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Crl.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 17.12.2025

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA

Crl.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

1.S.Madhankumar
S/o Selvaraj

2.Selvaraj,
S/o Kanniyappan

3.Prema,
W/o Selvaraj
(All are residing at No.3/175,
Arunthathiyar Street,
Eranapuram, Namakkal-637 003.)

... Petitioners/ Accused 1 to 3

Vs.

1.The State,
Rep. by the Inspector of Police
All Women Police Station,
Sankari, Salem District.

..1st respondent/Complainant

2.N.Amsavalli,
Extension Officer,
Panchayat Union, Sankari Taluk,
Salem District.

.. 2nd Respondent/De facto complainant

PRAYER : Criminal Original Petition filed under Section 528 of B.N.S.S. to call for the records pertaining to P.R.C.No.18 of 2025 on the file of the learned Judicial Magistrate No.I, Sankari, and quash the same.

For Petitioners : Ms.R.Madhubala

For Respondents : Mr.K.M.D.Muhilan,
Additional Public Prosecutor for R1



CrI.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

ORDER

This Criminal Original Petition has been filed seeking to quash P.R.C.No.18 of 2025 on the file of the learned Judicial Magistrate No.I, Sankari, for the offences punishable under Sections 9, 10 and 11 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

2.The learned counsel for the petitioners would submit that the first petitioner and the victim are relatives and belong to the same community and they are known to each other and while the victim was studying +2, both fell in love with each other and thereafter, since it was objected to by the parents of the victim, the victim eloped from her house on 11.11.2024 and hence, the parents of the first petitioner viz., petitioners 2 and 3 (father and mother respectively) had performed their marriage on the same day at Anjaneyar Temple, Royalur Road, Chinna Goundanur. He would further submit that on coming to know about the marriage of the victim, who is a minor, the second respondent viz., Extension Officer in Panchayat Union, had lodged a complaint as against the petitioners 2 and 3, who had assisted for the minor's marriage. The first respondent, after completing the investigation, had filed a final report against the petitioners, which was taken on file as P.R.C.No.18 of 2025 by the Judicial Magistrate No.1.



CrI.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

3.Learned counsel for the petitioners would further submit that the first petitioner and the victim are now living as husband and wife under the same roof and the parents of both the first petitioner and the victim girl are taking care of them and now, the victim is pregnant and their marriage was registered on 11.12.2025 by the SRO, Sangagiri.

4.The victim has no objection for the proceedings in P.R.C.No.18 of 2025 filed against the petitioners being quashed and she has also filed an affidavit dated 21.11.2025 to that effect.

5.The learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing on behalf of the 1st respondent-Police submitted that though the parties have entered into a compromise while this case is pending, this Court, taking into account the seriousness of the offences, has to consider the issue as to whether offences of this nature can be quashed on the ground of compromise between parties.

6.The first petitioner, his mother, victim, and her mother are present before this Court at the time of hearing. They were identified by their respective counsel as well as by Mrs.G.Athilakshmi, SSI, All Women Police Station, Sankari, Salem District.



Crl.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

7.The parties have filed a joint Memo of Compromise dated 21.11.2025 entered into between the petitioners and the victim's mother and the victim has filed separate affidavit dated 21.11.2025.

8.The main issue that requires the consideration of this Court is as to whether this Court can quash the criminal proceedings involving non-compoundable offences pending against the petitioners.

9.The Supreme Court, in a very recent judgment in **K. Kirubakaran vs. State of Tamil Nadu [2025 INSC 1272]**, in which the appellant was convicted for the offences under Sections 366 IPC and Section 6 of the POCSO Act, pursuant to the compromise entered into between the parties, by commencing the judgment with the quote "*The final cause of law is the welfare of society*" of Benjamin N. Cardozo, Former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and finding that the crime was not the result of lust but love, quashed the proceedings against the appellant invoking Section 142 of the Constitution of India. The relevant paragraphs of the said judgment read as under:

“5. The only question which remains to be decided is whether the proceedings should be quashed in the present case, considering that the appellant is convicted of a heinous offence.

6. We are conscious of the fact that a crime is not merely a wrong against an individual but against society as a whole. When an



offence is committed, it wounds the collective conscience of the society and therefore the society, acting through its elected lawmakers, determines what would be the punishment for such an offence and how an offender should be dealt with, to deter its recurrence. The criminal law is, thus, a manifestation of the sovereign will of the society. However, the administration of such law is not divorced from the practical realities. Rendering justice demands a nuanced approach. This Court tailors its decisions to the specifics of each case: with firmness and severity wherever necessary and it is merciful when warranted. It is also in the best interest of society to bring a dispute to an end, wherever possible. We draw inspiration from Cardozo, J. to hold that the law aims to ensure not just punishment of the guilty, but also harmony and restoration of the social order.

7. With such perspective in mind, we need to proceed to balance the competing interests of justice, deterrence, and rehabilitation.

8. The founding fathers of the Constitution conferred this Court with the extraordinary power to do “complete justice” in proper cases. This constitutional power stands apart from all other powers and is intended to avoid situations of injustice being caused by the rigid application of law.

9. Per the law made by the legislature, the appellant having been found guilty of a heinous offence, the proceedings in the present case on the basis of a compromise between the appellant and his wife cannot be quashed. But ignoring the cry of the appellant's wife for compassion and empathy will not, in our opinion, serve the ends of justice. Even the most serious offenders of law do receive justice moderated by compassion from the courts, albeit in appropriate cases. Given the peculiar facts and circumstances here, a balanced approach combining practicality and empathy is necessary. The appellant and the victim are not only legally married, they are also in their family way. While considering the offence committed by the appellant punishable under the POCSO Act, we have discerned that the crime was not the result of lust but love. The victim of crime herself has expressed her desire to live a peaceful and stable family life with the appellant, upon whom she is dependent, without the appellant carrying the indelible mark on his forehead of being an offender. Continuation of the criminal proceedings and the appellant's incarceration would only disrupt this familial unit and cause irreparable harm to the victim, the infant child, and the fabric of society itself.

10. We are, thus, persuaded to hold that this is a case where the law must yield to the cause of justice.



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11. Accordingly, resting on the foregoing considerations, the developments subsequent to the trial, and in the interest of rendering complete justice, we deem it appropriate to invoke our powers under Article 142 of the Constitution of India to quash the criminal proceedings against the appellant including the conviction and sentence. Ordered accordingly.

12. Also, bearing in mind the interests of the appellant's wife and child, we deem it appropriate to subject the appellant to the specific condition of not deserting his wife and child and also to maintain them for the rest of their life with dignity. If, in future, there be any default on the appellant's part and the same is brought to the notice of this Court by his wife or their child or the complainant, the consequences may not be too palatable for the appellant.

13. We make the interim order granting benefit to the appellant of exemption from surrendering absolute and discharge him from the bail bonds.

14. The appeal is, accordingly, allowed.

15. Needless to observe, this order is rendered in the unique circumstances that have unfolded before us and shall not be treated as a precedent for any other case." (emphasis supplied by this Court)

10. It is also apropos to point out that the Supreme Court, in **K.Dhandapani vs. The State [2022 Live Law (SC) 477]**, in which the appellant was convicted of the offences under Sections 5 and 6 of the POCSO Act, by a terse order, set aside the conviction and sentence slapped on the appellant, on the basis of the settlement arrived at between the parties. The following relevant paragraphs of the said order make an interesting reading:

"The appellant submitted that this Court should exercise its power under [Article 142](#) of the Constitution and ought to do complete justice and it could not be in the interest of justice to disturb the family life of the appellant and the prosecutrix.



CrI.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

After hearing the matter for some time on 08th March, 2022, we directed the District Judge to record the statement of the prosecutrix about her present status. The statement of the prosecutrix has been placed on record in which she has categorically stated that she has two children and they are being taken care of by the appellant and she is leading a happy married life.

Dr. Joseph Aristotle S., learned counsel appearing for the State, opposed the grant of any relief to the appellant on the ground that the prosecutrix was aged 14 years on the date of the offence and gave birth to the first child when she was 15 years and second child was born when she was 17 years. He argued that the marriage between the appellant and the prosecutrix is not legal. He expressed his apprehension that the said marriage might be only for the purpose of escaping punishment and there is no guarantee that the appellant will take care of the prosecutrix and the children after this Court grants relief to him.

In the peculiar facts and circumstances of this case, we are of the considered view that the conviction and sentence of the appellant who is maternal uncle of the prosecutrix deserves to be set aside in view of the subsequent events that have been brought to the notice of this Court. This Court cannot shut its eyes to the ground reality and disturb the happy family life of the appellant and the prosecutrix. We have been informed about the custom in Tamil Nadu of the marriage of a girl with the maternal uncle.

For the aforesaid mentioned reasons, the conviction and sentence of the appellant is set aside in the peculiar facts of the case and shall not be treated as a precedent. The appeal is accordingly, disposed of. Pending application(s), if any, shall stand disposed of.

In case, the appellant does not take proper care of the prosecutrix, she or the State on behalf of the prosecutrix can move this Court for modification of this Order.”

(emphasis supplied by this Court)

11. Since the aforesaid decisions apply on all fours to the facts and circumstances obtaining in this case, this Court is inclined to quash P.R.C.No.18 of 2025 on the file of the learned Judicial Magistrate No.I, Sankari, against the petitioners, for the offences punishable under Sections 9, 10 and 11 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.



CrI.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

12. Accordingly, this Criminal Original Petition is allowed and P.R.C.No.18 of 2025 on the file of the learned Judicial Magistrate No.I, Sankari, is quashed. This Court hopes and trusts that the petitioners will take due care of the victim for the rest of her life and in the event of any default on their part in this regard being brought to the notice of this Court, the consequences that would befall the petitioners would be very serious. The affidavit and joint memo of compromise dated 21.11.2025 filed by the parties for compromising the offences, shall form part of the records.

13. Before parting, this Court hastens to add that this Court is not oblivious of the fact that the Supreme Court, in **K. Kirubakaran**, *supra*, had invoked Article 142 of the Constitution of India and quashed the criminal proceedings against the appellant. However, since the facts obtaining in this case being akin to the facts in **K. Kirubakaran**, *supra*, this order is passed.

17.12.2025

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CrI.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

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1. The Judicial Magistrate No.I,
Sankari.
2. The Inspector of Police
All Women Police Station,
Sankari, Salem District.
3. The Public Prosecutor,
High Court of Madras, Chennai



Crl.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA J.

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Crl.O.P.No.32893 of 2025

17.12.2025