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HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR**Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 131 of 2022**

Chingdu @ Sonsingh, S/o Dayaram @ Dayadan, Aged about 37 years, R/o Churchapara, Dhanpunji, Police Station Nagarnar, Distt. Bastar, Chhattisgarh.

---Petitioner

Versus

1. State of Chhattisgarh through the Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, Mahanadi Bhawan, New Mantralaya, Atal Nagar, Nawa Raipur, Distt. Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
2. The Secretary, Law Department, Mantralay, Mahanadi Bhawan, Atal Nagar, Nawa Raipur, Distt. Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
3. Director General of Police (Jail), Atal Nagar, Nawa Raipur, Distt. Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
4. The Jail Superintendent, Central Jail, Raipur, Distt. Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

---Respondents

For Petitioner :- Ms. Pushpa Dwivedi, Advocate
For Respondents/State :- Mr. Sudeep Verma, Dy. G.A.

Hon'ble Shri Justice Sanjay K. Agrawal
Order on Board

28/09/2022

1. By way of this writ petition, the petitioner has called in question order impugned dated 18/11/2021 (Annexure P/1) by which respondent No. 1 has rejected the application under Section 432(1) of CrPC for remission of his jail



sentence on the basis of the recommendation given by learned 3rd Additional Session Judge, Jagdalpur, Bastar vide letter dated 01/06/2021 (Annexure P/6).

2. Petitioner herein has been convicted for offence punishable under Section 302 of IPC by the 2nd Additional Session Judge, Bastar Place Jagdalpur vide impugned judgment dated 19/09/2007 (Annexure P/2) passed in Sessions Trial No. 288/2006 which was challenged by him in Criminal Appeal No. 485/2013 but it stood dismissed vide judgment dated 21/01/2015 (Annexure P/3) and he has been undergoing imprisonment for life. Thereafter, the petitioner moved an application under Section 432 of CrPC for remission of his jail sentence but it has been dismissed by the State Government vide impugned order dated 18/11/2021 (Annexure P/1) only on the basis of recommendation of the Presiding Judge who had convicted the petitioner, without assigning sufficient reason, which has been assailed in the instant appeal.

3. Ms. Pushpa Dwivedi, learned counsel for the petitioner, would submit that the order impugned passed by the State Government (respondent No. 1) is in teeth of the provisions contained under Section 432(1) of CrPC in light of the decisions rendered by the Supreme Court in the matters of **Ram Chander v. State of Chhattisgarh**¹ and **Laxman Naskar v. Union of India**², as such, the impugned order be

1 AIR 2022 SC 2017

2 (2000) 2 SCC 595



quashed and respondent No. 1 may be directed to consider petitioner's application afresh.

4. Mr. Sudeep Verma, learned State counsel, would support the impugned order and submit that petitioner's case has strictly been considered in accordance with the provision contained in Section 432(1) of CrPC after obtaining the recommendation/opinion of learned trial Judge and thereafter, it has been rejected, as such, the instant writ petition deserves to be dismissed.

5. I have heard learned counsel for the parties, considered their rival submissions made herein-above and perused the record with utmost circumspection.

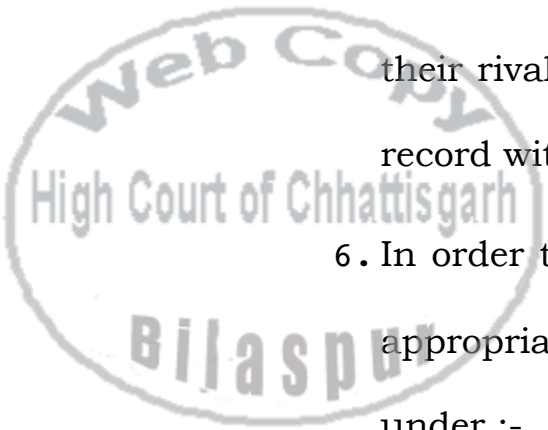
6. In order to consider the plea raised at the Bar, it would be appropriate to notice Section 432 of CrPC which states as under :-

“432. Power to suspend or remit sentences. - (1)

When any person has been sentenced to punishment for an offence, the appropriate Government may, at any time, without conditions or upon any conditions which the person sentenced accepts, suspend the execution of his sentence or remit the whole or any part of the punishment to which he has been sentenced.

(2) Whenever an application is made to the appropriate Government for the suspension or remission of a sentence, the appropriate Government may require the presiding Judge of the Court before or by which the conviction was had or confirmed, to state his opinion as to whether the application should be granted or refused, together with his reasons for such opinion and also to forward with the statement of such opinion a certified copy of the record of the trial or of such record thereof as exists.

(3) to (7) XXX XXX”





7. The power to consider remission under Section 432(1) of the CrPC has been conferred to the appropriate Government to consider and suspend the execution of his sentence or to remit the whole or any part of the punishment to which the accused person has been sentenced i.e. the petitioner in this case.
8. It is well settled that Section 432 of the CrPC has application only in two situations firstly, where a convict is to be given “additional” remission or remission for a period over and above the period that he is entitled to or he is awarded under the Jail Manual, and secondly, where a convict is sentenced to life imprisonment, which is for an indefinite period, subject to procedural and substantive checks. (See: **Sangeet v. State of Haryana**³)
9. It is also settled that a convict undergoing life imprisonment is expected to remain in custody till the end of his life, subject to any remission granted by the appropriate Government under Section 432 of the CrPC which in turn is subject to the procedural checks mentioned in the said provision and further substantive check in Section 433A of the CrPC. (See : **Mohinder Singh v. State of Punjab**⁴)
10. The Supreme Court in the matter of **Ram Chander** (supra) has considered its earlier decisions including the Constitution Bench decision rendered in the matter of

3 AIR 2013 SC 447

4 2013 Cri.LJ 1559



Union of India v. Sriharan⁵ as well as in **Laxman Naskar**

(supra) and has held as under :-

“20. In Sriharan (supra), the court observed that the opinion of the presiding judge shines a light on the nature of the crime that has been committed, the record of the convict, their background and other relevant factors. Crucially, the Court observed that the opinion of the presiding judge would enable the government to take the 'right' decision as to whether or not the sentence should be remitted. Hence, it cannot be said that the opinion of the presiding judge is only a relevant factor, which does not have any determinative effect on the application for remission. The purpose of the procedural safeguard under Section 432(2) of the CrPC would stand defeated if the opinion of the presiding judge becomes just another factor that may be taken into consideration by the government while deciding the application for remission. It is possible then that the procedure under Section 432(2) would become a mere formality.

21. However, this is not to say that the appropriate government should mechanically follow the opinion of the presiding judge. If the opinion of the presiding judge does not comply with the requirements of Section 432(2) or if the judge does not consider the relevant factors for grant of remission that have been laid down in Laxman Naskar v. Union of India (supra), the government may request the presiding judge to consider the the matter afresh.

22. In the present case, there is nothing to indicate that the presiding judge took into account the factors which have been laid down in Laxman Naskar v. Union of India (supra). These factors include assessing (i) whether the offence affects the society at large; (ii) the probability of the crime being repeated; (iii) the potential of the convict to commit crimes in future; (iv) if any fruitful purpose is being served by keeping the convict in prison; and (v) the socio-economic condition of the convict's family. In Laxman Naskar v. State of West Bengal (supra) and **State of Haryana v. Jagdish**⁶, this Court has reiterated that these factors will be considered while deciding the application of a convict for pre mature release.

23. In his opinion dated 21 July 2021 the Special Judge, Durg referred to the crime for which the

5 (2016) 7 SCC 1
6 (2010) 4 SCC 216



petitioner was convicted and simply stated that in view of the facts and circumstances of the case it would not be appropriate to grant remission. The opinion is in the teeth of the provisions of Section 432(2) of the CrPC which require that the presiding Judge's opinion must be accompanied by reasons. Halsbury's Laws of India (Administrative Law) notes that the requirement to give reasons is satisfied if the concerned authority has provided relevant reasons. Mechanical reasons are not considered adequate. The following extract is useful for our consideration :

“[005.066] Adequacy of reasons Sufficiency of reasons, in a particular case, depends on the facts of each case. It is not necessary for the authority to write out a judgement as a court of law does. However, at least, an outline of process of reasoning must be given. It may satisfy the requirement of giving reasons if relevant reasons have been given for the order, though the authority has not set out all the reasons or some of the reasons which had been argued before the court have not been expressly considered by the authority. A mere repetition of the statutory language in the order will not make the order a reasoned one.

Mechanical and stereotype reasons are not regarded as adequate. A speaking order is one that speaks of the mind of the adjudicatory body which passed the order. A reason such as 'the entire examination of the year 1982 is cancelled', cannot be regarded as adequate because the statement does explain as to why the examination has been cancelled; it only lays down the punishment without stating the causes therefor.”

24. Thus, an opinion accompanied by inadequate reasoning would not satisfy the requirements of Section 432(2) of the CrPC. Further, it will not serve the purpose for which the exercise under Section 432(2) is to be undertaken, which is to enable the executive to make an informed decision taking into consideration all the relevant factors.

25. In view of the above discussion, we hold that the petitioner's application for remission should be re-considered. We direct the Special Judge, Durg to provide an opinion on the application afresh accompanied by adequate reasoning that takes into consideration all the relevant factors that govern the grant of remission as laid down in *Laxman Naskar v. Union of India* (supra). The Special Judge, Durg





must provide his opinion within a month of the date of the receipt of this order. We further direct the State of Chhattisgarh to take a final decision on the petitioner's application for remission afresh within a month of receiving the opinion of the Special Judge, Durg.”

11. Reverting to the facts of the present case in light of the aforesaid pronouncements by their Lordships of the Supreme Court, in the instant case, it appears that the 3rd Additional Sessions Judge, Bastar, Place Jagdalpur in his recommendation dated 01/06/2021 (Annexure P/6) has simply observed that he has perused the case and held that since the offence committed by the petitioner herein is heinous in nature, his case for remission cannot be considered and on the basis of the said recommendation of the Session Judge, the State Government has rejected petitioner's application for remission vide impugned order dated 18/11/2021 (Annexure P/1), which is in teeth of the decision rendered by the Supreme Court in **Ram Chander** (supra). Accordingly, the impugned order dated 18/11/2021 (Annexure P/1) passed by respondent No. 1 is hereby set aside. Matter is remitted to the State Government to decide petitioner's application for remission afresh. The State Government will call for the opinion of learned Session Judge, who will provide his opinion on the petitioner's application within one month from the date of requisition and thereafter, the State Government will decide petitioner's application within one month from the date of receipt of opinion from learned Session Judge. As such, the State





Government will decide petitioner's application in accordance with law within two months from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.

12. With the aforesaid directions, this writ petition stands disposed of. No cost(s).

Certified copy, as per rules.

Sd/-
(Sanjay K. Agrawal)
Judge

Harneet

