

Paramjit Kaur Vs State of Punjab and Another

Court: High Court Of Punjab And Haryana At Chandigarh

Date of Decision: Oct. 11, 2007

Acts Referred: Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) â€” Section 498A

Hon'ble Judges: Ranjit Singh, J

Bench: Single Bench

Judgement

Ranjit Singh, J.

The petitioner, who is married sister-in-law of complainant (respondent No. 2) Amritpal Kaur has filed this petition,

seeking quashing of FIR, involving her for an offence u/s 498A IPC.

2. Amarbir Singh, brother of petitioner, married Amritpal Kaur @ Renu, respondent No. 2 on 10.3.2003. This FIR is registered on the basis of a

letter written by respondent No. 2 to S.S.P., Batala. Grievance raised is that she had given an earlier application, which was registered at No. 428

and was marked to DSP, Dera Baba Nanak, for investigation. It is stated that the complainant did not get justice and accordingly had filed another

application, demanding justice and for initiating proceedings against the persons referred to in the application.

Otherwise, in the complaint, it is

generally alleged that husband Amarbir Singh, mother-in-law Gurmeet Kaur, sister-in-law Paramjit Kaur (petitioner) were harassing respondent

No. 2 for not fulfilling the demand of dowry. Allegation also is that after marriage, when the complainant came to the village of her husband, 15 tola

of gold, one motor cycle make Passion and clothes for relatives were given as dowry. It is further alleged that from very first date, father-in-law,

mother-in-law, sister-in-law and husband started teasing the complainant on the pretext that these days motor cycle is given only by lowly placed

persons and that all the friends of Amarbir Singh got car as dowry in their marriages. Claiming that father of the complainant had spent lacs of

rupees in this marriage, it is stated that he died of cancer during April 2004. Grievance is that respondent No. 2 was brought to cremation ground

but was taken back from there only by her husband to her in-laws place. The motor cycle given in dowry is allegedly sold. The complainant also

complains that she was got aborted after her pregnancy. Allegation of beating is also made. It is also stated that in April 2005, a son, namely, Preet

Singh, was born to the complainant, who, at the time of lodging the FIR, was one and a half year old. As per the allegation, the complainant was

not permitted to take her child along, whenever she went to meet her parents. The relatives of the complainant also tried to intervene and explained

the things to the in-laws but they always avoided them.

3. Some articles at the time of birth of the child were statedly given, including, clothes for the newly born, though the in-laws were expecting a car.

Since the car was not given to them, they started troubling the complainant. Even on the death of uncle of the complainant, husband Amarbir had

accompanied her and while going back, took away their son from the Bhog ceremony itself. Other allegations of creating trouble for the

complainant made by in-laws are also referred in this complaint. The complainant claims that she had written letter in this regard to her brother.

Allegation of abuse by the husband to her brother on telephone on 23.8.2006 is made. The husband had further told her brother to take the

complainant away and that he would prefer to keep a servant instead. Having so spoken, the husband is alleged to have given slaps and asked the

complainant to go out of his house. When the brother of the complainant came to meet her, he was abused and demand of dowry was raised

besides stipulating that otherwise the complainant be taken away. Ultimately, it is stated that the complainant had been turned out from the house

after taking one and a half year old son that she is having. It is accordingly prayed that action be taken against all the persons mentioned in the FIR.

4. Noticing the fact that there was no specific allegation made against the petitioner, who is a married sister-in-law, notice in this case was issued to

the State. Service is complete. State has filed reply whereas no one has put in appearance on behalf of respondent No. 2.

5. In the reply filed by the State, it is conceded that the allegations made by respondent No. 2 were earlier got investigated by DSP, Dera Baba

Nanak, and nothing incriminating was found against the petitioner. The complaint filed by respondent No. 2 was accordingly ordered to be filed. It

is, however, denied that on the basis of same very allegation, SSP, Batala, without conducting any further investigation, has ordered registration of

this FIR. It is disclosed that upon receipt of the present complaint, opinion of ADA (Legal) was sought, who opined that offence u/s 498A IPC is

made out from the allegations contained in the FIR. Otherwise, the averments made in the petition that allegations are general and vague in nature is

denied in the reply filed by the State. Unlike, normal cases of this nature, the petitioner is alleged an offence u/s 498A alone. The position that

would emerge from the pleadings is that respondent No. 2 had filed this complaint, which was marked for investigation to DSP, Dera Baba

Nanak. It is conceded that DSP, Dera Baba Nanak, found that the allegations made in the FIR were not made out. This complaint was, thus, filed.

This complaint subsequently has been got revived on the basis of a letter written by respondent No. 2 to S.S.P., Batala. As is seen, the FIR u/s

498A IPC is registered only after obtaining the opinion of A.D.A. (legal), Batala.

6. Without going into any other ground, it may be seen if any allegation specific or otherwise is made against the petitioner, who is a married sister-

in-law. It is stated in the petition that the present petitioner is married for more than two years from the date of occurrence. This fact, however, is

denied for want of knowledge in the reply filed by the State. This fact, as such, is not specifically denied and, as such, is not in any dispute. If the

petitioner is a married sister-in-law of the complainant, it would be reasonable to assume that she would not be likely available at the house of her

parents to harass or maltreat or taunt the complainant. One can justifiably submit that there is no specific allegation made against the petitioner, who

concededly is married sister-in-law of the complainant. Detailed reference to the contents of the FIR is made above. It is vaguely mentioned in the

FIR that the petitioner alongwith her other relatives pressed the complainant for fulfilling the demand of dowry. It is then averred that the petitioner

alongwith mother-in-law, father-in-law and her husband started teasing the complainant for bringing car and more dowry and had allegedly

remarked that such dowry is given by lowly placed persons. Except for these two allegations made against the present petitioner, nothing else is

urged. No date, time or other details of the allegations is disclosed. There is no demand seen from the allegations made in the FIR. The allegations,

as standing against the petitioner, are not only vague but would not reveal an offence u/s 498A IPC against her.

7. There may be some allegations specifically standing against other co-accused, for which they are facing prosecution. The allegations, as made

against the present petitioner, would not be sufficient to indicate cruelty to bring her within the purview of an offence u/s 498A IPC. A perusal of

Section would show that gravamen of offence under the Section is subjecting a woman to cruelty. Cruelty for the purpose of Section is defined by

the explanation under the Section:

Explanation.- For the purpose of this Section, "cruelty" means:

(a) any willful conduct which is of such a nature as is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or to cause grave injury or danger to life, limb or

health (whether mental or physical) of the woman; or

(b) harassment of the woman where such harassment is with a view to coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for

any property or valuable security or is on account of failure by her or any person related to her to meet such demand.]

8. Accordingly, harassment of a woman has to be with a view to coerce her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any

property or valuable security. The allegation in the FIR would, in my view, would fall short of this requirement of law to bring home the offence

against the petitioner. In terms of the ratio of law laid down in State of Haryana and others Vs. Ch. Bhajan Lal and others, , one of the valid

grounds to quash FIR is that where no offence from the contents of the FIR is made out. The present case, in my considered view, would be

covered by this criteria as laid down by the Hon"ble Supreme Court in Bhajan Lal's case (supra). Accordingly, the petition is allowed. FIR No. 4

dated 25.1.2007 u/s 498A IPC, registered at Police Station Kotli Surat Malli, District Bhatinda, and the subsequent proceedings arising therefrom

are ordered to be quashed qua the petitioner. It is made clear that any expression of opinion be not construed as opinion on merits of the case qua

the remaining accused being prosecuted in the same FIR. Proceedings qua them would continue without any effect thereon by this order passed in

the present petition.