



WEB COPY

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT
DATED : 20.09.2017

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE M.M.SUNDRESH
and
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE N.SATHISH KUMAR

H.C.P. (MD) No.674 of 2017

Ponnuchamy

... Petitioner

-vs-

1.The Principal Secretary to Government,
State of Tamil Nadu,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St.George,
Chennai - 600 009.

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Office of the District Collector and District Magistrate,
Dindigul District, Dindigul.

3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Madurai Central Prison,
Madurai District.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, calling for the records connected with the detention order of the respondent No.2 in Detention Order No.29/2017 dated 29.04.2017 and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the body or person of the detenu by name Ponnuchamy, son of Vellaichamy, aged about 43 years, now confining at Madurai Central Prison before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.R.Alagumani

For Respondents : Mr.C.Ramesh

Additional Public Prosecutor

O R D E R

[Order of the Court was made by **M.M.SUNDRESH, J.**]

The petitioner is the detenu, namely, Ponnuchamy, Son of Vellaichamy Thevar, male, aged about 43 years. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in Detention Order No.29/2017, dated 29.04.2017, holding him to be a "Drug Offender", as contemplated under section 2(e) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982. The said order is under challenge in this Habeas Corpus Petition.

<https://hcservices.ecourts.gov.in/hcservices/>

2. We have heard the learned counsel for the petitioner and the learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the

respondents. We have also perused the records produced by the Detaining Authority.

3. Though several grounds have been raised in the Habeas Corpus Petition, the learned counsel appearing for the petitioner would mainly focus his argument on the ground that there is gross violation of procedural safeguards, which would vitiate the detention. The learned counsel, by placing authorities, submitted that the representation made by the petitioner was not considered on time and there was an inordinate and unexplained delay.

4. The learned Additional Public Prosecutor opposed the Habeas Corpus Petition. He would submit that though there was delay in considering the representation, on that score alone, the impugned detention order cannot be quashed. According to the learned Additional Public Prosecutor, no prejudice has been caused to the detenu and thus, there is no violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution of India.

5. The Detention Order in question was passed on 29.04.2017. The petitioner made a representation, dated 06.05.2017 and the same was received on 10.05.2017. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 11.05.2017. The remarks were duly received on 23.05.2017. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 15.06.2017.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 12 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 4 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 8 days in submitting the remarks. Thereafter, there was another delay of 23 days in considering the representation, of which 6 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was another inordinate delay of 17 days in considering the representation.

7. In *Rekha vs. State of Tamil Nadu*, reported in 2011 (5) SCC 244, the Honourable Supreme Court has held that the procedural safeguards are required to be zealously watched and enforced by the Courts of law and their rigour cannot be allowed to be diluted on the basis of the nature of the alleged activities undertaken by the detenu.

8. In *Sumaiya vs. The Secretary to Government*, reported in 2007 (2) MWN (Cr.) 145, a Division Bench of this Court has held that the unexplained delay of three days in disposal of the representation made on behalf of the detenu would be sufficient to set aside the order of detention.

9. In *Tara Chand vs. State of Rajasthan and others*, reported in 1980 (2) SCC 321, the Honourable Supreme Court has held that any unexplained delay on the part of the Government in considering the representation renders the very detention

illegal.

10. In the subject case, admittedly, there is an inordinate and unexplained delay of 8 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and 17 days in considering the representation. The impugned detention order is, therefore, liable to be quashed.

11. In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in Detention Order No.29/2017, dated 29.04.2017, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Ponnuchamy, son of Vellaichamy Thevar, Male, aged about 43 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar(RTI)

/True copy/

Sub Assistant Registrar

To:

- 1.The Principal Secretary to Government,
State of Tamil Nadu,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
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- 3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Madurai Central Prison,
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- 4.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.
- 5.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

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