

IN THE HIGH COURT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH, SHIMLA

Cr.MP(M) No.2013 of 2020

Date of Decision: 12th November, 2020

Shri Karan

...Petitioner.

Versus

State of Himachal Pradesh

...Respondent.

Coram:

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Anoop Chitkara, Judge.

Whether approved for reporting?¹ No

For the petitioner: Mr. Rajesh Parmar Advocate.

For the respondent: Mr. Nand Lal Thakur, Additional Advocate General, Mr. Ram Lal Thakur, Assistant A.G., and Mr. Rajat Chauhan Law Officer.

COURT PROCEEDINGS CONVENED THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCE

Anoop Chitkara, Judge.

The petitioner, aged 21 years, who is incarcerated upon his arrest for alluring and raping a minor girl, aged 16 years, who resides in the adjacent village of petitioner, has come up before this Court seeking regular bail on the grounds that the family of the girl forced her to lodge a false complaint to break their love affair.

2. Based on a complaint, the police arrested the petitioner on 2.9.2020, in FIR No.107 of 2020, dated 1.9.2020, registered under Section 376, 363 and 366A of Indian Penal Code, 1860, (IPC), and Section 4 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences, Act, 2012 (POCSO Act), in Police Station Dharampur, District Solan, Himachal Pradesh, disclosing cognizable and non-bailable offences.

3. The petitioner's criminal history relating to the offences prescribing sentence of greater than seven years of imprisonment or when on conviction, the sentence

¹ **Whether reporters of Local Papers may be allowed to see the judgment?**

imposed was more than three years: The contents of the petition and the status report do not reveal any criminal history.

4. Briefly, the allegations against the petitioner are that on 1st September, 2020, the father of the victim visited Police Station, Dharampur, District Solan and gave a written report. The contents of the application, which was addressed to SHO was that his daughter aged 16 years was missing on 31st August, 2020 from 12.30 p.m, i.e, day time. He further told the SHO that the victim had gone to fetch water from 'Baudi', which at 100 mtrs. distance but she did not return home. The family conducted frantic search but could not trace her. On verifying one phone, which belongs to the mother of the complainant, i.e., grand mother of the victim, they noticed one phone call, which had come from Mobile No.8894819690. When the complainant called back on the said number, it was switched off, but they came to know from inquiries that the phone belongs to Karan-petitioner herein. Thus the complainant suspected that Karan had allured his daughter and has run away with her.

5. After registration of the FIR, the police conducted frantic search of the victim. On the night of 1st September, 2020, the petitioner Karan reached home and he was brought to the police station to inquire about the victim. He informed the investigator that the victim was with him and he dropped her near a forest. In the meanwhile at 1.00 a.m in the intervening neight of 1st and 2nd September, 2020, the complainant informed the police that the victim had reached home on her own. After that, the police took the victim for medical examination and subsequently, got her statement recorded under Section 161, Cr.PC. The version of the victim while deposing in her statement under Section 161, Cr.PC that when she was with the accused-petitioner when he started touching her and requested her to indulge coitus but she refused. After that, during the medical examination of the victim, the police had also collected scientific evidence but the same was sent for examination in State Forensic Science Laboratory, Junga. The report of the Laboratory did not find presence blood or semen in any such evidence.

6. Mr. Rajesh Parmar, learned counsel for the petitioner contends that the victim and the petitioner belong to adjacent villages and are known to each other from childhood and it is a case of romantic love and not of rape and that incarceration before the proof of guilt would cause grave injustice to the petitioner and family.

7. While opposing the bail, Mr. Nand Lal, learned Additional Advocate General submits that since the victim is a minor, as such there is no question of consent.

ANALYSIS AND REASONING:

7. In **Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia and others v. State of Punjab**, 1980 (2) SCC 565, (Para 30), a Constitutional bench of Supreme Court held that the bail decision must enter the cumulative effect of the variety of circumstances justifying the grant or refusal of bail. In **Kalyan Chandra Sarkar v. Rajesh Ranjan @ Pappu Yadav**, 2005 (2) SCC 42, (Para 18) a three-member bench of Supreme Court held that the persons accused of non-bailable offences are entitled to bail, if the Court concerned concludes that the prosecution has failed to establish a prima facie case against him, or despite the existence of a prima facie case, the Court records reasons for its satisfaction for the need to release such persons on bail, in the given fact situations. The rejection of bail does not preclude filing a subsequent application, and the Courts can release on bail, provided the circumstances then prevailing requires, and a change in the fact situation. In **State of Rajasthan, Jaipur v. Balchand**, AIR 1977 SC 2447, (Para 2 & 3), Supreme Court noticeably illustrated that the basic rule may perhaps be tersely put as bail, not jail, except where there are circumstances suggestive of fleeing from justice or thwarting the course of justice or creating other troubles in the shape of repeating offences or intimidating witnesses and the like by the petitioner who seeks enlargement on bail from the court. It is true that the gravity of the offence involved is likely to induce the petitioner to avoid the course of justice and must weigh with us when considering the question of jail. So also the heinousness of the crime. In **Gudikanti Narasimhulu v. Public Prosecutor, High Court of Andhra Pradesh**, (1978) 1 SCC 240, (Para 16), Supreme Court in Para 16, held that the delicate light of the law favours release unless countered by the negative criteria necessitating that course. In **Dataram Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh**, (2018) 3 SCC 22, (Para 6), Supreme Court held that the grant or refusal of bail is entirely within the discretion of the judge hearing the matter and though that discretion is unfettered, it must be exercised judiciously and in a humane manner and compassionately. Also, conditions for the grant of bail ought not to be so strict as to be incapable of compliance, thereby making the grant of bail illusory.

8. Pre-trial incarceration needs justification depending upon the offense's heinous nature, terms of the sentence prescribed in the statute for such a crime, probability of the accused fleeing from justice, hampering the investigation, criminal history of the accused, and doing away with the victim(s) and witnesses. The Court is under an obligation to maintain a balance between all stakeholders and safeguard the interests of the victim, accused, society, and State. However, while deciding bail applications, the Courts should discuss evidence relevant only for determining bail. The difference in the order of bail and final judgment is similar to a sketch and a painting. However, some sketches are in detail and paintings with a few strokes.

9. Although the victim is aged 16 years but simultaneously, the accused is also aged 21 years and both of them are the residents of adjacent villages. Given the conduct of the victim of her voluntarily leaving her home under the pretext of fetching water from the water source and fact that the accused is also unmarried, the possibility of romantic love going wrong is there. Given above without commenting on the evidentiary value of acquisition and without going fact that the victim was a minor, at least for the purpose of this petition, further incarceration is not justified.

10. An analysis of entire evidence does not justify further incarceration of the accused, nor is going to achieve any significant purpose. Without commenting on the merits of the case, the stage of the investigation and the period of incarceration already undergone would make out a case for bail.

11. The possibility of the accused influencing the course of the investigation, tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses, and the likelihood of fleeing justice, can be taken care of by imposing elaborative conditions and stringent conditions. In **Sushila Aggarwal**, (2020) 5 SCC 1, Para 92, the Constitutional bench held that unusually, subject to the evidence produced, the Courts can impose restrictive conditions.

12. Given the above reasoning, the Court is granting bail to the petitioner, subject to strict terms and conditions, which shall be over and above and irrespective of the contents of the form of bail bonds in chapter XXXIII of CrPC, 1973.

13. Following the decision of this Court in **Abhishek Kumar Singh v. State of HP**, Cr.MP(M) No. 1017 of 2020, the petitioner shall be released on bail in the FIR mentioned above, subject to his furnishing a personal bond of Rs. Ten thousand only (INR 10,000/-), and shall either furnish two sureties of a similar amount to the satisfaction of the Chief Judicial Magistrate/Ilaqua Magistrate/Duty Magistrate/the Court exercising jurisdiction over the concerned Police Station where FIR is registered, or the aforesaid personal bond and fixed deposit(s) for Rs. Ten thousand only (INR 10,000/-), made in favour of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate/ Judicial Magistrate, Theog, District Shimla, H.P., from any of the banks where the stake of the State is more than 50%, or any of the stable private banks, e.g., HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, etc., with the clause of automatic renewal of principal, and liberty of the interest reverting to the linked account. Such a fixed deposit need not necessarily be made from the account of the petitioner. If such a fixed deposit is made manually, then the original receipt has to be deposited. If made online, then the copy attested by any Advocate has to be filed, and the depositor shall get the online liquidation disabled. It shall be total discretion of the petitioner to choose between surety bonds and fixed deposits. During the trial's pendency, it shall be open for the petitioner to apply for substitution of fixed deposit with surety bonds and vice-versa. Subject to the proceedings under S. 446 CrPC, if any, the entire amount of fixed deposit along with interest credited, if any, shall be endorsed/returned to the depositor(s). The Court shall have a lien over the deposits until discharged by substitution, and otherwise up to the expiry of the period mentioned under S. 437-A CrPC, 1973. The furnishing of the personal bonds shall be deemed acceptance of the following and all other stipulations, terms, and conditions of this bail order:

- a) The petitioner to give security to the concerned Court(s) for attendance. Once the trial begins, the petitioner shall not, in any manner, try to delay the trial. The petitioner undertakes to appear before the concerned Court, on the issuance of summons/warrants by such Court. The petitioner shall attend the trial on each date, unless exempted, and in case of appeal, also promise to appear before the higher Court, in terms of Section 437-A CrPC.
- b) The attesting officer shall mention on the reverse page of personal bonds, the permanent address of the petitioner along with the phone number(s),

WhatsApp number (if any), email (if any), and details of personal bank account(s) (if available).

c) The petitioner shall join investigation as and when called by the Investigating Officer or any Superior Officer. Whenever the investigation takes place within the boundaries of the Police Station or the Police Post, then the petitioner shall not be called before 8 AM and shall be let off before 5 PM. The petitioner shall not be subjected to third-degree methods, indecent language, inhuman treatment, etc.

d) The petitioner shall cooperate with the investigation at all further stages as may be required, and in the event of failure to do so, it will be open for the prosecution to seek cancellation of the bail granted by the present order.

e) The petitioner shall not influence, browbeat, pressurize, make any inducement, threat, or promise, directly or indirectly, to the witnesses, the Police officials, or any other person acquainted with the facts of the case, to dissuade them from disclosing such facts to the Police, or the Court, or to tamper with the evidence.

f) Once the trial begins, the petitioner shall not in any manner try to delay the trial. The petitioner undertakes to appear before the concerned Court, on the issuance of summons/warrants by such Court. The petitioner shall attend the trial on each date, unless exempted.

g) In addition to standard modes of processing service of summons, the concerned Court may serve the accused through E-Mail (if any), and any instant messaging service such as WhatsApp, etc. (if any). [Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Re Cognizance for Extension of Limitation, Suo Moto Writ Petition (C) No. 3/2020, I.A. No. 48461/2020- July 10, 2020].

h) The concerned Court may also inform the accused about the issuance of bailable and non-bailable warrants through the modes mentioned above.

i) In the first instance, the Court shall issue summons and may send such summons through SMS/ WhatsApp message/ E-Mail.

j) In case the petitioner fails to appear before the Court on the specified date, then the concerned Court may issue bailable warrants, and to enable the accused to know the date, the Court may, if it so desires, also inform the petitioner about such Bailable Warrants through SMS/ WhatsApp message/ E-

Mail.

k) Finally, if the petitioner still fails to put in an appearance, then the concerned Court may issue Non-Bailable Warrants to procure the petitioner's presence and send the petitioner to the Judicial custody for a period for which the concerned Court may deem fit and proper to achieve the purpose.

l) In case of non-appearance, then irrespective of the contents of the bail bonds, the petitioner undertakes to pay all the expenditure (only the principal amount without interest), that the State might incur to produce him before such Court, provided such amount exceeds the amount recoverable after forfeiture of the bail bonds, and also subject to the provisions of Sections 446 & 446-A of CrPC. The petitioner's failure to reimburse the State shall entitle the trial Court to order the transfer of money from the bank account(s) of the petitioner. However, this recovery is subject to the condition that the expenditure incurred must be spent to trace the petitioner alone and it relates to the exercise undertaken solely to arrest the petitioner in that FIR, and during that voyage, the Police had not gone for any other purpose/function what so ever.

m) The petitioner shall intimate about the change of residential address and change of phone numbers, WhatsApp number, e-mail accounts, within thirty days from such modification, to the Police Station of this FIR, and also to the concerned Court.

n) The petitioner shall abstain from all criminal activities. If done, then while considering bail in the fresh FIR, the Court shall take into account that even earlier, the Court had cautioned the accused not to do so.

o) Considering the apprehension expressed by the learned counsel appearing for the respondent, the petitioner should stay far away from the place of occurrence while on bail - (Vikramsingh v. Central Bureau of Investigation, 2018 All SCR (CrI.) 458).

p) The petitioner shall neither stare, stalk, make any gestures, remarks, call, contact, message the victim, either physically, or through phone call or any other social media, nor roam around the victim's home. The petitioner shall not contact the victim.

q) The petitioner shall surrender all firearms along with ammunitions, if any, along with the arms license to the concerned authority within 30 days from

today. However, subject to the provisions of the Indian Arms Act, 1959, the petitioner shall be entitled to renew and take it back, in case of acquittal in this case.

r) In case of violation of any of the conditions as stipulated in this order, the State/Public Prosecutor may apply for cancellation of bail of the petitioner. Otherwise, the bail bonds shall continue to remain in force throughout the trial and also after that in terms of Section 437-A of the CrPC.

s) During the trial's pendency, if the petitioner repeats the offence or commits any offence where the sentence prescribed is seven years or more, then the State may move an appropriate application for cancellation of this bail.

14. The learned Counsel representing the accused and the Officer in whose presence the petitioner puts signatures on personal bonds shall explain all conditions of this bail order to the petitioner, in vernacular and if not feasible, in Hindi or English.

15. In case the petitioner finds the bail condition(s) as violating fundamental, human, or other rights, or causing difficulty due to any situation, then for modification of such term(s), the petitioner may file a reasoned application before this Court, and after taking cognizance, even before the Court taking cognizance or the trial Court, as the case may be, and such Court shall also be competent to modify or delete any condition.

16. Consequently, the petitioner shall be released on bail in the present case, in connection with the FIR mentioned above, on his furnishing bail bonds in the terms described above.

17. This order does not, in any manner, limit or restrict the rights of the Police or the investigating agency, from further investigation in accordance with law.

18. Any observation made hereinabove is neither an expression of opinion on the merits of the case, nor shall the trial Court advert to these comments.

19. The SHO of the concerned Police Station or the Investigating Officer shall arrange to send a copy of this order, preferably a soft copy, to the complainant and the victim, at the earliest. In case the victim notices stalking or any violation of this order, she may either inform the SHO of the concerned Police Station or write to the Trial Court or even to this Court.

20. In return for the protection from incarceration, the Court believes that the accused shall also reciprocate through desirable behavior.

The petition stands allowed in the terms mentioned above. All pending applications, if any, stand closed.

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**(Anoop Chitkara),
Judge.**

12th November 2020 (mamta)

High Court of H.P.