

Bail Slip

The Appellant/Accused was directed to be released on bail in and by the order of this Court dated 05/08/2014 made in M.P.No. 1 of 2014 in Crl.A 413 of 2014.

IN THE HIGHCOURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

Date of Reservation : 28.11.2016

Date of Pronouncement : 01.06.2017

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE P.VELMURUGAN

Criminal Appeal No.413 of 2014

Meena Appellant/Accused

versus

State by
The Inspector of Police,
D3 Ice House Police Station,
Chennai - 600 005. Respondent/Complainant

Prayer: Criminal Appeal filed under Section 374 of Cr.P.C., to call for the records pertaining to order dated 21.07.2014 passed in S.C.No.36 of 2013 on the file of the Mahila Sessions Judge, Chennai and set aside the same.

For Appellant : Mr.R.Abdul Mubeen
For Respondent : Mr.P.Govindarajan, A.P.P.

JUDGMENT

This criminal appeal has been filed by the appellant/accused against the judgment of conviction passed by the learned Mahila Sessions Judge, Chennai in S.C.No.36 of 2013 dated 21.07.2014, in which, the Mahila Judge had convicted the appellant for the commission of offence under Section 306 of I.P.C. and sentenced her to undergo 7 years rigorous imprisonment and to pay a fine of Rs.10,000/- in default to undergo 6 months simple imprisonment.

2.The case of the prosecution is that one Vivek, who is the maternal grandson of the accused fallen in love with 15 years old girl by name Jessima, who is the deceased and daughter of the complainant and on 25.05.2012 at about 10.00 p.m., when Jessima was walking in the Muthiah Thotta street, the accused

with an intention to insult her, scolded her with filthy language and induced her to commit suicide and since the minor girl Jessima was not able to bear the words uttered by the accused, poured kerosene, which was kept in her house on her and set fire as self immolation, as a result of which, she sustained burnt injuries and immediately, she was admitted in the Government Hospital, Royapettah, where, she died on 26.05.2012 at about 10.15 a.m. Therefore, a case was registered against the accused for the offence under Section 306 of I.P.C. by the respondent police in crime No.1039 of 2012.

3.After completion of investigation, the Inspector of Police, D3 Ice House Police Station, Chennai laid a charge sheet against the appellant before the learned XIII Metropolitan Magistrate, Egmore, where the case was taken on file in P.R.C.No.330 of 2012 and the case was committed to the Court of Sessions and the same was made over to the learned Mahila Sessions Judge, Chennai, where the case was taken on file in S.C.No.36 of 2013 and as prima facie case was found against the accused, she was charged for the commission of offence under Section 306 of I.P.C.

4.In order to prove the case of prosecution, on the side of prosecution, as many as 10 witnesses, P.W.1 to 10 were examined and Exs.P1 to 8 were marked. P.W.1 is the mother of the deceased and she has spoken about the complaint statement made before the Assistant Sub Inspector of Police. P.W.2 is the uncle of the deceased, who had admitted the deceased in the Government Hospital, Royapettah and spoken about the cause of the injuries sustained by the deceased. P.W.3 is the second husband of the complainant and P.W.4 is the mother of the complainant as well as the maternal grandmother of the deceased, who has spoken about the cause of injury sustained by the deceased. P.W.7 is the doctor, who gave treatment to the deceased and spoken about the A.R.Copy entry made in the G.H. Register and spoken about the condition of the deceased at that time, when she was admitted in the hospital. P.W.8 is the doctor, who has done postmortem and has spoken about the cause of the death. P.W.9 is the Special Sub Inspector of D3 Ice House Police Station and spoken about the registration of first information report and P.W.10 is the Inspector of Police, who investigated the matter and laid the charge sheet against the accused.

5.After examining the above said witnesses, the incriminating evidence as against the accused were put to her, for which, the accused denied the same as false and in order to disprove the case of prosecution, on the side of the accused, though D.W.1 was examined as defence witness, no document was marked.

6.The trial Court, after completion of trial, on the basis of oral and documentary evidence produced by the prosecution, found the accused guilty for the offence under Section 306 of I.P.C. and sentenced her as stated above. Aggrieved by the said judgment of conviction passed against the accused, the present appeal has been filed.

7.The learned counsel for the appellant would submit that the prosecution has not proved the case beyond reasonable doubt. There is no eye witness to prove that the accused scolded the deceased and due to that, she poured kerosene and set her on fire. The evidence of P.W.9 has created doubt and there is a contradiction regarding the condition of the deceased when he obtained the complaint from P.W.1, the mother of the deceased. P.Ws.1,2, and 4 are the interested witnesses and they made false allegation against the accused. The prosecution had laid charge sheet against the accused without any proper investigation. The prosecution could not substantiate the charge. The trial Court failed to consider the materials produced before it and wrongly convicted the accused. The judgment of conviction passed by the trial Court is without any substance. The conviction and sentence passed by the learned trial Judge is purely on a sympathy on the deceased and not on merits and therefore, the conviction and sentence passed by the trial Court is liable to be set aside. For supporting his contention, he has placed reliance of the following decisions:

1.2016(1) MLJ (Criminal) 459 - Govindan V. State by Inspector of Police, Attayampatty, Salem.

2.2016(1) MLJ (criminal) 657 - B.Raja V. State by Inspector of Police, E3, Teynampet Police Station, Chennai.

3.2002 Cri.L.J. 2796 - Sanju @ Sanjay Singh Sengar

4.2007(10) SCC 797 - Kishori Lal V. State of M.P.

8.The learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the State would submit that P.Ws.1 and 2 had clearly spoken about the involvement of the accused. P.W.7, doctor, who had made A.R. Copy entry clearly stated that at the time, when the deceased was admitted in the hospital, she was able to speak. The deceased has spoken to her uncle P.W.2 about the occurrence and thereafter, her mother and therefore, evidence of P.Ws.1,2 and 7 have clearly proved the involvement of the accused in the commission of offence. The trial Court has correctly come to the conclusion that the accused has committed the offence and found her guilty and hence, the conviction and sentence passed

by the trial Court does not warrant any interference and the appeal is devoid of merits and the same is liable to be dismissed.

9. Since the first appellate Court is a fact finding Court, this Court has to come to an independent conclusion as to whether the accused has committed and the prosecution has proved the charge as framed against the appellant/accused beyond reasonable doubt?

10. Heard the learned counsel for the appellant and the learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the respondent and perused the materials available on records as well as the judgment passed by the Court below.

11. The brief facts of the case is that on 25.05.2012 at about 10.00 p.m., when the deceased Jessima was walking in the Muthiah Thotta street, the accused with an intention to insult her, scolded her with filthy language regarding her love with his maternal grandson and induced her to commit suicide and accordingly, the deceased poured kerosene on her and set fire as self immolation, as a result of which, she died and a case was registered against the accused for the offence under Section 306 of I.P.C. by the respondent police in crime No.1039 of 2012.

12. In order to find out the correctness of the judgment of the trial Court, it is relevant to refer the evidence of prosecution, which would run thus:

P.W.1, Regina Mary, who is the mother of the deceased has deposed in her evidence that on 25.05.2012 at about 9.00 p.m., she sent the deceased to buy milk and gone to the function of her relative. P.W.2, Prabhu, who is the uncle of the deceased, while chatting with his friends, hearing the news that one lady set fire on her and when he attempted to set off the fire, the lady called him as uncle and thereafter, he came to know that the lady is his sister's daughter and he took her to the hospital in an auto and in the hospital, when he asked her as to why she acted like this, she replied that when he returned back from the shop, the accused scolded her in filthy language. Thereafter, he called P.W.1 over phone and intimated the matter and asked her to come to government hospital, Royapettah. Immediately, P.W.1 came to the hospital and asked the deceased as to why she acted like this, she replied that when the deceased along with her friends was talking with one Vivek, who is the maternal

grandson of the deceased, she scolded her in filthy language before some persons and since she was not able to bear with the same, she set fire on self immolation. P.Ws.3 and 4 have corroborated the evidence of P.Ws.1 and 2. P.W.6 witnessed that she had put his signature in the mahazer. P.W.7 doctor, who made entry in accident register maintained in the hospital has deposed that when he examined Jesima at the time of admission in the hospital, she has stated that on 25.05.2012 at about 10.30 p.m., she poured kerosene on her and set fire on self immolation. He has further stated that she was conscious and was in semi sedation and was able to speak and she sustained 91% burnt injuries. P.W.8 doctor conducted postmortem and gave opinion that the deceased would appear to have died of shock due to extensive burns. P.W.9, Sub Inspector of Police received the intimation and gone to government hospital and since the deceased was not able to speak, he recorded the statement given by her mother P.W.1 and registered the case in crime No.1039 of 2012 for the offence under Section 309 of I.P.C. and P.W.10, Inspector of Police conducted further investigation and laid the charge sheet against the accused.

13.A perusal of the judgment of the trial court and other records would show that there is no direct evidence to speak about the occurrence to prove that the accused scolded the deceased before some other person and as a result of which, she poured kerosene and set fire on self immolation. The evidence of P.Ws.1 to 4 are only hearsay evidence. There is no eye witness to prove the case of prosecution. Even though it is alleged that the deceased fallen in love with the maternal grandson of the accused, no witnesses has been examined by the prosecution to prove the same.

14.The case of the prosecution is that on 25.05.2012 at about 9.00 p.m., when the deceased returned back from the shop, the accused scolded her in filthy language in the presence of some persons. However, no occurrence witness has been examined from the village to prove the above fact. Therefore, the prosecution has not established the case with acceptable evidence that the accused scolded the deceased in filthy language and induced her to set fire on self immolation.

15.Perusal of the evidence of P.W.2 would show that when he heard the news that one lady set fire on self immolation and when he tried to set off the fire, the deceased called him

as uncle and thereafter only, he came to know that the deceased was his sister's daughter. Likewise, after sending the deceased to buy milk in the shop, P.W.1 gone to a function and after the occurrence only, she was intimated by his brother/P.W.2 about the occurrence and thereafter only, she gone to the hospital.

16. Even though, P.W.7 enquired the deceased at the time of admitting in the hospital, she has stated that she poured kerosene and set fire on self immolation during that time she was in conscious and semi sedation, he has not recorded as to the reason for why she poured kerosene on her and set fire. Subsequently, P.W.8, the doctor who conducted postmortem has given opinion that the deceased sustained 91% burnt injuries. However, the prosecution has not taken any steps to record the dying declaration of the deceased before her death. Furthermore, the prosecution has not seized any suicidal note or there is no any extra judicial confession.

17. Perusal of the evidence of P.W.9 would show that when he gone to the hospital, the deceased was not able to speak and hence, he recorded the statement of P.W.1, whereas, during the cross examination, P.W.1 has deposed that when she saw her daughter in the Hospital, she was in a position to speak well. Police came to the hospital at 10.30 a.m. Her daughter gave complaint statement before the police. She also heard the statement given by her daughter before the police which create doubts. P.W.1 is the mother, P.W.2 is the uncle, P.W.3 is the second husband of P.W.1 and P.W.4 is the maternal grandmother of the deceased and they are all interested witness. Though the evidence of a related witness cannot be discarded solely on this score. It will not adversely affect prosecution version, if statement of related witnesses are trustworthy. But, in this case, P.W.1 has stated that her daughter, the deceased, while she was admitted in the hospital told her that in front of others the accused had insulted by uttering untold filthy language and induced to commit suicide. But except P.W.5, none of the person has been examined before the Court to establish that accused scolded the deceased with untold words. The only person P.W.5 was examined before the Court for that purpose also has not supported the case of the prosecution. Further, it is not clear that there was a dispute between the accused family and the deceased family due to the love affairs between the deceased and the maternal grandson of the accused.

18. Therefore, in the absence of any eye witnesses or dying declaration or suicidal note or statement of the witnesses under Section 164 of Cr.P.C., or extra judicial confession and since there is no evidence as to the love between the deceased and Vivek and there is no evidence to prove that the accused

scolded the deceased in the presence of some persons and no one person in the village, except the family members of the complainant has spoken about occurrence and accused is reason for self immolation of the deceased. That too only hearsay evidence. It is clear that the prosecution has not proved its case beyond reasonable doubt. Further more, the evidence of P.W.9 itself create suspicion as to whether the deceased was conscious and able to speak or not at the time of recording the statement from P.W.1. But, there is no doctor certificate annexed with the complaint statement, Ex.P1 in this regard.

19.Thus, the prosecution evidence does not go to establish the charges framed against the accused. What remains is suspicion and surmises. Suspicion and surmises, however, strong may not take the place of legal proof. No legal and acceptable evidence is available to record a conviction against the accused. Prosecution has thoroughly failed to prove the charge framed against the accused.

20..For all the above reasons, this Court is of the view that the trial Court has not considered all the aspects in a proper manner and convicted the accused for the offence under Section 306 of I.P.C. Therefore, the judgment and conviction passed by the trial Court is liable to be set aside and the benefit of doubt should be given to the accused.

21.Accordingly, this criminal appeal is allowed and judgment and conviction dated 21.07.2014 passed in S.C.No.36 of 2013 by the learned Mahila Sessions Judge, Chennai is set aside and the accused is acquitted from the charge of offence under Section 306 of I.P.C.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar(CS VIII)

//True Copy//

सत्यमेव जयते

Sub Assistant Registrar

Arul

To

1.The Inspector of Police,
D3 Ice House Police Station,
Chennai - 600 005.

2.The Mahila Sessions Judge,
Chennai

WEB COPY

3.The Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate,
Egmore, Chennai.

4.The Superintendent,
Special Prison for Women,
Puzhal, Chennai.

5.The District Collector,
Chennai.

6.The Director General of police,
Mylapore, Chennai.

7.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

8.The Section Officer,
Criminal Section,
High Court, Madras.

9.The 13th Metropolitan Magistrate Court,
Egmore, Chennai.

10.-Do-Thro- The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate,
Chennai.

+1cc to M/S.r.Abdul Mubeen, Advocate Sr.39536

Criminal Appeal No.413 of 2014

ak[co]
srg 14/06/2017

WEB COPY