Court No. - 69

Case :- CRIMINAL REVISION No. - 2696 of 2010

Revisionist :- Leela Dhar
Opposite Party :- State of U.P. and Another
Counsel for Revisionist :- Shri Ram Pandey
Counsel for Opposite Party :- Govt. Advocate

Hon'ble Samit Gopal,J.

1. List revised.

2. Heard Sri Praveen Kumar Mishra, learned counsel for the revisionist and Sri Ajay Singh, learned A.G.A.-I for the State and perused the records.

3. This criminal revision is preferred against the judgment and order dated 29.06.2010 passed by Additional Session Judge, Court No.6, District Agra in Criminal Appeal No. 40 of 2010 and the judgment and order dated 29.01.2010 passed by the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, First, Agra in Criminal Case No. 2235 of 1994, convicting the revisionist under Section 7/16 of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act for one year rigorous imprisonment & fine of Rs. 1500/- and in default of payment of fine to further undergo 20 days additional imprisonment.

2. At the outset, learned counsel for the revisionist does not challenge his conviction, but submits that he is ready and willing to apply for commutation of sentence on the condition of further deposit, if any, in lieu of awarded sentence.

3. Learned counsel for the State submits that the sentence is proportionate to the charge established. He also submits that no useful purpose would be served by keeping this revision pending and it be disposed of by giving appropriate directions.

4. It is not disputed that the alleged offence took place on 30.07.1982, when the alleged sample of milk purchased from the revisionist was found to be adulterated. However, the Court cannot be oblivious that an offence under the P.F.A. Act has serious ramifications in the society, which cannot be lightly ignored, but at the same time to direct him after 23 years to serve out his remainder sentence is the other extreme. Learned A.G.A. is right in his submission that this Court cannot tinker, where minimum sentence is provided under a statute like the P.F.A. Act, 1954.

5. The Apex Court in the case of State of ***Rajasthan Vs. Jagdish Prasad : (2009) 12 SCC 646*** held in paras-4 and 5 thereof as under:

> *"4. In Dayal Singh v. State of Rajasthan it was inter alia observed as follows: (SCC pp. 728-29, para 15)*
>
> > *"15. In the instant case it was not disputed that for the offence charged a minimum sentence of 6 months' rigorous imprisonment is prescribed by law. The appellant has*

been sentenced to undergo 6 months' rigorous imprisonment which is the minimum sentence. We are not inclined to modify the sentence by passing an order of the nature passed in N. Sukumaran Nair where this Court in exercise of its extraordinary jurisdiction imposed only a sentence of fine and directed that State to exercise its powers under Section 433 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to commute the sentence of simple imprisonment for fine. In the instant case the appellant has been sentence to undergo 6 months' rigorous imprisonment. Moreover, we are firmly of the view that strict adherence to the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and the Rules framed thereunder is essential for safeguarding the interest of consumers of articles of food. Stringent laws will have no meaning if offenders could get away with mere fine. We, therefore, find no reason to interfere with the sentence imposed against the appellant."

"5. In the circumstances, the appeal is allowed. The sentence as imposed by the trial court is restored. However, since the occurrence took place nearly three decades back if the respondent-accused moves the appropriate Government to commute the sentence of imprisonment, the same shall be considered in the proper perspective. For a period of three months the accused need not surrender to undergo sentence during which period it shall be open to him to move the appropriate Government for commutation. If no order in the matter of commutation is passed by the appropriate Government the accused shall surrender to custody to serve the remainder of sentence."

6. The position which emerges from the aforesaid discussion is that the allegations against the revisionist, was selling mixed milk which as per the report of Public Analyst was deficient in milk fat by 18%. Learned A.G.A. could not point out any distinguishing feature, which would make the ratio laid in the case of Jagdish Prasad (supra) inapplicable on the facts of the present case. Learned counsel for the revisionist has also expressed his willingness that the revisionist is prepared to apply for commutation of sentence under Section 433 of the Code and is also willing to deposit additional fine, if any.

7. The revision is disposed of subject to the following conditions:-

(i) Order of conviction is maintained;

(ii) In case, the revisionist deposits Rs.10,000/- as additional fine before the Trial Court within 6 weeks from today, he shall be released on bail on his furnishing a bond with two sureties of the like amount, each to the satisfaction of the court concerned, and simultaneously he would apply before the appropriate government for commutation of his sentence;

(iii) The State government shall be obliged to consider the request for commutation of sentence in accordance with law and in the light of observations made above, within a further period of three months from the date of production of certified copy of the order along with the request for commutation.

(iv) For a period of 6 months, revisionist need not surrender to undergo remaining sentence. If no orders for commutation in favour of revisionist is passed by the appropriate government, within the aforesaid period (3 months), the revisionist would be obliged to surrender only upon refund of fine deposited by him.

(v) The competent authority would strictly adhere to the time schedule and to the conditions stipulated hereinabove.

(vi) However, in case of default on the part of revisionist in complying with this order, he shall forthwith surrender after 6 weeks to serve out his remainder sentence.

8. Let a copy of this order along with the trial court records be sent to the Trial Court concerned and to the State Government for compliance and necessary action.

Order Date :- 11.12.2023
AS Rathore

(Samit Gopal,J.)

Digitally signed by :-
ABHISHEK SINGH RATHOR
High Court of Judicature at Allahabad