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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
CHANDIGARH

CRA-S-2884-SB-2011 (O&M)

Date of Decision: 19.02.2025

SAROOP DAN

...Appellant

V/S

STATE OF PUNJAB

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. G.S. Kaura, Advocate
for the appellant.

Mr. Nitesh Sharma, DAG Punja.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR J. (Oral)

1. Present appeal has been preferred by the appellant against the judgment and order of sentencedated 21.09.2011 passed by learned Judge, Special Court, Sri Muktsar Sahib vide which the appellant has been convicted under Section 18/61/85 of NDPS Act and sentenced as mentioned below:

Offence under Section	Sentence
18/61/85 of NDPS Act	Rigorous imprisonment for two years alongwith fine of Rs. 10,000/-, in default of payment of fine, further RI for three months

2. Learned counsel for the appellant contends that he is not assailing the impugned judgment of conviction dated 21.09.2011 passed by learned Judge, Special Court, Sri Muktsar Sahib on merits and restricts his prayer to modification of the order on quantum of sentence dated 21.09.2011 to that of sentence already undergone by the appellant as he has already undergone a period of 04 months and 17 days.



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3. 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, he does not deserve any leniency.

4. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the record with their able assistance.

5. 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.

6. 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 oppor-



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tunities 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.

7. 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. Moreover, learned counsel for the appellant has not assailed the judgment of conviction on merits, rather he has restricted his prayer only qua modification of quantum of sentence.

8. The FIR in the present case was lodged on 13.04.2007 and the appellant has been suffering the agony of trial since the last more than 17 years. As per the custody certificate, the appellant has undergone total sentence of 04 months and 17 days out of rigorous sentence of two years awarded to him.

9. Accordingly, 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.

10. Consequently, the present petition is disposed of in the following terms:-

- (i) The judgment of conviction dated 21.09.2011 passed by the learned Judge, Special Court, Sri Muktsar Sahib is upheld, however, the order of sentence dated 13.04.2007 is modified to the extent that the sentence of rigorous imprisonment for two years

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

(ii) Fine of Rs. 10,000/- imposed upon the appellant shall remain intact. The appellant is directed to deposit the amount of fine in the trial Court within one month from the date of receipt of certified copy of this order and in case of default of payment of fine, the appellant shall be liable to be taken into custody and made to undergo simple imprisonment for one month.

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

19.02.2025
Ajay Goswami

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned *Yes/No*
Whether reportable *Yes/No*