

IN THE COURT OF THE JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE SIRKALI

Present: Thiru. R.Kailaash B.A.,B.L.,
Judicial Magistrate,
Sirkali.

Friday, the 18th day of May 2026

S.T.C.No.1530/2026
CNR.No.TNMY08-0032781-2025

1.	Details of the Complainant	:	Punjab National Bank Rep. By its Authorised agent John Britto Kerketta, No.326-4 MIA Building, Main Road, Puthur, Sirkali Tk, Mayiladuthurai Dt.
2.	Details of the Accused	:	Annadurai S/o. Balakrishnan, No.1/84, Periya Street, Arapallam, Sirkali Town, Mayiladuthurai Dt.
3.	Date of Complaint	:	26.11.2024
4.	Commencement of Trial	:	19.09.2025
5.	Closure of Trial	:	10.02.2026
6.	Judgment	:	18.05.2026
7.	Reason for Delay	:	Absence of Complainant

This case was taken cognizance on 26.09.2025 and came up for final hearing on 13.05.2026 in the presence of Mrs. M. Sudha, Counsel for the complainant and on the said date there was no representation for the accused. After hearing the submissions, upon perusing the materials on record and having stood over for consideration till this day, this court delivers the following:-

JUDGMENT

The complainant has filed this complaint U/s.223 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita r/w section 138 & 142 of the Negotiable Instrument Act against the accused alleging that, the accused has committed the offence u/s.138 of N.I Act and prayed for awarding suitable punishment to the accused according to law and for award of compensation to him.

2. The case of the complainant is as follows:

The complainant is a banking company and the accused is the customer of the said bank. On 07.07.2020 the accused promised to pay **Rs.7,60,000/-** within a period of 60 months for Bamboo & Cane works in complainant's bank and signed a loan agreement with them and received the said amount. For discharging the said pre-existing liability the accused had issued a cheque in favour of the complainant bearing cheque No.005427 dated **27.09.2024** for **Rs.1,40,000/-** drawn on **Punjab National Bank, Puthur Branch**. When at the request of the accused, the complainant presented the cheque for collection on **30.09.2024** through its banker viz. **Central Bank of India, Sirkali Branch** it was returned unhonoured on the same day for the reason "**Insufficient Funds**". Therefore, the complainant issued a registered legal notice to the address of the accused on **10.10.2024** demanding him to settle the cheque amount. The said notice was served on **22.10.2024**. Since the accused did not repay the cheque amount, this complaint was filed before this court on **26.11.2024**.

3. After filing of the complaint, at the pre - summoning stage itself the complainant was examined and exhibits were marked. Then, this court took cognizance of the offence u/s 138 of NI Act and on satisfaction that there are sufficient grounds available to proceed against the accused, summon was issued to the accused. After his appearance, copies of material documents were furnished u/s 230 of BNSS at free of cost. Then, the substance of accusation in this case was explained to the accused u/s 274 of BNSS for which the accused pleaded as 'False case' and so the case was posted for defence evidence.

4. The case of the accused is as follows:

The accused has not defended this case in a fullfledged manner for the reasons best known to him. He chose not to issue a reply to the demand notice, he chose not to cross examine the complainant and also he failed to adduce any evidence

on his part even after grant of several opportunities. At the time of explaining the substance of accusation he stated as

"இது பொய் வழக்கு. நான் நிரபராதி"

Thus though the accused claimed it as a false case, he failed to establish the same. Thus, this case was left undefended by the accused.

5. The complainant was examined as **P.W.1** and **Ex.P1-P5** were marked. After closing of the evidence, this court dispensed with the questioning u/s 351(1)(b) of B.N.S.S in terms of the Judgement of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka dated **07.02.2025** in ***Sunil Yadav and Y C Manju*** (CRP No. 664/2020) since on the part of the accused no reply notice was given, the complainant was not cross examined and no defense evidence was adduced.

6. Heard the complainant side. Perused the materials and documents available on record.

7. The counsel for the complainant argued that all the ingredients of the offence u/s 138 of N.I. Act are satisfied as proved through the documents exhibited on the side of the complainant and prayed for awarding maximum punishment and compensation.

8. The points for consideration are as follows:

- (i) Whether the ingredients of the offence enumerated in section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 have been met?
- (ii) Whether the facts and circumstances of this case warrants raising of presumption under section 139 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881?
- (iii) Whether the accused has rebutted the said presumption (if raised) in favour of the complainant?
- (iv) Whether the complainant has proved this case against the accused beyond all reasonable doubts?

9. Point No.I:

The complainant has filed this complaint alleging that the accused has committed the offence u/s.138 of the N.I Act. To attract the offence under section 138, the following conditions must have been satisfied.

1. The accused should have drawn the cheque from the bank account maintained by him for payment of any amount of money to the complainant.

2. The said cheque should have been drawn for the discharge, in whole or in part, of any debt or other liability.

3. The cheque should have been presented to the bank within a period of three months from the date on which it is drawn or within the period of its validity, whichever is earlier.

4. The cheque should have been returned by the bank unpaid, either because the amount of money standing to the credit of that account is insufficient to honour the cheque or that it exceeds the agreed arrangements.

5. After the dishonour, the complainant should have made a demand in writing for the payment of the amount mentioned in the cheque, within thirty days of receipt of information by him from the bank regarding the return of the cheque as unpaid.

6. The accused should not have paid the said amount of money within fifteen days of the receipt of the demand notice.

With the above aspects in mind, when the case on hand is analysed it transpires that the complainant examined himself as P.W.1 and through him the cheque was marked as Ex.P1, the return memo from bank showing dishonour of cheque as Ex.P2, the Legal Notice demanding payment within 15 days as Ex.P3, Acknowledgement card as Ex.P4. Thus, on considering the evidence of P.W.1 along with Ex.P1-P4, it is categorically established that the conditions enumerated under section 138 of the N.I Act are satisfied. Thus, the first point is answered in favour of the complainant.

10. Point No.II:

Section 139 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, under certain circumstances raises presumption in favour of the complainant in respect of the liability of the accused to him. It says as follows:

Sec. 139 – Presumption in favour of the holder:

It shall be presumed, unless the contrary is proved, that the holder of a cheque received the cheque, of the nature referred to in section 138, for the discharge, in whole or in part, of any debt or other liability.

As held by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in ***Rangapa Vs. Sri Mohan*** [2010 (4) CTC 118], section 139 presumes two things as follows:

- (i) That there exist a legally enforceable debt or liability
- (ii) That the cheque issued in favour of the holder was for discharge of legally enforceable debt or liability.

11. Regarding 'when' Sec 139 presumption comes into play, it was held by the Supreme Court in ***Triyambak S. Hegde Vs. Sripad (Crl.A.No. 849850/2011)*** that if the signature on the cheque is admitted, the presumption under section 139 'shall' be raised that the cheque was issued in discharge of debt or liability. Applying the said ratio to the case on hand, section 139 presumption does come into play since the accused in this case has not specifically denied his signature in Ex.P1 cheque. Therefore, facts of this case warrants raising of presumption under section 139 of the Negotiable Instruments Act and accordingly it is raised. Hence, this point is also answered in favour of the complainant.

12. Point No.III:

Section 139 of the N.I. Act, as a reverse onus clause imposes an 'evidentiary burden', not a 'persuasive burden'. Hence, as laid down in ***Rangappa Vs. Sri Mohan*** (cited supra), when the accused has to rebut the presumption under section 139, the standard of proof for doing so is that of 'preponderance of probabilities'. Similarly, as held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in

Basalingappa Vs. Mudibasappa [2020-1-L.W. (Crl)875], to rebut the presumption, it is open for the accused to rely on evidence let by him or he can also rely on the materials submitted by the complainant in order to raise a probable defence. It is not necessary for the accused to get into the witness box in support of his defence. Also, the inferences of preponderance of probabilities can be drawn not only from the materials brought on record by the parties but also by reference to the circumstances upon which they rely. With these settled principles in mind, the facts of the case on hand must be analysed.

13. As explained above the accused has not defended this case. He neither contested nor settled this matter out of the court in spite of the grant of sufficient opportunities. In view of the same this court concludes that the accused has failed to rebut the presumption raised against him under section 139 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 even in the standards of 'Preponderance of Probabilities'. Accordingly, the point is answered in favour of the complainant.

14. Point No.IV:

On the other hand, when the case of the complainant is analysed, it is cogently supported by oral and documentary evidence. The complainant examined himself as P.W.1 and narrated the sequence of events. He marked the cheque (Ex.P1) as documentary evidence and also deposed as to its issuance by the accused, deposit of the cheque for collection, its dishonour, issuance of demand notice and inaction on the part of the accused. His testimony is well supported by the other documentary evidence as well viz. Ex.P2– P5.

15. Therefore, as discussed in Point No.I, the ingredients of section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act were met. Then, as discussed in Point No.II, the presumption under section 139 of the NI Act was drawn against the accused. But, the accused has failed to rebut the said presumption as discussed in Point No.III. Hence, in view of all the above, I am of the considered view that the complainant has successfully proved this case against the accused beyond all reasonable doubts.

Hence, this point is also answered in favour of the complainant. Today the counsel for the accused had filed a memo stating that **Rs.40,000/-** has been paid to the complainant towards discharge of the liability.

In the result, the accused is found guilty for the offence under section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 and is convicted and sentenced to undergo 6 months simple imprisonment u/s. 278(2) of B.N.S.S and is directed to pay a compensation of Rs.1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh only) i.e., the amount due upon the cheque, to the complainant U/s. 395(3) of B.N.S.S within a period of one month from today. In default to pay the aforesaid compensation amount, the accused is directed to undergo further simple imprisonment for a period of one month.

Dictated to the steno-typist, typed by her, corrected by me and pronounced by me in the open court on this 18th day of May 2026.

Judicial Magistrate,
Sirkali.

List of witnesses examined on the complainant's side:

P.W.1- John Britto Kerketta (Complainant)

List of exhibits marked on the side of complainant through P.W.1:

1.	Ex.P1	The cheque bearing No.005427 dated 27.09.2024
2.	Ex.P2	Return Memo dated 30.09.2024
3.	Ex.P3	Office copy of statutory legal notice dated 10.10.2024
4.	Ex.P4	Postal Acknowledgement card dated 22.10.2024
5.	Ex.P5	Copy of Power of Attorney dated 04.11.2016

List of witnesses examined /exhibits marked on the side of the accused: -Nil-

Judicial Magistrate,
Sirkali.