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Life imprisonment for Satyam Babu

Staff Reporter

VIJAYAWADA: Pidathala Satyam Babu, accused in the sensational case of murder and rape of pharmacy student Ayesha Meera, was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Women's Special Sessions Court here on Wednesday. He was sentenced to another 10 years of simple imprisonment for raping the victim. Both sentences will run concurrently, Judge P. Srisudha announced in the packed court hall.

Ayesha Meera was found dead in the bathroom of Sri Durga Ladies Hostel at Ibrahimpatnam, while studying in the nearby Nimra College, on December 27, 2007. After several twists and turns in the investigation, Satyam Babu was produced by the Vijayawada police as the accused in August 2008.

The judge gave lifer under Section 302 (punishment for murder) and 10-year imprisonment under Section 376 (punishment for rape) of the IPC. She also levied a total fine of Rs.2,000.

The judgment brought curtains on the nearly three-year-long case in which 34 witnesses were examined.

Several Dalit organisations, women activists and lawyers gathered in a large number in the court complex and staged a protest against the judgement.

They insisted that Satyam Babu was not the culprit in the case. Ayesha Meera's mother Shamsad Begum also expressed the same view. Members of the bar association pacified the agitators, saying it was not proper to protest on the court premises.

Mother faints

Satyam Babu's mother Mariamma fainted as soon as the judgment was delivered. Defence lawyer P. Srinivasa Rao said that he would move the High Court to seek justice for Satyam Babu. He earlier urged the court to consider the health condition of the accused, who was suffering from Guillain Barre Syndrome. As soon as the proceedings began for the day, the judge asked the accused for his version.

Satyam Babu said, "If the court believes that I am guilty, I am ready to even face death penalty. But please consider the financial position of my family as I am the only breadwinner for my mother and sister."

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INDIA

Lifer for Satyam Babu in Ayesha murder case

TNN, Sep 30, 2010, 04.36am IST

VIJAYAWADA: Amidst high tension, the women's special sessions court here on Wednesday sentenced [Pidathala Satyam Babu](#) to life imprisonment in the sensational rape and murder case of Ayesha Meera.

The court awarded 14 years jail to the lone accused in the case under section 302 of IPC for murder and 10 years of rigorous imprisonment under section 376 of IPC for rape. The court ruled that both the jail terms would run concurrently. In addition, the court ordered Satyam Babu to pay a fine of Rs 1,000 or undergo six months jail.

After confirming the charges against Satyam Babu in the morning, judge P Srisudha took nearly five hours to give final touches to the verdict, which was delivered around 4.15 pm.

Anxiety was palpable on the court premises since morning as none—the family members of Ayesha, relatives of Satyam or the members of the bar—was in favour of conviction of Satyam. A shocked Mariyamma, Satyam's mother fainted after hearing the judgment. She alleged that her son was falsely implicated by the police to save influential people.

The judge said the life sentence was handed out as the prosecution had proved all the charges against Satyam. "Based on the available material—technical and scientific evidences—this court has come to the conclusion that Satyam committed the crime and there was no doubt about that," the judge said.

When the judge asked him whether he preferred a death or life imprisonment, he said he would welcome the death penalty since the court had already concluded that he was the culprit. "I prefer death sentence instead of a jail term as there is no point in living on this earth after the court has confirmed the charges which anyway are false," he told the judge. There was virtual silence in the court hall for about five minutes, after which the judge retired to her chambers.

The court gave another opportunity to the defence counsel to put up their final arguments on the mode of sentence when it resumed at 3 pm. Putting up a brave front, defence counsel P Srinivas argued that the court should not sentence Satyam to death going by the technical evidences given by the prosecution.

"There are no direct witnesses. There are no concrete scientific evidences. All the parties in the case except the police are not sure Satyam is guilty. Please take his family and health conditions into consideration while awarding the sentence," Srinivas pleaded.

After giving them time for 10 minutes, the judge again retired to her chambers. Finally, the judge pronounced the verdict at 4.15 pm.

For the record, 17-year-old Ayesha Meera, a first year B Pharmacy student, was found murdered in her hostel room on Dec 27, 2007. The police, who filed a chargesheet against one Gurvinder Singh alias Laddu in the case, had withdrawn it after nabbing Satyam Babu in August 2008. While women's fora and locals from Satyam's native village of Anasagaram in Krishna district accused the police of falsely implicating him in the case, Ayesha's parents alleged that police carried out the investigation only to bail out the kin of former deputy CM Koneru Ranga Rao.

Meanwhile, Koneru Sateesh, grandson of late Ranga Rao, rubbished the charges of his involvement in Ayesha's murder. He said he had undergone all the tests which were conducted on Satyam and the people's organisations were deliberately trying to defame him without any evidence. Meanwhile, Ayesha's parents said they would continue their legal battle against the kin of Ranga Rao.

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Ayesha murderer jailed for life; Dalits protest

VIJAYAWADA: After many twists and turns, the sensational Ayesha Meera rape-cum-murder case finally culminated in a lifer for main accused Pidatala Satyam Babu (24) here on Wednesday sparking off protests from various quarters.

Satyam Babu of Anasagaram village in Krishna district was held guilty on two counts of murder and rape. He was handed life imprisonment for murdering Ayesha Meera, an under-graduate, under Section 302 of the IPC and asked to pay Rs 1,000 or undergo six more months in jail if he fails to pay up.

The court sentenced him to 10 years imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 1,000/six more months in jail under Section 376 of the IPC for raping the girl. Both the sentences will run concurrently.

Satyam Babu pleaded with the Mahila Sessions Court Judge P Sree Sudha to hang him if he was found guilty but prayed her to consider the plight of his mother and sister before delivering the verdict.

His mother and sister are dependent upon him for their livelihood.

Additional Public Prosecutor G Uma, however, would have none of it and argued strongly in favour of capital punishment for the accused. She cited Supreme Court judgments to buttress her arguments.

Senior advocate Karnati Rammohana Rao, Bojja Tarakam, P Srinivas, ASS Ramprasad, B Sambasiva Rao, VNV Rajyalakshmi, Pilla Ravi and K Sudhakar Raju defended the accused in the 2 1/2 years old case. The defence lawyers sought time to prepare their final arguments prompting the judge to adjourn the proceedings till noon. The 103-page judgment was delivered after the court reassembled.

Tension gripped the court premises soon after with several Dalit organisations locking the main gate in protest against the "injustice" meted out to Satyam Babu.

"The government has punished an innocent young man to shield the real culprits," the protestors alleged.

Dalit Sthree Sakthi state convener and High Court advocate G Jhansi said a Dalit had been victimised and punished for a crime committed by influential people.

She wondered why the government was so desperate to help the real murderer.

The protestors raised slogans and said people would lose confidence in the judiciary if an innocent man like Satyam Babu was punished. They blamed the police for wrongly implicating him in the case.

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