

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH, BILASPUR

W.P.(Cr.) No. 446 of 2017

Ashok Dhobi S/o Bhakla Alias Mahettar, Aged About 41 Years
Lodged in Raipur Central Jail, Raipur Distt. Raipur Chhattisgarh

---- Petitioner

Versus

1. State Of Chhattisgarh Through Secretary, Department of Home, Mantralaya, Naya Raipur, District Raipur (Chhattisgarh).
2. Director General Prisons, The Jail & Correctional Services Chhattisgarh, Jail Road, Raipur District Raipur Chhattisgarh
3. Jail Superintendent, Central Jail Raipur, District Raipur Chhattisgarh
4. District Magistrate, Raipur, District Raipur Chhattisgarh
5. Additional District Magistrate, Raipur, District Raipur Chhattisgarh
6. Superintendent of Police, Raipur, District Raipur Chhattisgarh

---- Respondents

For petitioner - Ms. Rajni Soren, Advocate.
For State/respondents- Shri Suryakant Mishra, PL.

Hon'ble Shri Justice Goutam Bhaduri

Order

28/11/2017

Heard.

1. The instant petition has been filed invoking the provisions of Article 226 of the Constitution of India, seeking a direction to the respondents for releasing the petitioner on parole. By the impugned order dated 18/04/2017 District Magistrate, Raipur has concurred with the opinion of the Superintendent of Police and rejected the prayer for temporary release on parole.
2. Learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that the petitioner was convicted in Special Criminal Case No.116/1998 under section 302 read with 34 of IPC and convicted on 23/12/1999 for life imprisonment. Thereafter he was lodged in jail from 1998 to 2005. Subsequently, he was released on 24/03/2005 and when appeal was dismissed on 15/01/2014, he was again lodged in jail on 12/10/2014. It is stated that an application was preferred by the petitioner to the Superintendent Central Jail, Raipur

on 20/11/2015 and prayer was made to release him for a period of 10 days. Said application was forwarded by the jail authority respondent No.3 and opinion was sought for from the Superintendent of Police, Raipur by Annexure P-4. On 7/12/2015 and the Superintendent of Police obtained opinion from the Police Station Ajad Chowk and reverted back that the petitioner may not be released on parole. Consequently, application to release the petitioner was dismissed which cannot be substantiated under the law. It is therefore prayed that respondent No.4 be directed to pass fresh order in light of the rule applicable as only on apprehension the application for leave cannot be dismissed.

3. Learned State counsel opposes the prayer.

4. Having considered the rival contentions put forth on behalf of either side what is relevant at this juncture is that the State Government has enacted specific rules in respect of grant of leave to the prisoners in exercise of powers conferred upon it under the provisions of the Prisoners Act, 1900. The said Rules in the State of Chhattisgarh are known as 'The Chhattisgarh Prisoner's Leave Rules, 1989'. Rule 4 of the Rules of 1989 deals with the conditions of leave. For ready reference the said clause is reproduced herein below :

“4. Conditions of Leave.– The prisoners shall be granted leave under sub-section (1) of Section 31-A of the Act on the following conditions, namely :–

- (a) He fulfills the conditions laid down in Section 31-A of the Act;
- (b) He has not committed any offences in jail between the date of application for leave and receipt of the order of such leave;
- (c) The releasing authority must be satisfied that the leave may be granted without detriment to the public interest;
- (d) He gives in writing to the Releasing Authority the place or places which he intends to visit during the period of his leave and undertake not to visit any other place during such period without obtaining prior permission of the Releasing Authority in that behalf; and
- (e) He should furnish security to the satisfaction of the Releasing Authority if such security is demanded by the Releasing Authority.”

5. Similarly, Rule 6 of the Rules of 1989 deals with the powers conferred upon the sanctioning authority while considering the application for grant of leave, which again for ready reference is reproduced hereinbelow :

“6. Sanctioning Authority for first leave.– (a) If the District Magistrate, after making such enquiry as he may consider necessary, is satisfied that the request for grant of leave can be granted without detriment to public interest, he shall issue to the Superintendent a duly signed and sealed warrant in Form 'A' to the prisoner. The District Magistrate shall enter in the warrant the number of days that will be required for the journeys by the shortest practicable route to and from the place at which during his leave the prisoner proposes to reside or if he proposes to visit more than one place, the farthest place from the Jail which he proposed to visit.

Note.– The District Magistrate is responsible for the proper carrying out of these instructions. He may of course, consult the District Superintendent of Police on the advisability of granting the leave. The Superintendent of Police should also obtain the opinion of the Gram Panchayat of the village where the prisoner resided before conviction and send to the District Magistrate along with his report. But the responsibility for the action is that of the District Magistrate. He should use his discretion and should refuse to grant leave only in cases in which he is satisfied that release is fraught with danger to the public safety. Security should be demanded only when it is really necessary, for example, when there is reasonable apprehension that the prisoner will break leave. When security is required, the District Magistrate of the place where the surety resides should be asked by the releasing District Magistrate to accept the surety and not call the surety to his own headquarters. If the prisoner intends to visit another district, where his near relatives reside, the concerned Magistrate shall make necessary enquiries from the District Magistrate of that District before sanctioning the leave.

(b) If the District Magistrate considers that the grant of leave to the prisoner is undesirable in the public interest, he shall intimate his opinion to the Superintendent, who shall inform the prisoner that his request has been rejected.”

6. If we take into consideration the Note attached to Rule 6(a) it clearly reflects that there is only one ground on which leave can be refused by the District Magistrate and it is only in case where he is satisfied that the release of the prisoner is fraught with danger to the public safety and under no other circumstances can the leave be refused as a matter of routine without cogent reasons. Further perusal of Rule 6 also clearly depicts that before the District Magistrate takes a decision on the application for grant of temporary leave he has to consult the District Superintendent of Police who in turn has to obtain the opinion of the Gram

Panchayat of the village where the prisoner resides and if the refusal is on the ground of public interest, the refusal can be ordered for.

7. Taking into the facts and circumstances of the present case, it would show that document filed alongwith the petition Annexure R-1 contains an endorsement that as per opinion of the SHO Ajad Chowk it would not be proper to release the petitioner on parole. Memo which is filed as Annexure R-1 dated 30/03/2017 do not specifically lay down that before passing such order there was satisfaction to the requirement as according to the rule as existing The Chhattisgarh Prisoner's Leave Rules, 1989 were complied. In view of this present opinion of the City Superintendent will not prevail over statutory requirement and the application appears to have been rejected in mechanical manner.

8. The reasons for such communication has not been placed on record. Therefore, rejection of the application of petitioner for releasing him on parole is against the spirit of the Rule 1989.

9. In **Dadu alias Tulsidas Vs. State of Maharashtra, 2000 (8) SCC 437**, the Supreme Court held as under :

“6. Parole is not a suspension of sentence. The convict continues to be serving the sentence despite granting of parole under the statute, rules, jail manual or the Government Orders. “Parole” means the release of a prisoner temporarily for a special purpose before the expiry of a sentence, on the promise of good behaviour and return to jail. It is a release from jail, prison or other internment after actually being in jail serving part of sentence.”

10. Similar matter had come up before the Madhya Pradesh High Court in 2002 and relying upon the aforesaid judgment of the Supreme Court, the Madhya Pradesh High Court in the case of **Jeevan Singh Verma Vs. State of M.P. & Others, 2002 (1) M.P.L.J. 347**, Hon'ble Shri Justice Dipak Misra, as he then was, while deciding the case after referring to the provisions of the Prisoners Act held as under :

“7. Now the question that falls for consideration is whether the petitioner should be granted the benefit of parole or temporary release. In this context I may profitably refer to the decision rendered in the case of

Inder Singh and Anr. v. The State (Delhi Administration) 1978 SCC (Cri) 564 wherein their Lordships emphasized on rehabilitation and quoted a passage from Lewis Moore with approval. The said passage reads as under :

"You cannot rehabilitate a man through brutality and disrespect. Regardless of the crime a man may commit, he still is a human being and has feelings. And the main reason most inmates in prison today disrespect their keepers, is because they themselves (the inmates) are disrespected and are not treated like human beings. I myself have witnessed brutal attacks upon inmates and have suffered a few myself, if he becomes violent. But many a time this restraining has turned into a brutal beating. Does this type of treatment bring about respect and rehabilitation? No.! It only instills hostility and causes alienation toward the prison officials from the inmate or inmates involved.

If you treat a man like an animal, then you must expect him to act like one. For every action, there is reaction. This is only human nature. And in order for an inmate to act like a human being, you must treat him as such. Treating him like an animal will only get negative results from him."

In the aforesaid case the Apex Court laid emphasis on the concept of 'Karuna' and directed that parole should be allowed to the convicts if they show responsibility and trustworthiness. To quote

"parole will be allowed to them so that their family ties may be maintained and inner tensions may not further build up."

Thus parole has been treated as a curative strategy keeping in view the human dignity which is the quintessence of Article 21 of the Constitution.

8. The facts of the present case have to be judged on the basis of aforesaid enunciation of law. By the impugned order the District Magistrate has concurred with the opinion of the Superintendent of Police and rejected the prayer for temporary release. The reason ascribed is that the petitioner is likely to commit similar nature of offence. It is not shown on what foundation such an opinion has been expressed. It is not reflected in the impugned order that the convict has any criminal antecedent or has been a drug peddler. The order does not indicate that the convict was a member of any organized group involved in the transaction. The convict is the only son and his mother is ill. In support of the illness of the mother Annexure P-2 has been brought on record. Refusal to grant parole or temporary release on a spacious plea that he will get himself involved in similar nature of crime, without indicating any kind of antecedent or any other essential facts is likely to cause trauma in a prisoner which is against the curative measure. Thus I am of the considered opinion that the order passed vide Annexure P-I is vulnerable and deserves to be lanced in exercise of extraordinary jurisdiction of this Court and I so do. Consequently it is directed that the respondents shall extend the privilege of temporary release/parole as per law to the son of the petitioner."

11. In the light of the aforesaid discussions in the given facts and circumstances of the case, the Court is of the opinion the order of refusal passed by the District Magistrate, Raipur rejecting the application of the petitioner to grant parole do not fall in line with the Rules of 1989 and object behind it and sufficient reasons has not been shown. Accordingly, the said order of refusal passed by the District Magistrate, Raipur deserves to be and is hereby set-aside.

12. As a consequence, the case of the Petitioner for grant of temporary leave/parole is again ordered to be placed before the concerned District Magistrate who in turn in consultation with the Superintendent of Police and also keeping in view Rule 6 of the Rules of 1989 in this regard, shall pass a fresh order within a period of 15 days from the date of presentation of the certified copy of this order. It is further observed that since statement has been made at the bar that similarly placed co-accused have been released on parole, therefore if case of the petitioner is similar to that of the other co-accused who have been granted parole his case may also be considered on the ground of parity.

13. The petition accordingly stands allowed.

Sd/-

(Goutam Bhaduri)

JUDGE