



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

204

CRA-S-2823-SB-2012 (O&M)

Date of decision : 24.09.2025

Amarjit Singh

... Appellant

Versus

State of Punjab

... Respondent

CORAM : HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE H.S.GREWAL

Present:- Mr. Veneet Sharma, Advocate for the appellant.

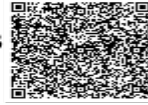
Mr. Rishabh Singla, AAG, Punjab.

H.S. Grewal, J.(Oral)

1. The present appeal has been preferred by the appellant against the judgment of conviction and order of quantum of sentence dated 18.09.2012, passed by the learned Judge, Special Court, Amritsar, in FIR No.129 dated 28.09.2008, registered at Police Station Amritsar, whereby he has been convicted under Section 18 of the NDPS Act and sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for 02 years, to pay a fine of Rs.20,000/- and in default thereof, to undergo further simple imprisonment for 03 months.

2. The case of the prosecution is that on 28.09.2008, the appellant was apprehended while having in possession of 500 grams of opium and in pursuant thereto, the trial Court vide impugned judgment and order of sentence dated 18.09.2012 had convicted the appellant and sentenced him to undergo aforesaid imprisonment.

3. Learned counsel for the appellant submits that he is not assailing the impugned judgment of conviction dated 18.09.2012 on merits and restricts



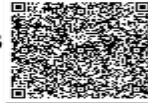
his prayer qua modification of the order on quantum of sentence, to the period as already undergone by the appellant or in the alternative for reduction of sentence because he has already undergone an actual sentence of 03 months & 17 days out of the total sentence of two years. He also submits that the appellant is not involved in any other case under the NDSP Act. He, therefore, prays that since the FIR in question pertains to the year 2008, a lenient view may be taken while passing an order/judgment by this Court.

4. On the other hand, learned State counsel opposes the prayer of the appellant on the ground that the learned Court below has passed a well reasoned judgment based on correct appreciation of evidence available on record. He has filed the custody certificate in Court which is taken on record. As per the custody certificate, the appellant has undergone an actual sentence of 03 months & 17 days out of the total sentence of two years and he is not involved in any other case under the NDPS Act.

5. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and have gone through the material placed on record.

6. The appellant is stated to have been convicted for having in possession of 500 grams opium attracting the offence under Section 18 of the NDPS Act, for which no minimum punishment has been prescribed. Moreover, the FIR in the present case pertains to the year 2008 and he has already faced the rigors of the trial for more than 17 years.

7. Hon'ble the Supreme Court in "*Deo Narain Mandal Vs. State of UP*", (2004) 7 SCC 257, has held that awarding of sentence is not a mere formality in criminal cases. When a minimum and maximum term is prescribed



by the statute with regard to the period of sentence, a discretionary element is vested in the Court. Background of each case, which includes factors like gravity of the offence, the manner in which the offence is committed, age of the accused, should be considered while determining the quantum of sentence and this discretion is not to be used arbitrarily or whimsically. After assessing all relevant factors, proper sentence should be awarded bearing in mind the principle of proportionality to ensure the sentence is neither excessively harsh nor does it come across as lenient.

8. Further, a Division Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Ravada Sasikala Vs. State of AP, AIR 2017 SC 1166***, has held that the imposition of sentence also serves a social purpose, as it acts as a deterrent by making the accused realise the damage caused not only to the victim, but also to the society at large. The law in this regard is well settled that opportunities of reformation must be granted and such discretion is to be exercised by evaluating all attending circumstances of each case by noticing the nature of the crime, the manner, in which the crime was committed and conduct of the accused to strike a balance between the efficacy of law and the chances of reformation of the accused.

9. A perusal of the judgment of conviction passed by the learned trial Court indicates no perversity in its findings and the same is based on correct appreciation of evidence available on record. However, learned counsel for the appellant has not assailed the judgment of conviction on merits, rather restricted the prayer only qua modification of quantum of sentence to that of reduction or the sentence already undergone by the appellant.



10. The FIR in the present case was registered on 28.09.2008 and the appellant has been suffering the agony of trial for over 17 years. It is pertinent to note that Section 18 of the NDPS Act does not prescribe any minimum sentence. The appellant has already undergone an actual sentence of 03 months & 17 days out of the total sentence of two years and he is not involved in any other case under the NDPS Act. Therefore, while taking a lenient view, this Court is of the opinion that it would be in the interest of justice if the sentence awarded to the appellant is reduced to the period already undergone by him.

11. Consequently, the present appeal is disposed of in the following terms:-

(i) The judgment dated 18.09.2012 passed by the learned Judge, Special Court, Amritsar is upheld, however, the order of sentence of even date is modified to the extent that the sentence of rigorous imprisonment for 02 years awarded to the appellant is reduced to the period of sentence already undergone by him.

(ii) The sentence of fine of an amount of Rs.20,000/- imposed upon the appellant by learned trial Court is increased to Rs.30,000/-. The appellant is directed to deposit the increased amount of fine in learned trial Court within a period of one month from the date of receipt of certified copy of this order and in case of default of payment of fine, he will be liable to be taken into custody and made to undergo rigorous imprisonment for one month.

12. Pending application(s), if any, shall stand disposed of accordingly.

24.09.2025
A.Kaundal

(H.S.GREWAL)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No
Whether reportable : Yes/No