



477

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRA-S-642-SB-2007 (O & M)
Date of decision: 25.03.2025

HARDEEP SINGH @ KALA

V/S

...APPELLANT

STATE OF PUNJAB

...RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Abhishek Singla, Advocate for
Mr. L.S. Sidhu, Advocate
for the appellant.

Mr. Rishabh Singla, AAG, Punjab.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

1. The prayer in the present appeal is to set aside the judgment of conviction and order of sentence dated 21.08.2006 passed by learned Judge, Special Court, Mansa whereby the appellant was convicted and sentenced for the offence punishable under Section 15 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (hereinafter referred to as ‘NDPS Act’), in the case stemming from FIR No.75 dated 18.12.2002 registered under Section 15 of NDPS Act at Police Station Joga.
2. The appellant was sentenced as mentioned below:

Offence	Sentence
Section 15 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985	Rigorous imprisonment for a period of one year and to pay fine of Rs.5,000/- and in default of payment of fine, to further undergo RI for two months.



3. Brief facts of the case are that on 18.12.2002, when SI Joginder Singh of CIA Staff along with other police officials was present at T-Point in the revenue limit of Kharak Singh Wala, appellant was seen coming in an Ambassador car. On seeing the police, he tried to turn the car back, but was apprehended on suspicion. Upon search of car, a bag was recovered, from which, 35 kgs of Poppy Husk was recovered. Subsequently, FIR (*supra*) was registered under Section 15 of the NDPS Act.

4. Learned Counsel for the appellant submits that he is not assailing the impugned judgment of conviction dated 21.08.2006 passed by learned Judge, Special Court, Mansa on merits and restricts his prayer to modification of the order on quantum of sentence dated 21.08.2006 to that of sentence already undergone by the appellant. Lastly, he submits that the sentence of the appellant was suspended after he has undergone near about 05 months of custody, out of total sentence of one year and his custody certificate dated 15.09.2009 is already taken on record.

5. *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 and as such, he does not deserve any leniency.

6. 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 35 kgs of poppy husk, which falls under the purview of Section 15 NDPS Act. As per order dated 22.09.2009 passed by this Court, the appellant has already undergone custody period of 04 months and 26 days, out of total sentence of one year, in the instant case.



Since there is no minimum punishment prescribed under Section 15 NDPS Act, for the non-commercial quantity 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.



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 18.12.2002 and the appellant has been suffering the agony of trial for last more than 22 years. Since his conviction, he has grown into law-abiding citizen and desires to live a peaceful life.

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

(i) The judgment dated 21.08.2006 passed by the learned Judge, Special Court, Mansa is upheld.

(ii) The order of sentence dated 21.08.2006 is modified to the extent that the sentence of rigorous imprisonment for one year and fine of Rs.5,000/- along with default mechanism awarded to the appellant is reduced to the period of sentence already undergone by him.

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

March 25, 2025
manisha

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

(i)	Whether speaking/reasoned	Yes/No
(ii)	Whether reportable	Yes/No