

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 28.08.2018

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE C.T.SELVAM
and
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE M.NIRMAL KUMAR

H.C.P.No.796 of 2018

Vasanthi
W/o.Jagan (a) Ramakrishnan ... Petitioner

vs.

1.State of Tamil Nadu
represented by its
Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Villupuram District,
Villupuram. Respondents

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, calling for the entire records relating to petitioner's husband detention under Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 vide detention order dated 05.04.2018 on the file of the second respondent herein made in proceedings No.C2/9507/2018 and quash the same as illegal and consequently direct the respondents herein to produce the said petitioner's husband namely Jagan (a) Ramakrishnan S/o.Sundaramoorthy, aged 33 years, before this Court and set him at liberty, now detained at Central Prison, Cuddalore.

For Petitioner : Mr.C.C.Chellappan
For Respondents : Mr.M.Mohamed Riyaz
Additional Public Prosecutor

O R D E R

(Order of the Court was made by C.T.SELVAM, J)
Petitioner is the wife of the detenu Jagan alias Ramakrishnan S/o.Sundaramoorthy, who has been branded as "Bootlegger" under the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 and detained

under orders of second respondent passed in No.C2/9507/2018 dated 05.04.2018. Such order is under challenge herein.

2. The alleged ground case has been registered against the detenu in Crime No.232 of 2018 on the file of Ulundurpet Police Station, for offences u/s.4(1)(aaa) and 4(1-A) of Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937.

3. We have heard learned counsel for petitioner and learned Additional Public Prosecutor for respondents. Perused the materials on record.

4. Though several grounds have been raised in the Habeas Corpus Petition, learned counsel for 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. In support of his contention, learned counsel for petitioner relied on the judgment of the Hon'ble Apex Court in Rajammal vs. State of Tamil Nadu, [(1999) 1 SCC 417].

5. Learned Additional Public Prosecutor would submit that though there was delay in considering the representation, on that score alone, the impugned detention order cannot be quashed. According to 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.

6. The Detention Order in question was passed on 05.04.2018. The petitioner submitted representations dated 12.04.2018 and 17.04.2018 and the same was received on 23.04.2018 and 20.04.2018. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 20.04.2018. The remarks were duly received on 23.04.2018 and 03.05.2018. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 11.05.2018 and sent to the detenu on 14.05.2018.

7. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was an inordinate delay of 12 days, of which 5 days were Government holidays, in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority. Thereafter, there was yet another delay of 9 days, of which 4 days were Government holidays and hence, there was yet another delay of 5 days in considering the representations.

8. In the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Rajammal's case (cited supra), it has been held as follows:

'It is a constitutional obligation of the Government to consider the representation forwarded by the detenu without any delay. Though no period is prescribed by Article 22 of the Constitution for the decision to be taken on the representation, the words "as soon as may be" in clause (5) of Article 22 convey the message that the representation should be considered and disposed of at the earliest.'

9. As per the dictum laid down by the Supreme Court in above cited Rajammal's case, number of days of delay is immaterial and what is to be considered is whether the delay caused has been properly explained by the authorities concerned. But, here 12 days delay has not been properly explained at all.

10. Further, in a recent decision in Ummu Sabeena vs. State of Kerala [2011 STPL (Web) 999 SC], the Supreme Court has held that the history of personal liberty, as is well known, is a history of insistence on procedural safeguards. The expression 'as soon as may be', in Article 22(5) of the Constitution of India clearly shows the concern of the makers of the Constitution that the representation, made on behalf of the detenu, should be considered and disposed of with a sense of urgency and without any avoidable delay.

11. In the light of the above fact and law, we have no hesitation in quashing the order of detention on the ground of delay on the part of the Government in disposing of the representations of the detenu.

Accordingly, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the detention order passed by the second respondent against the detenu Jagan alias Ramakrishnan S/o.Sundaramoorthy in No.C2/9507/2018 dated 05.04.2018 is quashed. The detenu is directed to be set at liberty, forthwith, unless his presence is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar(CS IX)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

gm

To

1.The Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Villupuram District,
Villupuram.

3.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

4.The Superintendent,
Central Prison,
Cuddalore.

5.The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (Law & Order)
Fort St.George, Chennai-9

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PP(CO)
GSP(17/09/2018)



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