



CRA-S-1888-SB-2008

3. Learned Amicus Curiae for the appellant *inter alia* submits that the case set up by the prosecution does not inspire confidence. It is full of doubts, contradiction and lacks intrinsic value. Further, neither FSL form was prepared at the spot nor submitted with the case property in the Malkhana, which assures that the same have been tampered with. There is non-compliance of Section 42 to 57 of NDPS Act. Further, learned trial Court has ignored the reliable evidence led by the appellant in his defence by producing HC Ajaib Singh as DW-1 to prove an entry of the present case in the Register No.19 maintained in the Police Station. As per the custody certificate, the appellant has undergone a period of 02 months and 30 days.

4. *Per contra*, learned State counsel opposes the prayer of the appellant as the learned Court below has passed a well-reasoned judgment based on correct appreciation of evidence available on record. He further submits that the appellant is involved in one more case under the NDPS Act and as such, he does not deserve any leniency.

5. Having heard learned counsel for the parties and after perusing the record with their able assistance, it transpires that the appellant was convicted for being in possession of 10 kgs of poppy husk, which falls under the purview of Section 15 of NDPS Act. As per the custody certificate, the appellant has undergone a period of 02 months and 30 days out of total sentence of six months in the instant case. Though the petitioner is involved in one more case under the NDPS Act, however, learned State counsel could not controvert that the quantity involved in the present case does not fall under the commercial quantity. Since there is no minimum punishment prescribed under Section 15 of NDPS Act for the non-commercial quantity this Court is of the opinion that it would be in the interest of justice, if the



CRA-S-1888-SB-2008

sentence awarded to the appellant is reduced to the period already undergone by him.

6. In ***Deo Narain Mandal vs. State of U.P. (2004) 7 SCC 257***, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has opined that awarding of sentence is not a mere formality in criminal cases. When a minimum and maximum term is prescribed by the statute with regard to the period of sentence, a discretionary element is vested in the Court. Background of each case, which includes factors like gravity of the offence, manner in which the offence is committed, age of the accused, should be considered while determining the quantum of sentence and this discretion is not to be used arbitrarily or whimsically. After assessing all relevant factors, proper sentence should be awarded bearing in mind the principle of proportionality to ensure the sentence is neither excessively harsh nor does it come across as lenient.

7. Further, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Ravada Sasikala vs. State of AP AIR 2017 SC 1166***, has reiterated that the imposition of sentence also serves a social purpose as it acts as a deterrent by making the accused realise the damage caused not only to the victim but also to the society at large. The law in this regard is well settled that opportunities of reformation must be granted and such discretion is to be exercised by evaluating all attending circumstances of each case by noticing the nature of the crime, the manner in which the crime was committed and the conduct of the accused to strike a balance between the efficacy of law and the chances of reformation of the accused.

8. Further, the primary consideration in matters where the appellant is involved in other NDPS cases ought to be the severity of the offence. Moreover, the Coordinate Benches of this Court have deemed it appropriate to reduce the sentence imposed upon the accused to be the custody already



CRA-S-1888-SB-2008

undergone by him, in spite of his involvement in other cases pertaining to the NDPS Act in ***Pritam Singh @ Preeti vs. State of Punjab*** in ***CRA-S-1769-SB-2010*** decided on 03.04.2025, ***Ram Lal vs. State of Haryana*** in ***CRA-S-986-SB-2005*** decided on 11.05.2018, ***Raj Pal vs. State of Haryana*** in ***CRA-S-68-SB-2005*** decided on 28.04.2023, ***Raj Pal vs. State of Haryana*** in ***CRA-S-34-SB-2005*** decided on 28.04.2023 and ***Gurmail Singh and others vs. State of Punjab*** in ***CRA-S-1976-SB-2007*** decided on 28.03.2025.

9. A perusal of the judgment of conviction passed by the learned trial Court indicates no perversity in its findings and the same is based on correct appreciation of evidence available on record. However, the FIR (*supra*) was lodged on 12.08.2007 and the appellant has been suffering the agony of trial for last more than 17 years. Since his conviction, he has grown into law-abiding citizen and desires to live a peaceful life.

9. Therefore, in view of the discussion above, present appeal is disposed of in the following terms:-

(i) The judgment dated 15.09.2008 passed by the learned Judge, Special Court, Barnala is upheld.

(ii) The order of sentence dated 15.09.2008 is modified to the extent that the sentence of rigorous imprisonment for six months and fine of Rs.250/- along with default mechanism awarded to the appellant is reduced to the period of sentence already undergone by him.

10. The High Court Legal Services Authority is directed to pay remuneration to learned *Amicus Curiae* as per rules



CRA-S-1888-SB-2008

11. Pending miscellaneous applications, if any, shall also stand disposed of.

02.05.2025
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(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/non-speaking?	Yes/No
Whether reportable?	Yes/No