

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

FAO-3232-2009 (O&M)

AMARJIT KAUR & ORS.

.....Appellants

vs.

BHUPINDER SINGH & ORS.

.....Respondents

Reserved on:- 04.02.2025

Pronounced on:- 09.02.2026

Uploaded on :- 09.02.2026

Whether only the operative part of the judgment is pronounced?

NO

Whether full judgment is pronounced?

YES

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE SUDEEPTI SHARMA

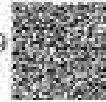
Present: Mr. Manish Kumar Singla, Advocate
for the appellants.

Mr. Ravinder Arora, Advocate
for respondent No.3-Insurance Company.

SUDEEPTI SHARMA J.

1. The present appeal has been preferred against the award dated 12.03.2009 passed by the learned Motor Accident Claims Tribunal, Patiala in the claim petition filed under Section 166 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (for short, 'the Tribunal') for enhancement of compensation granted to the claimants to the tune of Rs.6,51,000/- along with interest @ 7.5% per annum, on account of death of Baldev Singh in a Motor Vehicular Accident, occurred on 13.11.2006.

2. As sole issue for determination in the present appeal is confined to quantum of compensation awarded by the learned Tribunal, a detailed narration of the facts of the case is not required to be reproduced here for the sake of brevity.

**SUBMISSIONS OF LEARNED COUNSEL FOR THE PARTIES**

3. The learned counsel for the claimants-appellants contends that the amount assessed by the learned Tribunal is on the lower side and deserves to be enhanced. Therefore, he prays that the present appeal be allowed and amount of compensation be enhanced as per latest law.

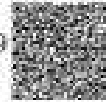
4. Per contra, learned counsel for respondent No.3, however, vehemently argues that the award has rightly been passed and the amount of compensation, as assessed by the learned Tribunal has rightly been granted. Therefore, they pray for dismissal of the appeal.

5. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the whole record of this case with their able assistance.

SETTLED LAW ON COMPENSATION

6. Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of **Sarla Verma Vs. Delhi Transport Corporation and Another [(2009) 6 Supreme Court Cases 121]**, laid down the law on assessment of compensation and the relevant paras of the same are as under:-

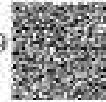
“30. Though in some cases the deduction to be made towards personal and living expenses is calculated on the basis of units indicated in Trilok Chandra, the general practice is to apply standardised deductions. Having a considered several subsequent decisions of this Court, we are of the view that where the deceased was married, the deduction towards personal and living expenses of the deceased, should be one-third (1/3rd) where the number of dependent family members is 2 to 3, one-fourth (1/4th) where the number of dependent family members is 4 to 6,



and one-fifth (1/5th) where the number of dependent family members exceeds six.

31. Where the deceased was a bachelor and the claimants are the parents, the deduction follows a different principle. In regard to bachelors, normally, 50% is deducted as personal and living expenses, because it is assumed that a bachelor would tend to spend more on himself. Even otherwise, there is also the possibility of his getting married in a short time, in which event the contribution to the parent(s) and siblings is likely to be cut drastically. Further, subject to evidence to the contrary, the father is likely to have his own income and will not be considered as a dependant and the mother alone will be considered as a dependant. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, brothers and sisters will not be considered as dependants, because they will either be independent and earning, or married, or be dependent on the father.

32. Thus even if the deceased is survived by parents and siblings, only the mother would be considered to be a dependant, and 50% would be treated as the personal and living expenses of the bachelor and 50% as the contribution to the family. However, where the family of the bachelor is large and dependent on the income of the deceased, as in a case where he has a widowed mother and large number of younger non-earning sisters or brothers, his personal and living expenses may be



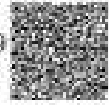
restricted to one-third and contribution to the family will be taken as two-third.

* * * * *

42. *We therefore hold that the multiplier to be used should be as mentioned in Column (4) of the table above (prepared by applying Susamma Thomas³, Trilok Chandra and Charlie), which starts with an operative multiplier of 18 (for the age groups of 15 to 20 and 21 to 25 years), reduced by one unit for every five years, that is M-17 for 26 to 30 years, M-16 for 31 to 35 years, M-15 for 36 to 40 years, M-14 for 41 to 45 years, and M-13 for 46 to 50 years, then reduced by two units for every five years, that is, M-11 for 51 to 55 years, M-9 for 56 to 60 years, M-7 for 61 to 65 years and M-5 for 66 to 70 years.*

7. Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of **National Insurance Company Ltd. Vs. Pranay Sethi & Ors. [(2017) 16 SCC 680]** has clarified the law under Sections 166, 163-A and 168 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, on the following aspects:-

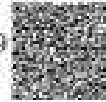
- (A) Deduction of personal and living expenses to determine multiplicand;
- (B) Selection of multiplier depending on age of deceased;
- (C) Age of deceased on basis for applying multiplier;
- (D) Reasonable figures on conventional heads, namely, loss of estate, loss of consortium and funeral expenses, with escalation;



(E) Future prospects for all categories of persons and for different ages: with permanent job; self-employed or fixed salary.

The relevant portion of the judgment is reproduced as under:-

*“52. As far as the **conventional heads** are concerned, we find it difficult to agree with the view expressed in Rajesh². It has granted Rs.25,000 towards funeral expenses, Rs 1,00,000 towards loss of consortium and Rs 1,00,000 towards loss of care and guidance for minor children. The head relating to loss of care and minor children does not exist. Though Rajesh refers to Santosh Devi, it does not seem to follow the same. The conventional and traditional heads, needless to say, cannot be determined on percentage basis because that would not be an acceptable criterion. Unlike determination of income, the said heads have to be quantified. Any quantification must have a reasonable foundation. There can be no dispute over the fact that price index, fall in bank interest, escalation of rates in many a field have to be noticed. The court cannot remain oblivious to the same. There has been a thumb rule in this aspect. Otherwise, there will be extreme difficulty in determination of the same and unless the thumb rule is applied, there will be immense variation lacking any kind of consistency as a consequence of which, the orders passed by the tribunals and courts are likely to be unguided. Therefore, we think it seemly to fix reasonable*

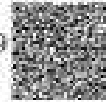


sums. It seems to us that reasonable figures on conventional heads, namely, loss of estate, loss of consortium and funeral expenses should be Rs.15,000, Rs.40,000 and Rs.15,000 respectively. The principle of revisiting the said heads is an acceptable principle. But the revisit should not be fact-centric or quantum-centric. We think that it would be condign that the amount that we have quantified should be enhanced on percentage basis in every three years and the enhancement should be at the rate of 10% in a span of three years. We are disposed to hold so because that will bring in consistency in respect of those heads.

** * * * **

59.3. While determining the income, an addition of 50% of actual salary to the income of the deceased towards future prospects, where the deceased had a permanent job and was below the age of 40 years, should be made. The addition should be 30%, if the age of the deceased was between 40 to 50 years. In case the deceased was between the age of 50 to 60 years, the addition should be 15%. Actual salary should be read as actual salary less tax.

59.4. In case the deceased was self-employed (or) on a fixed salary, an addition of 40% of the established income should be the warrant where the deceased was below the age of 40 years. An addition of 25% where the deceased was between the age of 40 to 50 years and 10% where the



deceased was between the age of 50 to 60 years should be regarded as the necessary method of computation. The established income means the income minus the tax component.

59.5. For determination of the multiplicand, the deduction for personal and living expenses, the tribunals and the courts shall be guided by paras 30 to 32 of Sarla Verma⁴ which we have reproduced hereinbefore.

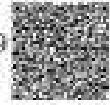
59.6. The selection of multiplier shall be as indicated in the Table in Sarla Verma¹ read with para 42 of that judgment.

59.7. The age of the deceased should be the basis for applying the multiplier.

59.8. Reasonable figures on conventional heads, namely, loss of estate, loss of consortium and funeral expenses should be Rs 15,000, Rs 40,000 and Rs 15,000 respectively. The aforesaid amounts should be enhanced at the rate of 10% in every three years.”

8. Hon’ble Supreme Court in the case of ***Magma General Insurance Company Limited Vs. Nanu Ram alias Chuhru Ram & Others [2018(18) SCC 130]*** after considering ***Sarla Verma (supra)*** and ***Pranay Sethi (Supra)*** has settled the law regarding consortium. Relevant paras of the same are reproduced as under:-

“21. A Constitution Bench of this Court in Pranay Sethi² dealt with the various heads under which compensation is to be awarded in a death case. One of these heads is loss

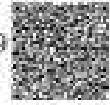


of consortium. In legal parlance, "consortium" is a compendious term which encompasses "spousal consortium", "parental consortium", and "filial consortium". The right to consortium would include the company, care, help, comfort, guidance, solace and affection of the deceased, which is a loss to his family. With respect to a spouse, it would include sexual relations with the deceased spouse.

*21.1. **Spousal consortium** is generally defined as rights pertaining to the relationship of a husband-wife which allows compensation to the surviving spouse for loss of "company, society, cooperation, affection, and aid of the other in every conjugal relation".*

*21.2. **Parental consortium** is granted to the child upon the premature death of a parent, for loss of "parental aid, protection, affection, society, discipline, guidance and training".*

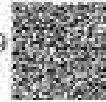
*21.3. **Filial consortium** is the right of the parents to compensation in the case of an accidental death of a child. An accident leading to the death of a child causes great shock and agony to the parents and family of the deceased. The greatest agony for a parent is to lose their child during their lifetime. Children are valued for their love, affection, companionship and their role in the family unit.*



22. Consortium is a special prism reflecting changing norms about the status and worth of actual relationships. Modern jurisdictions world-over have recognised that the value of a child's consortium far exceeds the economic value of the compensation awarded in the case of the death of a child. Most jurisdictions therefore permit parents to be awarded compensation under loss of consortium on the death of a child. The amount awarded to the parents is a compensation for loss of the love, affection, care and companionship of the deceased child.

23. The Motor Vehicles Act is a beneficial legislation aimed at providing relief to the victims or their families, in cases of genuine claims. In case where a parent has lost their minor child, or unmarried son or daughter, the parents are entitled to be awarded loss of consortium under the head of filial consortium. Parental consortium is awarded to children who lose their parents in motor vehicle accidents under the Act. A few High Courts have awarded compensation on this count. However, there was no clarity with respect to the principles on which compensation could be awarded on loss of filial consortium.

24. The amount of compensation to be awarded as consortium will be governed by the principles of awarding compensation under "loss of consortium" as laid down in Pranay Sethi². In the present case, we deem it appropriate

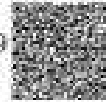


to award the father and the sister of the deceased, an amount of Rs 40,000 each for loss of filial consortium.

9. A perusal of the impugned award reveals that the deceased was stated to be 35 years of age at the time of the accident, which fact stands duly proved from the MLR Ex.C8 of the deceased, however, the learned tribunal erred in calculating the age of the deceased as 36 years.

10. It is settled proposition of law as held by Hon'ble the Supreme Court in ***Sunita Vs. Vinod Singh 2025 INSC 366*** wherein the Hon'ble Apex Court held that in absence of material indicating to the contrary, there is no inhibition to accept the age of deceased as per post mortem report. The relevant extract of the same is reproduced as under:-

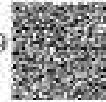
“11. The amount arrived at by the High Court of the monthly income being Rs.5,819/- (Rupees Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Nineteen) as against the claim of Rs.10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand) appears to be on the lower side as the total earning of the deceased from family pension itself ought to have been considered which itself would come to Rs.5,137/- (Rupees Five Thousand One Hundred and Thirty-Seven) to which the notional wages as a home maker had to be added, which we find is reasonable as has been taken by the High Court at Rs.2,500/- (Rupees Two Thousand Five Hundred). Thus, the monthly income would come to Rs.7,637/- (Rupees Seven Thousand Six Hundred and Thirty-Seven), which we are inclined to round off at Rs.7,000/- (Rupees Seven Thousand) Coming to the multiplier factor which is dependent on the age, there is sufficient indication that the deceased was aged about 45 years as per the Post-Mortem Report which is a scientific assessment of the age of the deceased. The purported discrepancy in the age with regard to that of the claimant and the deceased is



*erroneous for the reason that when the claim was filed, appellant no.1 was aged about 30 years and a difference of 15 years between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law cannot be said to be totally devoid of reality given the contextual and prevalent societal norms in vogue at the time of marriage of the deceased which could have been at least 25 to 30 years prior to her death i.e., in or about the 1970s. **Moreover, in the absence of material indicating to the contrary, there is no inhibition to accept the age of the deceased as per the Post-Mortem Report.** Thus, we are inclined to grant her the benefit of multiplier of 14 taking her age as 45 years. With regard to the loss of love and affection, Pranay Sethi (supra) grants Rs.40,000/- (Rupees Forty Thousand) per head with escalation of 10% every three years for loss of consortium which has been interpreted in Magma General Insurance Co. Ltd. v Nanu Ram, (2018) 18 SCC 130 to include spousal, parental, and filial consortium. Thus, there being five claimants the amount shall be [Rs.48,000/- x 5] which comes to Rs.2,40,000/- (Rupees Two Lakhs and Forty Thousand) payable under the head of loss of love and affection.”*

11. In view of the above, referred to judgment, the age of deceased Baldev Singh is ascertained as 35 years at the time of accident.

12. Further perusal of the award shows that the appellants/claimants had deposed before the learned Tribunal that the deceased was a by profession running the business of Milk dairy under the name of Punjab Milk Dairy in Tripuri town Patiala and was earning Rs 15,000 per month. However, no documentary evidence was produced to substantiate the said income. In the absence of such proof, the learned Tribunal assessed the monthly income of the deceased at ₹4,000 per month.

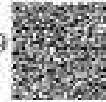


13. It is pertinent to note that the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Kubrabibi and others Vs. Oriental Insurance Company Ltd. and others, 2023 LiveLaw (SC) 697*, has held that in cases where compensation is sought and there is no definite proof of income, particularly when the deceased belongs to the unorganised sector, the social status, nature of work, and overall circumstances of the case must be taken into consideration. Strict proof of income is not mandatory in such circumstances, and a reasonable notional income is required to be assessed.

14. The relevant paras of *Kubrabibi's case (supra)* are extracted as under:-

“It is unfortunate that in a case of the present nature, the High Court while assessing the evidence available on record, has sought to seek strict evidence with regard to the income of the deceased. When the wife and children of the deceased were before the Court, they would not be in a position to secure all evidence when the deceased earning member was not in secure job. Despite the same we note that in the instant case, a perusal of the judgment and award passed by the MACT, would indicate that an effort was made to examine the owner of the two wheeler repair shop where the deceased was said to be working. The High Court has discarded the same on the ground that no documents, to 2 indicate that he is the owner of the shop and he had employed three persons, has been produced.

In a matter of the present nature where the compensation is sought and even in the absence of definite proof of the income, the social status of the deceased is to be kept in perspective where such persons are employed in unorganized sector and the notional income in any event is required to be taken into consideration. The fact that the deceased had three dependents to be cared for and had



claimed that he was working as a mechanic, the amount payable to an unskilled labour, cannot be the basis and in that circumstance when he was a skilled person, the daily income at Rs.200/- per day in any event could have been taken even if the income from jeep transport business was discarded for want of documents. More so in a circumstance, where the MACT had referred to the evidence available on record and then arrived at its conclusion, the re-appreciation of evidence by the High Court is without being sensitive to nature of lis before it.”

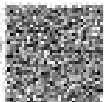
15. In the present case, the deceased was 35 years old, stated to be running the business of milk dairy and had 5 dependents to support. Considering the nature of employment, age, social background, and prevailing wages at the relevant time, this Court is of the view that the learned Tribunal erred in assessing the monthly income of the deceased at Rs 4000, which is on the lower side. In view of the overall circumstances, the monthly income of the deceased is reasonably assessed at ₹ 9000/- per month.

16. The learned Tribunal has correctly awarded Rs.1,24,000/- and further awarded Rs.3100/- as spent upon medical test by pursuing Ex.C3 to Ex.C23, therefore, not require the interference of the Court.

17. A further perusal of the award reveals that the learned Tribunal committed an error in deducting 1/3rd towards personal and living expenses, whereas, considering the age of the deceased and the number of dependents. Deduction of 1/4 should have been made in accordance with the settled principles of law.

18. Additionally, the learned Tribunal has failed to grant any amount towards future prospects, which is contrary to the law laid down by the

Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Pranay Sethi's case (supra)**, and subsequent



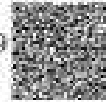
judgments. The claimants are therefore entitled to addition towards future prospects.

19. Moreover, no amount was awarded under the conventional heads of loss of estate and loss of consortium and also meager amount awarded under the heads of Funeral Expenses. Therefore, award require indulgence of this Court.

CONCLUSION

20. In view of the law laid down by the Hon’ble Supreme Court in the above referred to judgments, the present appeal is allowed. The award dated 12.03.2009 is modified accordingly. The appellants-claimants are entitled to enhanced compensation as per the calculations made hereunder:-

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Heads</i>	<i>Compensation Awarded</i>
1	Monthly Income	Rs.9,000/-
2	Future prospects @ 40%	Rs.3,600/- (40% of 9000)
3	Deduction towards personal expenditure 1/4	Rs.3,150/- (12600 X 1/4)
4	Total Income	Rs.9,450/- (12600-3150)
5	Multiplier	16
6	Annual Dependency	Rs.18,14,400/- (9450 X 12 X 16)
7	Loss of Estate	Rs.15,000/-
8	Funeral Expenses	Rs.15,000/-
9	Loss of Consortium Parental : 2 x 40,000 Spousal : 1 x 40,000 Filial : 2 x 40,000	Rs.2,00,000/-
10	Motorcycle repair	Rs.5,000/-
11	Medical expenses	Rs.1,27,100/-
12	Total	Rs.21,76,500/-
13	Deduction Amount Awarded by the Tribunal	Rs.6,51,000/-
14	Enhanced amount	Rs.15,25,500/- (21,76,500-6,51,000)



21. So far as the interest part is concerned, as held by Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Dara Singh @ Dhara Banjara Vs. Shyam Singh Varma** 2019 ACJ 3176 and **R.Valli and Others VS. Tamil Nandu State Transport Corporation (2022) 5 Supreme Court Cases 107**, the appellants-claimants are granted the interest @ 9% per annum on the enhanced amount from the date of filing of claim petition till the date of its realization.

22. The respondent No.3-Insurance Company is directed to deposit the enhanced amount along with interest at the rate of 9% with the Tribunal within a period of two months from the date of receipt of copy of this judgment. The Tribunal is directed to disburse the same to the appellants-claimants in their bank account as per ratio settled in award dated 12.03.2009. The appellants-claimants are directed to furnish their bank account details to the Tribunal.

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

09.02.2026

Ayub/Saahil

(SUDEEPTI SHARMA)
JUDGE

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