

Analysis on the right of private defense under IPC

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Abstract

Every person in India has the right to self-defend against any external force that may cause harm or injury to them. It is using otherwise illegal means to protect oneself or another person, safeguard property or prevent any other crime. The provisions of Sections 96 to 106 of the Indian Penal Code 1860 govern every person in India's right to self-defence. Citizens of any free society should have the right to self-defence to protect themselves from any impending harm when governmental assistance is unavailable or unworkable. This right should be understood in conjunction with the state's obligation to safeguard its citizens and their property. It was granted to every citizen of India as a right to self-defence, but many people abuse it by using it as an excuse to commit any crime or offence. As a result, this right to private defence is subject to some limitations and restrictions. Though the right to private defence was granted to Indian individuals as a weapon for self-defence, it is frequently utilised for ill or unlawful reasons by many people. The court has the duty and obligation to evaluate whether the right was exercised in good conscience or not.

Keywords- self-defence, safeguard, unlawful, sections

Introduction: A "private defence" is described as an action taken to protect one's body and property from another person when there is a reasonable fear of receiving injury or damage to one's property. In general, "private defence" is a particular point at which an individual refers to the defence that one can use to save his own life or the life and property of another person only when there is a requirement or procedure that must be performed at a specific moment and circumstance. The fundamental goal of an accused's private defence should be to defend himself, not to cause unnecessary harm to others. If the defendant is unable to cause any injury to the plaintiff, it should be justified to take any action that harms the defendant in a private defence plea. The burden of proof is entirely on the accused to demonstrate why he did such activities and what circumstances caused the plaintiff to take the required precautions to defend himself.

The defence of one self is the most significant aspect for exercising the principle of liberty as well as protection of life and property. The defence of a person and property by use of force is termed as the right of private defence. This right is inherent to person and the quantity of force is defined by the legal regulations. The laws relating to private defence of person and property is covered in sections 96 to 106 of Indian Penal Code, 1860.

The above mentioned sections confer power and authority to a person to apply necessary force on a wrong doer for protection of not only one self and property but also the body and property of other person. This power is mainly exercised when the aid is not available from the machinery of the state.

Nothing is an offense, which is done in the activity of the right of private defence. Right of private safeguard can't be supposed to be an offense consequently. The right of self-protection under Section 96 isn't outright yet is obviously qualified by Section 99 which says that the directly for no situation stretches out to the incurring of more mischief than it is needed with the end goal of safeguard. It is very much settled that in a free battle, no right of private guard is accessible to one or the other party and every individual is answerable for his own demonstrations. While the facts really confirm that regulation doesn't anticipate from the individual, whose life is put in harm's way, to gauge, with pleasant accuracy, the degree and the levels of the power which he utilizes with all due respect, it likewise doesn't face that the individual guaranteeing such a right should turn to drive which is messed up with regards to the wounds got or undermined and far in overabundance of the necessity of the case. The onus of demonstrating the right of private guard is upon the individual who needs to argue it. However, a denounced might be vindicated on the supplication of the right of private safeguard despite the

fact that he has not explicitly argued it. Courts are enabled to exclude in such cases. It should be borne as a primary concern that the weight of demonstrating an exemption is on the blamed. It isn't the law that inability to arrangement such a guard would dispossess this option to depend on the exemption unequivocally. It is aphoristic that weight on the denounced to demonstrate any reality can be released either through protection proof or even through arraignment proof by showing a vast majority of likelihood. The facts confirm that no instance of right of private safeguard of individual has been argued by the denounced not set forth in the interrogation to the onlookers yet it is very much settled that assuming there is a sensible likelihood of the blamed having acted in practice for right of private guard, the advantage of such a request can in any case be given to them. The right of private protection, as the name recommends, is a demonstration of protection and not of an offense. Self improvement is the principal rule of criminal regulation. The right of private guard is totally essential for the insurance of one's life, freedom and property. It is a right inborn in a man. However, the sort and measure of power is minutely managed by regulation. The utilization of power to safeguard one's property and individual is known as the right of private protection.

PRIVATE DEFENCE: MEANING AND TYPES

The articulation 'private guard' that has been utilized in the Indian Penal Code, 1860, has not been characterized in that. Consequently, it has been the privilege of the legal executive to develop a useful system for the activity of the right. Accordingly in India, the right of private guard is the option to protect the individual or property of himself or of some other individual against a demonstration of another, which on the off chance that the private safeguard isn't argued would have added up to a wrongdoing. This right hence makes an exemption for criminal risk. A portion of the parts of the right of private protection under the IPC are that no right of self-preservation can exist against an unarmed and unoffending individual, the right is accessible against the assailant just and it is just the individual who is in impending peril of individual or property and just when no state help is free. The right of private guard is a characteristic right which is displayed from specific conditions rather than being in the idea of an honor. Notwithstanding, the main standard is that the right of private protection expects that the power utilized in the guard should be vital and sensible in the conditions. Yet, at the times of upset state of mind, this can't be estimated in brilliant scales. Regardless of whether the instance of need exists not entirely settled from the perspective of the blamed and his demonstration should be seen in the illumination of the conditions as they show up on such event. Explicit constraints have additionally been accommodated when the right can't be truly practiced and furthermore the arrangement indicates obviously the cases in which the right can reach out to the causing of death of the attacker. The sensible anxiety must be defended assuming the denounced had a genuine conviction that there is risk and that such conviction is sensibly justified by the lead of the attacker and the encompassing conditions. This acquires a bit of a genuine measure for laying out 'sensibility.' The approach of risk is additionally a significant essential for the legitimate exercise self-protection. Accordingly, there should be a sensible conviction that the risk is up and coming and that power should be utilized to repulse it.

Nature of The Right

It is the first duty of man to help himself. The right of self-defence must be fostered in the Citizens of every free country. The right is recognised in every system of law and its extent varies in the inverse ratio to the capacity of the state to protect life and property of the subject(citizens). It is the primary duty of the state to protect the life and property of the individuals, but no state, no matter how large its resources, can afford to depute a policeman to dog the steps of every rouse in the country. Consequently this right has been given by the state to every citizen of the country to take law into his own hand for their safety. One thing should be clear that, there is no right of private defence when there is time to have recourse to the protection of police authorities. The right is not dependent on the actual criminality of the person resisted. It depends

solely on the wrongful or apparently wrongful character of the act attempted, if the apprehension is real and reasonable, it makes no difference that it is mistaken. An act done in exercise of this right is not an offence and does not, therefore, give rise to any right of private defence in return.

Right to Private Defence to the Body

The reason and objective of taking private defence should be taken to protect the body. The main reason to take private defence is to protect one's body is when there is only reasonable apprehension of danger to the body of a person arises from an attempt or threat to commit the offence though the offence might not be committed and it still continues as long as the apprehension of danger to the body continues as mentioned in **Section 102 of IPC**.

According to this section, it generally states whether there is an immense need to take the private defence to protect oneself from any harm to their body in the form of any offence or any harm from anyone. The victim is not expected to wait until the act has been committed. The extent to which this right can be exercised does not depend upon the actual danger but the apprehension it has caused. The threat must give rise to imminent danger but not distant danger. The next phase is that of continuance which permits the action to be in motion until the apprehension of danger continues.

In the case of *Sitaram Das v. Emperor*^[ii], that a person exercising the right of private defence is entitled to secure his victory as long as the contest is continued. He is not obliged to retreat but may still defend till he finds himself out of danger.

For claiming right of personal Defence extending to voluntarily causing death, the accused must establish that there have been circumstances giving rise to reasonable grounds for apprehension that either death or grievous hurt would be caused to him.

The enforceability of this act which states that once the danger of death or grievous hurt has disappeared, the person can't cause any harm to the other party and if he does, he cannot take the defence of Private defence.

CONCEPT OF PRIVATE DEFENCE

The concept of right of private defence plays a very important role in the society and thus the framing of such a right must not be sophisticated as it serves as a protection against the person committing the mistake. These rights bars the influence of corrupt characters and thereby encourage the good citizens who abide by the law.

The above right rests on the below mentioned principles –

- The right is available only against the aggressor.
- It is available only when there is a reasonable apprehension by the defender.

Under Section 96 of the Code, it is clearly mentioned that nothing is an offence which is done in the exercise of the right of private defence. Over here right of defending oneself is not absolute and it is further elaborated by section 99. It states that the harm inflicted should in no situation be more than required for the purpose of defence. The particular right pardons the guilt on a person despite of causing death of another, when the person deceased was the actual assaulter. Additionally, provided that the offence committed falls within any one of the six categories enshrined in sections 100 and 103 of the Indian Penal Code.

According to Section 97 of the Code, every person is empowered to defend his own body and the body of any other person against offence affecting human body. Also the person is empowered to defend any property whether movable one or immovable one which may belong to him or any other person against which any offence of theft, robbery, mischief, criminal trespass is committed or an attempt to commit the above has been done. The right under section 97 is subject to restrictions under section 99. The section 97 particularly divides the right of private defence into two parts, the first part being the defence of person whereas the second part being the defence of property^[1].

Under Section 98, the right of private defence is available to a person even against an offender committing or attempt to commit an act of offence and who is of unsound mind or want of maturity of understanding or by reason of any misconception on the part of that person.

The limitations on the exercise of the right of private defence are enumerated under Section 99 of the code. It clearly states that the right of private defence is not available against a public servant or a person exercising his duty not illegally and under good faith. It further states that the right of private defence is not applicable if there was enough time to seek help of public authorities and also the right must be exercised in proportion to what may be necessary for the purpose of defence.

According to Section 100 of the Code, the right of private defence of a body extends to voluntarily causing death or any harm to the assaulter when the offence give rise to the apprehension of death, or apprehension of grievous hurt, or intention of committing rape or intention of gratifying unnatural lust, or intention of kidnapping, abducting or assault with intention of illegally confining a person with apprehension of him being unable to seek help from public authorities or an act of throwing acid or an attempt of doing so. Other than the above varieties of assault, the provisions of the section can be invoked only when the person exercising the right of private defence is not at fault, there must be a forthcoming danger to life or great bodily injury and no route to escape by retreat and the taking of life had become a necessity.

Under Section 101 of the Code, it is stated that if the offence committed does not come under the preview of any of the conditions stated under section 100 of the code, then the right of private defence does not extend to voluntarily causing death of assaulter, but extend to causing harm other than death keeping in mind the restrictions under section 99 of the code.

As stated in Section 102 of the Code, the commencement of right of private defence occurs as soon as there is reasonable apprehension of threat or attempt to commit an offence although the offence may not have been committed and it goes on as long as apprehension of danger to the body continues. Therefore, it can be clearly stated that no right of private defence arises when there is no attack[2].

The right of private defence to property is enshrined under Section 103 of the Code. It clearly states that the right of private defence can be exercised if the offence of robbery, house-breaking by night, fire on building, tent, theft, mischief, house trespass are committed or attempted to be committed which cause apprehension that death or grievous hurt will be the consequences if right of private defence is not exercised. Moreover, to claim the right, the person must showcase possession of the property[3].

According to Section 104 of the Code, if any person commits act of theft, mischief or criminal trespass and that does not fall under the descriptions mentioned under section 103, then in that case the right of private defence extends to cause of any harm other than death. This section puts a restriction on the right of private defence of property[4].

Section 105 of the Code deals with the commencement and continuance of right of private defence of property. According to this section, the right of private defence of property commences as soon as reasonable apprehension of danger to the property originates. The continuance depends upon the nature of the offence. In incidents of theft it continues till the offender retreated the property or the assistance is obtained from public authorities or the property has been recovered. In case of robbery, it continues as long as the offender causes or attempts to cause death or harm to the person. In matters of mischief or criminal trespass, it continues as long as the offender continues the act of mischief or criminal trespass. Under Section 106 of the code, it is stated clearly that in a situation wherein there is reasonable cause for the exercise of the right of private defence, but the exercise of which will causes a risk of harm to an innocent person, he is entitled to take that risk.

THE AMBIT OF PRIVATE DEFENCE

There is no right to private defence against an act that is not an offence in and of itself under this Code. This excludes the possibility of exceptions. The right begins when there is a realistic fear of bodily harm as a result of an effort or threat to conduct an offence. The right to sue is only invoked in the face of an urgent, present, and actual danger. It is a protective right, not a punishing or retributive one. In no situation does the right extend to causing greater injury than is required for defence, although fair provision must be made for a truly sincere defender. When there is a reasonable and imminent danger of the horrific crimes specified in Section 100's six clauses, the right extends to killing the actual aggressor. There must be no safe or reasonable way for a person confronted with an impending threat to life or serious bodily harm to flee by retreat unless the aggressor is killed. The right, which is essentially a defensive right, does not accrue and apply where there is time to seek the protection of public authorities. According to Section 97 of the Indian Penal Code, every citizen has the right to defend his own body or the body of another person against any offence affecting the human body; the property of himself or another person, whether immovable or movable, against any act that is a criminal offence falling under the interpretation of robbery, theft, mischief and trespassing-204 (2015, 32 Ed.) Lexis Nexis.

ACT COMMITTED WHEN THERE IS NO OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE THE RIGHT TO PRIVATE DEFENCE

The right to private defence must be used when there is a reasonable fear of danger or harm to one's body or property, but there are some limitations. For example, if a public servant performs a bona fide act that results in harm or threats of violence or harm to one's body or property, the public servant will be justified in acting under the colour of his office. In a circumstance where public servants, such as police officers, are abdicating their duties, such as when they do not have a search warrant for a house but forcefully enter it anyway, the owner of the house, who is trying to resist the aggressive entry against with the police officers, cannot use the unlawfulness of the prosecution as a justification on his part because the public servant is not acting maliciously. The preceding situation analysis demonstrates the significance of this section and how it can be interpreted in different scenarios.⁴ A search party of police officers went to search the home of a person with information that the individual possessed an unlicensed gun. When the search party arrived at the home of the accused, they got to hear some strange sounds outside the house, took out the gun, and began firing shots in the belief that they were defending themselves against trespassers to the property who were police officers, but in reality, they killed one of them due to a factual and belief error. Where the police officers have not revealed their identities, the individual who fired a bullet at the public worker has the right to private defence, which does not constitute an offence. When there is an adequate opportunity to have any form of remedy to the public servant authorities, the supreme court has often stressed that taking up the law into one's own hands is a good choice or alternative.

CONCLUSION

When there is a legitimate fear of harm, the right to private defence is available. It should be noted that the right to private defence is available as long as access to a public authority is not conceivable. There is no need to be concerned if, in the present scenario, the support of public authorities is frequently gained. Though the right to private defence was offered to Indian individuals as a weapon for self-defence, many people utilise it for ill or unlawful purposes. It is now the court's job and responsibility to determine whether or not the right was exerted in good faith. The court will consider several crucial factors while rendering its decision: damage incurred by the accused; injuries suffered by the accused; whether or not state aid was accessible; and the addition of a risk to his safety. The extent to which this privilege may be exercised is determined by the reasonable fear of the hazard. The right to private defence is accessible when one is abruptly confronted with the imminent necessity of averting an impending threat; it begins when reasonable apprehension occurs and continues as long as apprehension exists. The right

can be expanded by an accused in specific instances, but only to a limited extent, which does not negate the right to private defence, i.e., just the amount of force required to disperse the threat or oppose the attack should be utilised.

References:

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[5] 2002 CrLJ 563 (SC)

[6]AIR 1979 SC 577

