



CRM-A-1700-MA-2018

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

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CRM-A-1700-MA-2018
Date of Decision:08.07.2025

Harbhajan Singh

.....Applicant

Versus

Labh Singh

.....Non-applicant/Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE **SANJAY VASHISTH**

Present: None.

SANJAY VASHISTH, J.

1. Applicant – Harbhajan Singh has filed the present application under Section 378(4) Cr.P.C. (corresponding Section 419(4) of BNSS, 2023), seeking grant of leave to appeal against the judgment of acquittal dated 11.06.20186, passed by learned Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, SBS Nagar in criminal complaint case No. 111/2-A of 2014, instituted on 10.11.2014, under **Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881**, titled as ‘Harbhajan Singh Vs. Labh Singh’, whereby the complaint filed by the applicant herein was dismissed by acquitting the accused/respondent.

2. Shorn off the factual matrix of the present case, it is suffice to notice that in the recent mandate of law laid down by Hon’ble the Apex Court, in the case of **M/s Celestium Financial v. A. Gnanasekaran etc.** [Criminal Appeal Nos. 1868-70 of 2025, decided on 08.04.2025, reported as 2025 (3) RCR (Criminal) 208 : Law Finder Doc Id # 2737710 : 2025 SCC OnLine SC 1320], their Lordships’ have answered the issue in affirmative that whether an appeal would be maintainable under the proviso to Section 372 Cr.P.C. (corresponding Section 413 of BNSS, 2023), against an order of acquittal passed in a case instituted upon a private complaint, by treating the complainant in such a proceeding as a ‘victim’ within the meaning ascribed to the term under Section 2(wa) of the Cr.P.-C.



3. After encapsulating in detail the provisions of Sections 2(d), (n) & (wa), 24, 200, 372, 377, 378, 386 of the Cr.P.C.; Sections 138, 139, 141, 142, 143 and 147 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881; and the earlier view point of the Hon'ble Supreme Court taken in the case of Mallikarjun Kodagali (dead) represented through Legal representative v. State of Karnataka, (2019) 2 SCC 752, an ongoing debate whether the right of the victim to file an appeal against acquittal in a complaint case would fall under Section 372 or Section 378(4) of Cr.P.C., has been put to rest. Succinctly, in **Celestium Financial's case (supra)** it has been held that the 'victim' has a right to file an appeal under Section 372 of Cr.P.C. before the Court of Sessions.

4. It is apposite to mention here that the judgment in the case of **Celestium Financial (supra)** has been followed and relied upon by this Court in the case of M/s Associated Road Carriers Limited v. Manjit Singh and others (CRM-A-885-MA-2013, decided on 07.07.2025) as well as by a Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in the case of Satish Kumar v. Jugal Kishor (CRM-A-2700-MA-2018, decided on 02.07.2025).

5. Having gone through the recent mandate of Hon'ble the Apex Court in **Celestium Financial's case (supra)**, and the view taken by this Court in the case of **M/s Associated Road Carriers Limited (supra)** as well as by a Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in the case of **Satish Kumar (supra)**, there exists no ground to take a different view in the present case.

6. Accordingly, the present application under Section 378(4) Cr.P.C. is disposed of by directing the learned Sessions Judge, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar to treat the present leave to appeal as an appeal filed under Section 372 of the Cr.P.C. and entrust the same to any appropriate Court to try the same. The concerned Court shall decide the appeal on merits as per law, as expeditiously as possible.

Since similar directions are being passed by this Court in number of cases, the concerned Appellate Court need not to adhere to the



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delay aspect, if any, involved in the case, for the purpose of considering the issue raised in the appeal and its disposal on merit.

- 7. The Registry is directed to transmit copy of this order alongwith complete paperbook and the record of the case to the learned Sessions Judge,Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, forthwith.
- 8. Disposed of accordingly.
- 9. Pending miscellaneous application(s), if any, also stands disposed of.

(SANJAY VASHISTH)
JUDGE

08.07.2025
rashmi

<i>Whether speaking/reasoned</i>	<i>Yes/no</i>
<i>Whether reportable</i>	<i>yes/No</i>