

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 08.09.2017

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE M.DURAISWAMY

W.P.No.24235 of 2017
and W.M.P.No.25613 of 2017

Happy Valley Recreation Club
rep. By its Secretary
R.Vijayakumar
No.625/1, BSNL Tower Land
Thamaraikarai Post
Burgur Village,
Anthiur Taluk
Erode District

... Petitioner

Vs.

1.The Superintendent of Police,
Office of the Superintendent of Police,
Erode District.

2.The Deputy Superintendent of Police,
Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Police,
Bhavani Sub Division, Erode District.

3.The Inspector of Police,
Anthiur Police Station,
Anthiur 638 501,
Erode District

... Respondents

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking to issue a Writ of Mandamus, forbearing the respondents from in any manner interfering with the affairs of the petitioner's club, Happy Valley Recreation Club situated at No.625/1, BSNL Tower Land, Thamaraikarai Post, Burgur Village, Anthiur Taluk, Erode District or the right of its members to avail the facilities provided in the Memorandum of Association including playing Rummy not involving any element of gambling.

For Petitioner : Mr.G.Thilagavathi, Senior Counsel
for Mr.R.Gophinath

For Respondents: Mr.R.Rajeswaran,
Special Government Pleader

O R D E R

Mr.R.Rajeswaran, learned Special Government Pleader, takes notice for the respondents and by consent, the main writ petition itself is taken up for disposal at the admission stage itself.

2. The petitioner has filed the above Writ Petition to issue a Writ of Mandamus forbearing the respondents from in any manner interfering with the affairs of the petitioner's club, Happy Valley Recreation Club situated at No.625/1, BSNL Tower Land, Thamarai Karai Post, Burgur Village, Anthiyur Taluk, Erode District or the right of its members to avail the facilities provided in the Memorandum of Association including playing Rummy not involving any element of gambling.

3. According to the petitioner, the members of the Association are actively taking part in recreation activities and social services. The Association members are jointly involved in various social activities and the members play indoor games like Chess, Carom Board, Table Tennis, cards particularly Rummy. The members play Rummy only for recreation purpose without any stakes. According to the petitioner Association, the respondent police along with their team are periodically visiting the Association in the evening hours under the guise of enquiry and threatening the members that they would be arrested on charges of gambling and informed them not to carry out any indoor games like playing cards and to close down the Association, if the members continue to play Rummy.

4. In similar circumstances, this court in W.P.No.6436 of 2012 by order dated 14.03.2012 disposed of the Writ Petition filed by Moon Sports Association, imposing the following conditions:

"...

7. In the light of the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and the order passed by this court on a similar issue in the order dated supra, I am inclined to dispose of this Writ Petition with the following conditions:

"

- i. The petitioner association shall not indulge in any other illegal activity other than playing Rummy (13 cards) with or without stakes by its members and guests;
- ii. If there is any evidence of gambling in some other way, the respondent police have a right to enter the premises of the petitioner's association, inspect and take further action as

- per law;
- iii. The respondent police are advised not to disturb the petitioner association frequently under the guise of inspection as it would disturb the peace and harmony of the petitioner association;
 - iv. The petitioner and the members of the petitioner association are entitled to carry on their lawful activities within their premises and there should not be any interference from the police authorities, so long as their activities are not in violation of the provisions of the Public Gambling Act, 1867/Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, 1930;
 - v. In the normal circumstances, there should be no interference in the lawful functioning of the association by the police. It is not permissible for the police to enter the petitioner's premises as a routine measure, so long as the association is functioning within the frame work of law;
 - vi. If the police authorities have specific information or reasonable doubt that the activities carried on by the association or its members are not in accordance with law or they indulge in unlawful activities, in violation of the provisions of the Public Gambling Act, 1867/Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, 1930 or any other enactment, it would be open to them, after recording reasons in the General Diary maintained in the Police Station, to proceed to enter the association premises, conduct investigation, interrogate those who involve themselves in such activities and take appropriate action on merits and as per law;
 - vii. While exercising the powers conferred on the police authorities, they should follow the mandatory provisions as contained in Section 5 of the Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, 1930/Public Gambling Act, 1867;
 - viii. It is always open to the association or its members to challenge the action taken by the police, if it is not in accordance with law;
 - ix. In case the police authorities are of the opinion that a situation has arisen to suspend the operation of the association to exercise of the powers conferred, they have to issue an order in writing. When there is no authority granted to the police to issue an order of suspension orally, they are not entitled to pass

- such oral orders; and
- x. Before passing orders for the purpose of closure of the association, in exercise of the powers conferred on the authorities, they should follow the principles of natural justice. The association should be given an opportunity to submit their objections and if so desired, a further opportunity of personal hearing should also be given."

8. In the result, the Writ Petition is disposed of in the above terms. No costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petition is closed."

5. The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner as well as learned Special Government Pleader appearing for the respondents submitted that the present Writ Petition may also be disposed of imposing the same conditions.

6. In view of the submissions made by the learned counsel on either side, the Writ Petition is disposed of with the following conditions:

- (a) The petitioner association shall not indulge in any other illegal activity other than playing Rummy (13 cards) with or without stakes by its members and guests;
- (b) If there is any evidence of gambling in some other way, the respondent police have a right to enter the premises of the petitioner's association, inspect and take further action as per law;
- (c) The respondent police are advised not to disturb the petitioner association frequently under the guise of inspection as it would disturb the peace and harmony of the petitioner association;
- (d) The petitioner and the members of the petitioner association are entitled to carry on their lawful activities within their premises and there should not be any interference from the police authorities, so long as their activities are not in violation of the provisions of the Public Gambling Act, 1867/Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, 1930;
- (e) In the normal circumstances, there should be no interference in the lawful functioning of the association by the police. It is not permissible for the police to enter the petitioner's premises as a

routine measure, so long as the association is functioning within the frame work of law;

(f) If the police authorities have specific information or reasonable doubt that the activities carried on by the association or its members are not in accordance with law or they indulge in unlawful activities, in violation of the provisions of the Public Gambling Act, 1867/Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, 1930 or any other enactment, it would be open to them, after recording reasons in the General Diary maintained in the Police Station, to proceed to enter the association premises, conduct investigation, interrogate those who involve themselves in such activities and take appropriate action on merits and as per law;

(g) While exercising the powers conferred on the police authorities, they should follow the mandatory provisions as contained in Section 5 of the Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, 1930/Public Gambling Act, 1867;

(h) It is always open to the association or its members to challenge the action taken by the police, if it is not in accordance with law;

(i) In case the police authorities are of the opinion that a situation has arisen to suspend the operation of the association to exercise of the powers conferred, they have to issue an order in writing. When there is no authority granted to the police to issue an order of suspension orally, they are not entitled to pass such oral orders; and

(j) Before passing orders for the purpose of closure of the association, in exercise of the powers conferred on the authorities, they should follow the principles of natural justice. The association should be given an opportunity to submit their objections and if so desired, a further opportunity of personal hearing should also be given.

No costs. Connected miscellaneous petition is closed.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(J)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

- 1.The Superintendent of Police,
Office of the Superintendent of Police,
Erode District.
- 2.The Deputy Superintendent of Police,
Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Police,
Bhavani Sub Division, Erode District.
- 3.The Inspector of Police,
Anthiur Police Station,
Anthiur 638 501,
Erode District

+1 cc to the Government Pleader sr 65644

+1 cc to the M/s.R.Rajeswaran Advocate sr 65192

W.P.No.24235 of 2017

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