

Sumit Rana & Ors vs State & Anr on 9 February, 2024

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

CRL.M.C. 1054/2024

SUMIT RANA & ORS.

Through:

STATE & ANR.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMIT MAHAJAN

% 09.02.2024 CRL.M.A. 4203/2024 (for exemption)

1. Exemptions allowed, subject to all just exceptions.

2. The application stands disposed of.

3. The present petition is filed under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 ('CrPC') seeking quashing of FIR No. 66/2019 dated 03.03.2019, for offences punishable under Sections 323/324/377/498A/406/34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 ('IPC'), registered at Police Station Bhajan Pura, including all consequential proceedings arising therefrom. The said FIR was registered on a complaint filed by Respondent No. 2.

4. It is averred that the marriage between Petitioner No.1 and This is a digitally signed order.

The authenticity of the order can be re-verified from Delhi High Court Order Portal by scanning the QR code shown above. The Order is downloaded from the DHC Server on 13/02/2024 at 22:23:25 Respondent No.2 was solemnized on 10.12.2017 as per Hindu rites and rituals. No child was born out of the said wedlock. Thereafter, due to matrimonial discord, some misunderstandings took place between the parties, due to which the petitioner and Respondent No. 2 have been living separately.

5. Subsequently, Respondent No.2 made a complaint to the ACP, Crime Against Women Cell, against the Petitioner No. 1 and his family members, alleging that she was subjected to cruelty by them, which later culminated into the aforementioned FIR No. 66/2019. The learned counsel for the petitioners submits that charge sheet has been filed only against the petitioners in the case arising out of the said FIR.

6. The present petition is filed on the ground that the matter is amicably settled between the parties with the intervention of the Delhi High Court Mediation and Conciliation Centre, on their own free will, without any coercion, pressure or undue influence. Respondent No.2 and the Petitioner No. 1 have already obtained a decree of divorce by mutual consent, and they intend to live their future lives peacefully.

7. In terms of the settlement dated 07.08.2023, out of the total amount of 17,50,000/-, an amount of 12,00,000/- (Twelve Lakhs only) already stands paid to Respondent No. 2 and balance settlement amount of 5,50,000/- (Five Lakhs and Fifty thousand only) is handed over in Court today by way of Demand Draft No. 997180 dated 10.01.2024 drawn on State Bank of India.

8. The parties are present before this Court in person and have been duly identified by the Investigating Officer.

9. Respondent No.2, on being asked, states that she does not wish to pursue the proceedings arising out of the present FIR, and has no objection if the proceedings are quashed.

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10. Offences under Sections 323/406 of the IPC are compoundable whereas offences under Sections 324/377/498A of the IPC are non-compoundable.

11. It is well settled that the High Court while exercising its powers under Section 482 of the CrPC can compound offences which are non-compoundable under the Code on the ground that there is a compromise between the accused and the complainant. The Hon'ble Apex Court has laid down parameters and guidelines for High Court while accepting settlement and quashing the proceedings. In the case of Narinder Singh & Ors. v. State of Punjab & Anr. : (2014) 6 SCC 466, the Hon'ble Supreme Court had observed as under :-

"29. In view of the aforesaid discussion, we sum up and lay down the following principles by which the High Court would be guided in giving adequate treatment to the settlement between the parties and exercising its power under Section 482 of the Code while accepting the settlement and quashing the proceedings or refusing to accept the settlement with direction to continue with the criminal proceedings:

29.1. Power conferred under Section 482 of the Code is to be distinguished from the power which lies in the Court to compound the offences under Section 320 of the Code. No doubt, under Section 482 of the Code, the High Court has inherent power to quash the criminal proceedings even in those cases which are not compoundable, where the parties have settled the matter between themselves. However, this power is to be exercised sparingly and with caution.

29.2. When the parties have reached the settlement and on that basis petition for quashing the criminal proceedings is filed, the guiding factor in such cases would be to secure:

(i) ends of justice, or This is a digitally signed order.

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(ii) to prevent abuse of the process of any court.

While exercising the power the High Court is to form an opinion on either of the aforesaid two objectives.

29.3. Such a power is not to be exercised in those prosecutions which involve heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. Such offences are not private in nature and have a serious impact on society. Similarly, for the offences alleged to have been committed under special statute like the Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity are not to be quashed merely on the basis of compromise between the victim and the offender.

29.4. On the other hand, those criminal cases having overwhelmingly and predominantly civil character, particularly those arising out of commercial transactions or arising out of matrimonial relationship or family disputes should be quashed when the parties have resolved their entire disputes among themselves.

29.5. While exercising its powers, the High Court is to examine as to whether the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal cases would put the accused to great oppression and prejudice and extreme injustice would be caused to him by not quashing the criminal cases."

(emphasis supplied)

12. Similarly, in the case of Parbatbhai Aahir & Ors. v. State of Gujarat & Anr. : (2017) 9 SCC 641, the Hon'ble Supreme Court had observed as under :-

"16. The broad principles which emerge from the precedents on the subject, may be summarised in the following propositions:

This is a digitally signed order.

The authenticity of the order can be re-verified from Delhi High Court Order Portal by scanning the QR code shown above. The Order is downloaded from the DHC Server on 13/02/2024 at 22:23:25 16.1. Section 482 preserves the inherent powers of the High Court to prevent an abuse of the process of any court or to secure the ends of justice. The provision does not confer new powers. It only recognises and preserves powers which inhere in the High Court.

16.2. The invocation of the jurisdiction of the High Court to quash a first information report or a criminal proceeding on the ground that a settlement has been arrived at between the offender and the victim is not the same as the invocation of jurisdiction for the purpose of compounding an offence. While compounding an offence, the power of the court is governed by the provisions of Section 320 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The power to quash under Section 482 is attracted even if the offence is non-compoundable.

16.3. In forming an opinion whether a criminal proceeding or complaint should be quashed in exercise of its jurisdiction under Section 482, the High Court must evaluate whether the ends of justice would justify the exercise of the inherent power.

16.4. While the inherent power of the High Court has a wide ambit and plenitude it has to be exercised (i) to secure the ends of justice, or

(ii) to prevent an abuse of the process of any court.

16.5. The decision as to whether a complaint or first information report should be quashed on the ground that the offender and victim have settled the dispute, revolves ultimately on the facts and circumstances of each case and no exhaustive elaboration of principles can be formulated.

16.6. In the exercise of the power under Section 482 and while dealing with a plea that the dispute has been settled, the High Court must have due regard to the nature and gravity of the offence. Heinous and serious offences involving mental depravity or offences such as murder, rape and dacoity cannot This is a digitally signed order.

The authenticity of the order can be re-verified from Delhi High Court Order Portal by scanning the QR code shown above. The Order is downloaded from the DHC Server on 13/02/2024 at 22:23:25 appropriately be quashed though the victim or the family of the victim have settled the dispute. Such offences are, truly speaking, not private in nature but have a serious impact upon society. The decision to continue with the trial in such cases is founded on the overriding element of public interest in punishing persons for serious offences. 16.7. As distinguished from serious offences,

there may be criminal cases which have an overwhelming or predominant element of a civil dispute. They stand on a distinct footing insofar as the exercise of the inherent power to quash is concerned.

16.8. Criminal cases involving offences which arise from commercial, financial, mercantile, partnership or similar transactions with an essentially civil flavour may in appropriate situations fall for quashing where parties have settled the dispute.

16.9. In such a case, the High Court may quash the criminal proceeding if in view of the compromise between the disputants, the possibility of a conviction is remote and the continuation of a criminal proceeding would cause oppression and prejudice; and 16.10. There is yet an exception to the principle set out in propositions 16.8. and 16.9. above. Economic offences involving the financial and economic well-being of the State have implications which lie beyond the domain of a mere dispute between private disputants. The High Court would be justified in declining to quash where the offender is involved in an activity akin to a financial or economic fraud or misdemeanour. The consequences of the act complained of upon the financial or economic system will weigh in the balance."

(emphasis supplied)

13. It is not in doubt that the offence under Section 377 of IPC is a heinous offence involving mental depravity and cannot be quashed though the victim has settled the dispute. Such offences, in true sense, are not private in nature.

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14. The present case, however, arises out of matrimonial disputes and the allegation has been made by the wife against the husband. The complainant, who was present in person also, stated that the allegations were made on a misunderstanding and because of disputes which had arisen on account of matrimonial discord. The parties have decided to part ways and move ahead in their lives burying the acrimony they had against each other. Therefore, even though the offence under Section 377 in general cannot be termed as a private dispute but keeping in view the fact that the allegations are made by the wife against the husband, the same, in the present case, can be called as the personal / private dispute.

15. This Court, in cases CRL.M.C.830/2019 titled as Dinesh Kumar & Ors. v. State & Anr., CRL.M.C.1613/2019 titled as Anmol Katyal & Ors. v. State (NCT of Delhi) & Anr., CRL.M.C. 5216/2018 titled as Gajender Singh & Ors. v. State (NCT of Delhi) & Ors. and CRL.M.C. 4117/2018 titled as Joginder Singh Bote & Ors. v. NCT of Delhi & Anr., while exercising power under Section 482 of CrPC had quashed the FIRs registered for offences under Section 377 of the IPC on the basis of compromise entered into between the husband and the wife.

16. Keeping in view the nature of dispute and that the parties have amicably entered into a settlement, this Court feels that no useful purpose would be served by keeping the dispute alive and continuance of the proceedings would amount to abuse of the process of Court. I am of the opinion that this is a fit case to exercise discretionary jurisdiction under Section 482 of the CrPC.

17. However, keeping in mind the fact that the charge sheet This is a digitally signed order.

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18. In view of the above, FIR No. 66/2019 and all consequential proceedings arising therefrom are quashed, subject to payment of cost of 20,000/- by the petitioners, out of which 10,000/- is to be deposited with the Delhi Police Welfare Fund and 10,000/- is to be deposited with Delhi High Court Legal Service Committee.

19. The present petition is disposed of in the aforesaid terms.

AMIT MAHAJAN, J FEBRUARY 9, 2024 "SS"

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