

HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA**Date of Decision: 30th January 2024****Coram: Hon'ble Mr. Justice Aman Chaudhary**

CRA-S-1797-SB-2004

Pardeep Kumar ...APPELLANT**VERSUS****State of Haryana ...RESPONDENT****Legislation:**

Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 333, 332, 353, 186

Subject: Appeal against the conviction and sentence for offences under IPC sections 333, 332, 353, 186, involving assault and obstruction of public servants in duty.**Headnotes:**

Criminal Appeal – Conviction and Sentencing by Additional Sessions Judge, Rewari – Appellant convicted under Sections 333, 332, 353, and 186 of IPC – Sentenced to various terms of rigorous imprisonment and fines, with all sentences to run concurrently. [Para 1]

FIR and Investigation – FIR lodged by Mahender Singh, a conductor in Haryana Roadways, alleging physical assault by the appellant – After investigation, charges framed under Sections 332, 333, 353, 186, and 506 IPC against the appellant. [Para 2-3]

Trial Proceedings – Prosecution examined 13 witnesses – Appellant denied all charges, claiming innocence and false implication – Trial Court convicted the appellant based on evidence. [Para 4-5]

Appellate Arguments – Appellant sought probation, citing his role as a sole breadwinner, first-time offender status, and long duration of trial since 2003. [Para 6-7]

Evidence Evaluation – Testimony of complainant (PW6) and medical evidence (PW2) confirmed the appellant's guilt – Trial Court's findings affirmed by the High Court. [Para 9-10]

Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 – Reference to Section 4 and relevant case laws – Emphasis on the Act's objective to reform offenders rather than punish, applicable to first-time offenders and non-grave crimes. [Para 11-16]

Judgment – Appellant granted probation for one year under conditions set by the Probation of Offenders Act – Bond of good behavior with two solvent sureties of Rs.10,000/-, under supervision of a Probation Officer. Breach of conditions to result in custody and sentence enforcement. [Para 17-18]

Referred Cases:

- Ratan Lal vs. State of Punjab, AIR 1965 SC 444

- Sitaram Paswan and Anr. vs. State of Bihar, AIR 2005 SC 3534
- B.S. Narayanan vs. State of A.P. 1987 SCC (Cri)791
- Buta Singh vs. State of Punjab 2004 (3) R.C.R. (Criminal) 605
- Satish vs. State of U.P., (2021) 14 SCC 580

AMAN CHAUDHARY, J.

1. Challenge in the present appeal is to the judgment/order dated 03.09.2004, passed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Rewari, whereby the appellant was convicted and sentenced as follows:

Offence u/s	Imprisonment	Fine	Default sentence
333 IPC	RI for three years	Rs.3,000/-	RI for six months
332 IPC	RI for two years	Rs.2,000/-	RI for four months
353 IPC	RI for one year	Rs.1,000/-	RI for one month
186 IPC	RI for three months		

All the sentences were ordered to run concurrently.

2. Succinct facts at first. Mahender Singh-complainant made a statement to the police that he was a conductor in Haryana Roadways and on 12.10.2003 at about 10:30 A.M., when his bus reached near Railway crossing of Rampura turn, Qutubpur, the accused gave beatings to the bus driver and when he was bring to rescue, the said accused inflicted injuries to him as well. An FIR was registered against the accused-appellant.
3. After completion of investigation, final report under Section 173 Cr.P.C. was presented in the Court against the accused-appellant. On finding a prima facie case, charges under Sections 332, 333, 353, 186 and 506 IPC were framed against him, to which he pleaded not guilty and claimed trial.
4. In order to bring home the guilt of the accused, the prosecution examined as many as 13 witnesses. On closure of the prosecution evidence, statement of the accused-appellant was recorded under Section 313 Cr.P.C. He denied all the incriminating circumstances that appeared against him in the prosecution

case while pleading innocence and false implication. In defence, he examined one witness.

5. The trial Court came to the conclusion that prosecution has proved its case, and accordingly convicted and sentenced as mentioned in para No.1 above.

6. Aggrieved accused as well as State are before this Court.

7. Learned for the accused, at the outset, gives up the challenge to the appeal on merits and prays for extending the benefit of probation in view of the fact that he is the sole breadwinner of the family; has a daughter of marriageable age; first time offender; never misused the concession of bail granted to him and has suffered the pangs of trial since 2003.

8. Learned State counsel submits that after appreciating the evidence led by the prosecution, the trial Court has rightly convicted the accused-appellant. Thus, he prays for the dismissal of the present appeal.

9. Heard the learned counsel on either side and perused the record.

10. Evidently, PW6-complainant Mahender has specifically deposed that he had received the injuries at the hands of the accused, which is fully corroborated with the medical evidence, proved by PW2 Dr.A.K. Ranga. On going through the evidence on record, the prosecution case is found to be well established. Thus, there is no scope for interference in the findings recorded and conclusion arrived at by the trial Court. As such, the conviction of the appellant is affirmed.

11. As regards the prayer made on behalf of the appellant is concerned, it would be apposite to make a reference to Section 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, which reads thus:

- “4. Power of Court to release certain offenders on probation of good conduct.-
- (1) When any person is found guilty of having committed an offence not punishable with death or imprisonment for life and the Court by which the person is found guilty is of opinion that, having regard to the circumstances of the case including the nature of the offence and the character of the offender, it is expedient to release him on probation of good conduct, then, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the court may, instead of sentencing him at once to any punishment direct that he be released on his entering into a bond, with or without sureties, to appear and receive sentence when called upon during such period, not

exceeding three years, as the Court may direct, and in the meantime to keep the peace and be of good behaviour: Provided that the Court shall not direct such release of an offender unless it is satisfied that the offender or his surety, if any, has a fixed place of abode or regular occupation in the place over which the Court exercises jurisdiction or in which the offender is likely to live during the period for which he enters into the bond.

- (2) Before making any order under sub-section (1), the court shall take into consideration the report, if any, of the probation officer concerned in relation to the case.
- (3) When an order under sub-section (1) is made, the court may, if it is of opinion that in the interests of the offender and of the public it is expedient so to do, in addition pass a supervision order directing that the offender shall remain under the supervision of a probation officer named in the order during such period, not being less than one year, as may be specified therein, and may in such supervision order, impose such conditions as it deems necessary for the due supervision of the offender.
- (4) The court making a supervision order under sub-section (3) shall require the offender, before he is released, to enter into a bond, with or without sureties, to observe the conditions specified in such order and such additional conditions with respect to residence, abstention from intoxicants or any other matter as the court may, having regard to the particular circumstances, consider fit to impose for preventing a repetition of the same offence or a commission of other offences by the offender.
- (5) The court making a supervision order under sub-section (3) shall explain to the offender the terms and conditions of the order and shall forthwith furnish one copy of the supervision order to each of the offenders, the sureties, if any, and the probation officer concerned.”

12. A judgment in *Ratan Lal vs. State of Punjab*, AIR 1965 SC 444 can be profitably referred to, whereby Hon'ble the Supreme Court, regarding the purpose and object of 'The Probation of Offenders Act, 1958' had observed and held that, "The Act is a milestone in the progress of the modern liberal trend of reform in the field of penology. It is the result of the recognition of the doctrine that the object of criminal law is more to reform the individual offender than to punish him. Broadly stated the Act distinguishes offenders below 21 years of age and those above that age, and offenders who are guilty of having committed an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life and those who are guilty of a lesser offence. While in the case of offenders who are above the age of 21 years, absolute discretion is given to the court to release them after admonition or on probation of good conduct, subject to the condition laid down in the appropriate provision of the Act, in the case of offenders below the age of 21 years an injunction is issued to the court not

to sentence them to imprisonment unless it is satisfied that having regard to the circumstances of the case, including the nature of the offence and the character of the offenders, it is not desirable to deal with them under Ss. 3 and 4 of the Act.”

13. Hon'ble the Supreme Court in *Sitaram Paswan and Anr. vs. State of Bihar*, AIR 2005 SC 3534, observed that benefit of probation can be extended at the appellate or revisional stage as well, and held that, “For exercising the power which is discretionary, the Court has to consider circumstances of the case, the nature of the offence and the character of the offender. While considering the nature of the offence, the Court must take a realistic view of the gravity of the offence, the impact which the offence had on the victim. The benefit available to the accused under Section 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act is subject to the limitation embodied in the provisions and the word "may" clearly indicates that the discretion vests with the Court whether to release the offender in exercise of the powers under Section 3 or 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act having regard to the nature of the offence and the character of the offender and overall circumstances of the case. The powers under Section 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act vest with the Court when any person is found guilty of the offence committed, not punishable with death or imprisonment for life. This power can be exercised by the Courts while finding the person guilty and if the Court thinks that having regard to the circumstances of the case, including the nature of the offence and the character of the offender, benefit should be extended to the accused, the power can be exercised by the Court even at the appellate or revisional stage and also by this Court while hearing appeal under Article 136 of the Constitution of India.”
14. In the case of *B.S. Narayanan vs. State of A.P.* 1987 SCC (Cri)791, the accused was convicted under Section 353 and sentenced to rigorous

imprisonment of six months, the Hon'ble Supreme Court observing that the incident pertains to the year 1975, ordered to release him on probation.

15. In *Buta Singh vs. State of Punjab* 2004 (3) R.C.R. (Criminal) 605, the accused was convicted and sentenced under Section 332, 333/34 IPC, this Court considering that he was a first time offender and facing the agony of trial for 13 years, ordered to release him on probation.
16. In *Satish vs. State of U.P.*, (2021) 14 SCC 580, Hon'ble the Supreme Court had observed that, "Whilst it is undoubtedly true that society has a right to lead a peaceful and fearless life, without free roaming criminals creating havoc in the lives of ordinary peace loving citizens. But equally strong is the foundation of reformatory theory which propounds that a civilised society cannot be achieved only through punitive attitudes and vindictiveness; and that instead public harmony, brotherhood and mutual acceptability ought to be fostered. Thus, first time offenders ought to be liberally accorded a chance to repent their past and look forward to a bright future. [*Maru Ram v. Union of India*, (1981) 1 SCC 107 : 1981 SCC (Cri) 112]".
17. Humanistically viewing, the appellants having suffered the ignominy of trial since long; successfully warded off their crime-proneness-an evident learning of a lesson; their socio-economic circumstances, this Court finds extenuation to be implicit. Thus, to strike a balance and serve the interest of justice, the appellants deserve to be granted an opportunity to assure the authorities of their reformation. They be released on probation for a period of one year, on the following conditions as enshrined under Section of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958:
 - (1) He shall execute a bond for good behaviour with two solvent sureties in a sum of Rs.10,000/- which shall be executed before the trial Court within a period of one month from today.
 - (2) The said bond shall be in force for a period of one year.
 - (3) He shall be subject to the supervision of the Probation Officer and subject to the conditions laid down in the Probation of Offenders Act.

18. It is clarified that in case there is any breach of the aforesaid conditions, the appellant will forthwith be taken into custody and shall have to undergo the sentence awarded to him by the trial Court.
19. Appeal stands disposed of accordingly.

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