granted to the petitioner no. 2 shall automatically lose its force.

20. In case, it is deliberate on the part of the petitioners no. 2 and she fails to reconcile, then in that case, the learned District Court shall proceed with the trial. In case, it is deliberate on the part of the opposite party no.2 to reconcile, then in that case, continuing with the criminal proceeding will amount to abuse of process of court and the interim protection granted to petitioner no. 2 shall continue and the proceeding against her is required to be dropped in accordance with law.

21. Accordingly, the present quashing application stands disposed of.

(Purnendu Singh, J)

Sanjay/-

AFR/NAFR	NAFR
CAV DATE	NA
Uploading Date	05.11.2025
Transmission Date	05.11.2025

