



FAO-3437-2025

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

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Balwant Kaur and anr.

.....Appellants

Vs.

Nirmal Singh and others

.....Respondents

Date of Reserve: 06.02.2026

Date of Pronouncement: 19.02.2026

Uploaded on:- 20.02.2026

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. Varun Sharma, Advocate
for the appellant.

Mr. Punit Jain, Advocate
for respondent No.3-Insurance Company.

SUDEEPTI SHARMA J.

1. The present appeal has been preferred against the award dated 20.02.2025 passed by the learned Motor Accident Claims Tribunal, Kapurthala 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.08,20,000/- along with interest @ 7% per annum, on account of death of Major Singh in a Motor Vehicular Accident, occurred on 30.12.2019.

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.



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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 compensation be enhanced as per latest law.

4. Per contra, learned counsel for respondents, 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 prays for dismissal of the appeal.

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

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



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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 d 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.

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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.



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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 deceased- Major Singh was a minor child aged merely 14 years at the time of the accident. The learned Tribunal, however, fell in error in assessing his notional income at a meager sum of Rs.50,000/- per annum.

10. It is by now a well-settled and consistently reiterated principle of law that the death or permanent disability of a minor child in a motor vehicle accident



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cannot be equated with that of a non-earning individual for the purposes of computing compensation. The reason is obvious: a child, by virtue of tender age, is not engaged in gainful employment and, therefore, any rigid categorization as a “non-earner” would not only be artificial but would also defeat the very object of just compensation under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

11. In such cases, the proper course for determination of compensation under the head of “loss of income” is to adopt, at the very least, the minimum wages notified for a skilled worker in the State concerned at the relevant time. The Hon’ble Supreme Court has, in categorical terms, laid down this principle in ***Kajal v. Jagdish Chand & Ors. [(2020) 4 SCC 413]*** and ***Baby Sakshi Greola v. Manzoor Ahmad Simon & Anr. [2024 SCC OnLine SC 3692]***, wherein it was held that a potential of minor and future prospects cannot be curtailed by treating him/her as a non-earner, and the yardstick of minimum wages of a skilled worker is the just and reasonable benchmark.

12. The same view was recently reiterated in ***Hitesh Nagjibhai Patel Vs. Bababhai Nagjibhai Rabari & Anr, 2025 INSC 1070***, the relevant portion of the same is reproduced as under:-

“9. On the aspect of monthly income of the minor appellant, we are inclined to interfere with the judgment and order of the Courts below. In the present case, it is evident that the Courts below have failed to take into account the monthly income of the appellant while determining the quantum of compensation. It is now a well-entrenched and consistently reiterated principle of law that a minor child who suffers death or permanent disability in a motor vehicle accident, cannot be placed in the same category as a non-earning individual for the purposes of assessing the amount of compensation because the



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*child was not engaged in gainful employment at the time of the accident. In such a case, the computation of compensation under the head of loss of income ought to be made by adopting, at the very least, the minimum wages payable to a skilled workman as notified for the relevant period in the respective State where the cause of action arises. The said observation was rendered by this Court, in **Kajal v. Jagdish Chand and Ors., (2020) 4 SCC 413**, and **Baby Sakshi Greola v. Manzoor Ahmad Simon and Anr., 2024 SCC Online SC 3692**.*

10. Adverting to the facts at hand, the appellant was an 8- year-old child at the time of the accident. In view of the above exposition of law, we must advert to the prevailing minimum wages, which for the skilled ones, as in the year of accident, i.e., 2012, in Gujarat would be Rs.227.85p. per day, therefore, in the interest of justice, we deem it appropriate to determine the income of the appellant as Rs.6,835.5p. per month, rounding off to Rs.6,836/- per month.”

13. Applying the aforesaid ratio to the present case, the monthly notional income of the deceased minor, Major Singh, is accordingly assessed at **Rs.13,000/- per month**, being the minimum wages of a skilled worker as notified for the relevant period in the State of Punjab.

14. It is revealed that the learned Tribunal has erred applying the multiplier of 15 instead of 18. The said approach is contrary to the settled position of law laid down by the Hon’ble Supreme Court. In the recent judgment of **Baby Sakshi Greola vs. Manzoor Ahmad Simon and another, Law Finder Doc Id # 2672826** applied a multiplier of 18 in the case of a child aged seven years, taking into consideration the age of the minor. The relevant portion of the same is reproduced as under:-



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“48. Consistent with the approach adopted by this Court in the cases of Kajal (supra) and Master Ayush (supra), we deem it appropriate to enhance the compensation to be awarded under this head. The minimum wages paid to a skilled worker on a full-time basis in the State of Delhi at the time of the accident was Rs. 4,358/-.

Keeping the appellant's age in mind, the multiplier in the present case should be 18. Accordingly, the compensation to be awarded to the appellant under this head shall be enhanced to Rs. $4,358 \times 12 \times 18 =$ Rs. 9,41,328/- and rounded it off to Rs.9,42,000/-.”

15. The ratio laid down therein squarely applies to the facts of the present case. Therefore, considering the age of the minor and judgment referred to above the correct multiplier should be **18**.

16. A further perusal of the award reveals that the learned Tribunal has erred in not adding any amount towards future prospects to the income of the deceased. Therefore, as per the settled law on compensation **40%** is to be added as future prospects.

17. A further perusal of the award reveals that the learned Tribunal has erred in not deducting anything for personal expenditure. Considering the facts that the deceased was unmarried, 1/2 is to be deducted towards personal expenditure.



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18. A further perusal of the award reveals that meager amount is granted by the learned Tribunal under the heads of loss of estate, funeral expenses and loss of consortium. Therefore, the award requires indulgence of this Court.

RELIEF

19. In view of the above, the present appeal is **allowed** and award dated 20.02.2025 is modified. Accordingly, as per the settled principles of law as laid down by Hon’ble Supreme Court as mentioned above, the appellant-claimant is held entitled to the enhanced amount of compensation as calculated below:-

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Heads</i>	<i>Compensation Awarded</i>
1	Monthly Income	Rs.13000/-
2	Future prospects @ 40%	Rs.5200/- (40% of 13000)
3	Deduction towards personal expenditure 1/2	Rs.9100/- (18200 X 1/2)
4.	Total Income	Rs.9100/-(18200-9100)
4	Multiplier	18
5	Annual Dependency	Rs.19,65,600/- (9100X12X18)
6	Loss of Estate	Rs.18,150/-
7	Funeral Expenses	Rs.18,150/-
8	Loss of Consortium	Rs.96,800/-
	Filial : Rs. 48,400/-x2	
	Total Compensation	Rs.20,98,700/-
	Deduction Amount Awarded by the Tribunal	Rs.8,20,000/-
	Enhanced amount	Rs.12,78,700/- (2098700-820000)

20. 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**



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Supreme Court Cases 107, the amount so calculated shall carry an interest @ 9% per annum from the date of filing of the claim petition, till the date of realization.

21. Respondent No.3-Insurance Company is directed to deposit the enhanced amount along with interest 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 enhanced amount of compensation along with interest to the appellant-claimant.

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

19.02.2026

Gaurav Arora

(SUDEEPTI SHARMA)
JUDGE

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