

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

Hukam Chand

Vs.

State of Haryana

Crl.A.No.147 of 2002

(Umesh C. Banerjee and Y.K. Sabharwal JJ.)

23.10.2002

JUDGMENT

U.C. Banerjee, J.

1. The appellant by the grant of special leave of this Court is in appeal from the order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court affirming conviction for an offence under Section 302 IPC and sentence to undergo imprisonment for life and further to pay a fine of Rs. 50,000/-. The appellant has further been convicted under Section 323 IPC and sentenced to imprisonment of six months and both the sentences, however, were directed to be concurrent.

2. Two principal issues stand canvassed for consideration in the appeal. Firstly, the order of conviction as confirmed by the High Court remains wholly unwarranted, since injuries inflicted on the deceased cannot but be termed to be in self-defence and secondly having credence on the entire prosecution story at the most the conviction should have been under Section 304 Part I and not under Section 302 IPC on the state of evidence available on record.

3. It is at this juncture, certain factual backdrop ought to be noticed. On 6th May, 1989, around 7.00 in the morning, PW.12 Kishori Lal son of Devi Sahai and his brother Udai Chand (since deceased) went to the fields of Chatur Bhuj, where a wheat thrasher had been installed for thrashing the wheat. A cart belonging to Kishori Lal was standing nearby from where Mani Ram and Tuhia @ Varinder picked up a Khes and started filling the fodder in the tractor trolley by laying the fodder on Khes. The complainant side asked them to return the Khes and there was by reason whereof some altercation between the two groups : whilst altercations, however, were on, Mani Ram asked his son Tuhia to inform his uncle so that he can come to lend support to Mani Ram's group. It is in pursuance of such a call that Hukam Chand arrived but armed with a Pharsa and it is this Pharsa by which Hukam Chand did inflict a blow on the head of Udai Chand and the latter on receipt of the same fell down. Whereas Mani Ram gave a Lathi blow on the head of Kishori Lal, Tuhia being the son of Mani Rai inflicted a Ballam blow on the right shoulder of Kishori Lal. The latter was also given a Ballam blow by Dayawati, wife of Hukam Chand and it is on the hue and cry that

some other persons arrived on the spot and Udai Chand was removed to the Government Hospital, Mandkola and subsequently to B.K. Hospital, Faridabad and then to Safdarjung Hospital in New Delhi.

4. The factual score further depicts that the Primary Health Centre sent a Ruqa to the local police station and ASI, Rajinder Singh, upon a visit to the village Mandkola, came to know that the injured had been admitted in B.K. Hospital, Faridabad and subsequently to Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi on 9.5.1989. The condition of Udai Chand, however, was rather serious, by reason wherefor no statement could be obtained but Kishori Lal's statement was recorded (Ex.PL). Subsequently, Udai Chand died on 12th May, 1989. Dr. A.K. Sharma (PW.2) conducted the post-mortem on the body of the deceased Udai Chand on 13.5.1989 and found a stitched wound of the length of 15 cm with 12 stitches placed antero posteriorly above the middle of the head. Its anterior end being 6 cm above the root of the nose and posterior end was also 6 cm above the occipital protuberance. On opening the stitches, it was bone deep, margins were clean cut. The doctor also found that effusion of blood was present in whole of the scalp region. Cut fracture of the skull was present in the middle of the frontal bone and continued backwards all along the saggital suture, its anterior end continued in the floor of the skull in the right side of the anterior cranial fossa. It encloses two small depressed fractures one at the middle level of saggital suture as shown in the post mortem report and another just at the anterior end of the saggital suture. Anterior end of the cut fracture in the frontal bone also encloses small depressed fracture. Dura matter was cut antero posteriorly just underneath the cut fracture. Extra dural haematoma 0.3 cm in thickness and 3 cm of width present all along with underneath the cut fracture. Thick subdural and patchy sub arachnoid haemorrhage present all over the both cerebral hemi spheres. Contusion laceration present along the inner margins of the anterior half of both the cerebral hemi spheres.

5. In the opinion of the doctor the death was due to cranio-cerebral damage consequence upon being hit on the head by a heavy sharp cutting weapon and injury No. 1 was sufficient to cause death in the ordinary course of nature.

6. Records depict that apart from the injury inflicted on to the deceased Udai Chand, Kishori Lal on the complainant side also suffered some injuries and Dr. A. Ahmad, PW.1 medico-legally examined Kishori Lal, PW.12 on 6.5.1989 at about 9.45 a.m. and found the following injuries on his person:-

1. Lacerated wound 4 cm x 0.4 cm x 0.3 cm on the middle of scalp, 10 cm above from occipital protuberance. There was slight bleeding.
2. Lacerated wound 3 cm x 0.4 x 0.3 cm, 0.7 cm from injury No. 1 towards left side. There was slight bleeding.
3. Superficial abrasion 7 cm on the right arm antero laterally.
4. Superficial abrasion 3.5 cm on the middle of back of right fore-arm.
5. Superficial abrasion 1 cm x 1 cm on the back of left elbow.

All the injuries in the opinion of the doctor were simple in nature caused by blunt weapon.

7. It has also come in evidence that both Hukam Chand and Baljit, being accused persons also suffered some injuries, whereas Hukam Chand's injury is a lacerated wound 1 cm x 1 cm x 0.5 cm on the back of left side of scalp, 5 cm above left to occipital protuberance and X-ray was advised. Baljit being the oer accused person was found to have suffered the following injuries on his person : (1) Lacerated wound 3.5 cm x 0.5 cm x 0.3 cm on the right side of scalp 7 cm above pinna of right ear. Wound was surrounded by contusion. Slight bleeding was present. (2) Superficial abrasion 8 cm on the right shoulder. Both the injuries were simple in nature caused by blunt weapon. Ex.DB is the copy of the medico legal report. 8. Incidentally, all the weapons, namely, Lathi, Pharsa and Ballam with blood-sĐstained marks thereon were duly recovered at the instance of the accused persons.

9. Presently, we are concerned with the appellant only and as such evidence pertaining to the involvement of the accused is required to be seen and considered.

10. Hukam Chand at the trial stated in his statement under Section 313 as below:

"I am innocent. My co-accused Mani Ram has filed a cross-case, which is pending in the court of JMIC, Palwal, wherein, our complete version has been given and Devi Sahai and Kishori PW have been summoned as accused. Harchandi, my uncle is a bachelor and he resides with us and is very much attached with Tuhia co-accused and treats him as his son. The complainant party i.e. Devi Sahai and his sons are jealous of Tuhia and are always looking out to give beating to Tuhia and his father, and his father Mani Ram on 6.5.1989 my co-accused Mani Ram and his son Tuhia went to the field of Chattarbhuji PW where we have stored our fodder with a tractor trolley and had started putting fodder on the Khes, belonging to us which was in our trolley. Devi Sahai, Kishori PWs and Udai Chand reached near the field of Chatterbhuj with a bhansa buggi and snatched/pulled the Khes from our trolley and on being confronted by Mani Ram they gave beating to Mani Ram and Tuhia on which Tuhia slipped away with our tractor and informed me and my brother Baljit about the same on which I along with my brother Baljit went to the field of Chattarbhuji with Tuhia on tractor but unarmed and on reaching there asked the complainant party i.e. Devi Sahai, Kishori to return the Khes but Udai Chand armed with a Pharsa, Kishori armed with a ballam and Devi Sahai armed with lathi opened attack on us. Kishori PW gave injuries to Tuhia by Ballam lathiwise. Devi Sahai PW gave injuries to Baljit with his lathi and Udai Chand (with) armed Pharsa and gave Pharsa blow on my head with blunt side and when Udai Chand wanted to hit a second blow of pharsa to me I grappled with Udai Chand in order to disarm and in that process Udai Chand received injury on his head. The occurrence was witnessed by Hari Chand and Kishan sons of Ramji Lal. Charanjit son of Man Singh and Kanwar Pal son of Chattarbhuji who intervened and separated us. I and my co-accused were medically examined by Dr. Kishan Kumar and Dr. A.Ahmad, Medical Officers of PHC Mandkola at 9.00 A.M. on 6.5.89 but we were all detained by the police in police lock up on 6.5.89 itself and initiated one sided challan against us illegally."

11. Hereinbefore in this judgment the first issue pertains to a question as to whether the complainant party can be termed to be aggressors or not ? The learned Sessions Judge negated it and so did the High Court. A bare perusal of the injury report of Hukam Chand as a matter of fact negates the theory of aggression, as introduced by the defence. No serious injuries have been shown to have been received by any of the accused persons and the pretended explanation as set up under Section 313 that Udai Chand received the fatal blow on his head from his own arms cannot but be termed to be otherwise not creditworthy neither acceptable. On the wake of the aforesaid the aggression theory completely fails and we answer the first issue thus in negative.

12. Mr. Shiva Pujan Singh, learned Advocate appearing in support of the appeal, however, very strongly laid emphasis on conversion of the offence from Section 302 to Section 304 Part I.

13. Before proceeding with the matter further, it be noticed that the order accused persons Mani Ram, Baljit and Tuhia @ Varinder were convicted under Section 323 and sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of six months and to pay a fine in the sum of Rs. 1,000/- each and this appeal stands filed by Hukam Chand only.

14. Coming back to the issue raised as regards the invocation of Section 304 Part II IPC, strong reliance was placed on to a decision of this Court in *Pularu v. State of Madhya Pradesh*¹, wherein K. Jayachandra Reddy, J., as His Lordship then was, speaking for the Bench in paragraph 7 of the Report stated :

"7. That takes us to the nature of the offence. All the three eye-witnesses have spoken that the appellant dealt only one blow with the agricultural implement. Having regard to the time and the surrounding circumstances it is difficult to hold that he intended to cause the death of the deceased particularly, when he was not armed with any deadly weapon as such. As an agriculturist he must have been having a tabbal in his hands and if in those circumstances he dealt a single blow it is difficult to convict him by invoking clause (1) or (3) of Section 300, I.P.C. It cannot be said that he intended to cause that particular injury which unfortunately resulted in the fracture of bones. Therefore, the offence committed by him would be one amounting to culpable homicide punishable under Section 304, Part II, I.P.C. We accordingly set aside the conviction of the appellant under Section 302, I.P.C. and sentence of imprisonment for life awarded thereunder. Instead we convict him under Sec. 304 Part II, I.P.C. and sentence him to undergo Rigorous Imprisonment for seven years. The appeal is partly allowed to the extent indicated hereinabove".

15. While it is true that there was only one blow but the medical evidence on record definitely indicates that the severity of the blow was such that it was sufficient for causing death. In *Pularu* (supra) the appellant dealt only one blow with an agricultural implement. This Court having regard to the fact the *Pularu* was an agriculturist came to a conclusion that question of there being any intent to cause death of the deceased would not arise since he was not armed with any deadly weapon as such. Presently, however, the situation is slightly

different. Hukam Chand was in the house. He was called in and he arrived at the scene and place of occurrence with a Pharsa which by all means is a deadly weapon and it is this Pharsa which was used to hit the deceased at his head resulting in immediate collapse and subsequent death. The story set up by appellant, as noticed hereinbefore belies the incident and cannot but be ascribed to be a totally fabricated one. Injuries suffered by Udai Chand, the deceased cannot be said to be inflicted as a matter of chance while grabbling (grappling ?) with each other. The nature of the injuries, as noticed hereinbefore, depicts it otherwise. If that be the case which stands to reason that there was in fact a deliberate Pharsa blow on the deceased, then and in that event a simple question by itself would negate the plea of the accused, namely as to the reason why Hukam Chand arrived at the place of occurrence with a Pharsa in his hand. The factum of bringing in the Pharsa at the place of occurrence from his house when he was sent for cannot be ignored. It definitely indicates the intent to use it and thereby cause death.

16. On the wake of the aforesaid, we are unable to record our concurrence on the second count as well, as addressed by the appellant.

17. In that view of the matter, we do feel it expedient to record that judgment impugned does not warrant any interference. The appeal thus fails and is dismissed.
Appeal dismissed.

¹(AIR 1993 SC 1487)