



CRA-S-313-SB-2008 (O&M)

1

821 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRA-S-313-SB-2008 (O&M)
Date of Decision: 07.04.2025

BHINDER SINGH @ RAJINDER SINGH

...APPELLANT

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB

...RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Jaiveer Singh, Advocate as *Amicus Curiae*,
for the appellant.

Mr. Rishabh Singla, AAG Punjab.

Harpreet Singh Brar, J. (Oral)

1. Present appeal has been preferred by the appellant against the judgment of conviction and order on quantum of sentence dated 06.02.2008 passed by learned Judge, Special Court, Barnala vide which the appellant has been convicted and sentenced as mentioned below:

Offence under Section	Sentence	Fine	Sentence in default of payment of fine
15 of NDPS Act	Rigorous imprisonment for two years	Rs. 2,000/-	Rigorous imprisonment for three months

2. Brief facts of the case are that on 22.05.2005, ASI Baljeet Singh alongwith other police officials in private Maruti Car, in connection with patrolling duty, were proceeding from Handiaya to Mansa Road via *Katcha* passage. When the police party was at about 15/20 karams ahead of the road, then Gulzar Singh had signalled the Maruti Car of ASI Baljit Singh to stop. Gulzar Singh took the lift in the car of ASI Baljit Singh. When Maruti Car reached near the Ram Bagh gate, then on the road side, under the tree, one person was seen sitting on the heavy gunny bag. Said person was facing towards the group of trees. ASI Baljit Singh stopped their vehicle and apprehended the

**CRA-S-313-SB-2008 (O&M)**

accused-appellant on the basis of suspicion and his identity was verified. Search of accused-appellant alongwith his belongings was conducted. Thereafter, on search of gunny bag, held by the appellant, poppy husk was recovered. Out of the poppy husk, two samples each of 250 grams were separated and remaining on weighment was found to be 29.500 kilograms. All the parcels were sealed. FIR(*supra*) was registered under Section 15 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (hereinafter to be referred as 'NDPS Act').

3. Learned *Amicus Curiae* for the appellant *inter alia* contends that the link evidence is missing in the chain of prosecution case. The CFSL form was neither prepared at the spot nor deposited alongwith the case property with the MHC. The entire case of prosecution is based upon the testimonies of official witnesses and no independent witness was joined at the time of effecting the alleged recovery. One Gulzar Singh was cited as prosecution witness, but he has not been examined by prosecution. Further, there are several discrepancies and shortcomings in the testimonies of prosecution witnesses with regard to time of reaching of police party at the spot and the time of effecting the alleged recovery. Further the perusal of Ex. PA indicates that seal was not deposited with MHC. Lastly he contends that the appellant is not involved in any other case and has undergone a period of 05 months and 06 days of custody out of total sentence of 02 years awarded to him.

4. Per contra, learned State counsel opposes the prayer of the appellant on the ground that learned trial Court has passed a well-reasoned judgment based on correct appreciation of evidence available on record and as such, the appellant 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

**CRA-S-313-SB-2008 (O&M)****3**

for being in possession of 30 kilograms of poppy husk, attracting the offence under Section 15 of NDPS Act, for which no minimum punishment has been prescribed. Perusal of custody certificate indicates that appellant is not involved in any other case and he has already undergone custody of 05 months and 06 days out of total sentence of 02 years, in the instant case. Since there is no minimum punishment prescribed under Section 15 of NDPS Act, this Court is of the opinion that it would be in the interest of justice, if the sentence awarded to the appellant is reduced to the period already undergone by him.

6. In **Deo Narain Mandal v. State of UP (2004) 7 SCC 257**, a three Judge bench of 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, a two Judge Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Ravada Sasikala v. 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



CRA-S-313-SB-2008 (O&M)

4

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. A perusal of the judgment of conviction passed by the learned trial Court indicates no perversity in its findings and the said judgment is based on correct appreciation of evidence available on record. However, the FIR (supra) was lodged on 22.05.2005 and the appellant has been suffering the agony of trial for last more than 19 years. Since his conviction, the appellant has reformed into a law-abiding citizen and intends to live a peaceful life.

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

(i) The judgment dated 06.02.2008 passed by the learned Judge, Special Court, Barnala is upheld.

(ii) The order of sentence dated 06.02.2008 is modified to the extent that the sentence of rigorous imprisonment for 02 years and fine of Rs. 2,000/- with default mechanism awarded to the appellant is reduced to the period of sentence already undergone by him.

10. Pending miscellaneous application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

11. High Court Legal Services Committee is directed to pay remuneration to the *Amicus Curiae*, as per rules.

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

07.04.2025

Ajay Goswami

Whether speaking/reasoned
Whether reportable

Yes/No
Yes/No