



WEB COPY

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT
DATED: 09.04.2018

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE Mr. JUSTICE C.T.SELVAM

and

THE HONOURABLE Mr. JUSTICE A.M.BASHEER AHAMED

H.C.P. (MD) No.1860 of 2017

Sunthammal

... 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 Commissioner of Police,
Office of the Commissioner of Police,
Madurai City, Madurai District.

3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Special Prison for Women,
Madurai, Madurai District.

... Respondents

PRAYER: The petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, to call for the entire records connected with the detention order of the Respondent No.2 in No.83/ BCDFGISSSV/2017 dated 13.12.2017 and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the body or person of the detenu by name Sunthammal wife of Ramasubramanian aged about 55 years now detained at Special Prison for Women Madurai before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith

For Petitioner : Mr.R.Alagumani

For Respondents : Mr.V.Neelakandan
Additional Public Prosecutor.

ORDER

(Order of the Court was made by C.T.SELVAM,J.)

The petitioner is the detenu viz., Sunthammal, wife of Ramasubramanian, aged about 55 years. The detenu has been detained by order in No.83/BCDFGISSSV/2017 dated 13.12.2017, holding her to be a "Drug Offender", as contemplated under 2(e) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982. The said order is under challenge in this Habeas Corpus Petition.

2.We have heard the learned counsel for the petitioner and the learned Additional Public Prosecutor 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 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 13.12.2017. The petitioner made a representation dated 19.12.2017. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 26.12.2017. The remarks were duly received on 02.01.2018. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the representation on 12.01.2018.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of four days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and thereafter, there was again a delay of eight days in considering the representation.

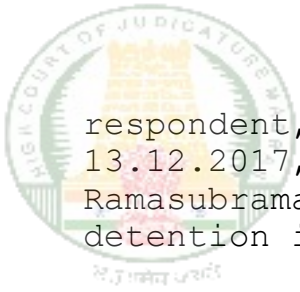
7. In *Rekha Vs. State of Tamil Nadu*, [2011 (5) SCC 244], the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that the procedural safeguards are required to be zealously watched and enforced by the Courts of law and their rigour cannot be allowed to be diluted on the basis of the nature of the alleged activities undertaken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

8. In *Sumaiya Vs. The Secretary to Government*, [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*, [1980 (2) SCC 321], the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that any inordinate and 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 in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and in considering the representation. The impugned detention order is, therefore, liable to be quashed.

11. In the result, the Detention Order, passed by the second



respondent, in his proceedings in No.83/BCDFGISSSV/2017 dated 13.12.2017, is quashed. The detenu, namely, Suthammal, wife of Ramasubramanian, is ordered to be set at liberty forthwith, if her detention is not required in connection with any other case.

12. In the upshot, we allow the Habeas Corpus Petition.

Sd/

Assistant Registrar(AS)

/True copy/

Sub Assistant Registrar

To

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

2.The Commissioner of Police,
Office of the Commissioner of Police,
Madurai City, Madurai District.

3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Special Prison for Women,
Madurai, Madurai District.

(In duplicate for communication to detenue)

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

5.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

H.C.P. (MD) No.1860 of 2017
09.04.2018

ia/sj

KK/SV MMS/19.04.2018/SAR-1/3P-7C