

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 06.06.2019

Coram

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.M.SUNDRESH
and
The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.NIRMAL KUMAR

H.C.P.No. 92 of 2019

Chithra

.. Petitioner

Vs

1.State of Tamil Nadu

Rep. By its Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.

2.The District Collector and

District Magistrate
Vellore District.
Vellore.

... Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for a writ of habeas corpus, to call for the entire records relating to the petitioner's husband detention under Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 vide detention order, dated 14.12.2018 on the file the 2nd respondent herein made in proceedings C3/D.O.No.109/2018 and quash the same as illegal and consequently direct the respondents herein to produce the said petitioner's husband namely Kamalanathan, Son of Samudi, aged 56 before this Hon'ble Court and set the petitioner's husband at liberty from detention, now petitioner's husband detained at Central Prison, Vellore.

For Petitioner : Mr.C.Chellappan

For Respondents : Mr.R.Prathap Kumar
: Addl. Public
Prosecutor

ORDER

(Order of the Court was made by M.M.SUNDRESH, J.)

The petitioner is the wife of Kamalanathan, S/o Samudi, aged 56 years, who is the detenu. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in C3/D.O.No.109/2018 dated 14.12.2018, holding him to be a "Bootlegger", as contemplated under Section 2(b) 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 appearing 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 14.12.2018. The petitioner made a representation on 31.12.2018. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 03.01.2019. The remarks were duly received on 11.02.2019. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 14.02.2019.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 39 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 16 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 23 days in submitting the remarks.

7. In *Rekha vs. State of Tamil Nadu* (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* (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 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 of 23 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority. 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 C3/D.O.No.109/2018 dated 14.12.2018, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, Kamalanathan, S/o Samudi, aged 56 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

s/d-
Assistant Registrar

True Copy

Sub-Assistant Registrar

mmi/ssm

To:-

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

2.The District Collector and
District Magistrate
Vellore.

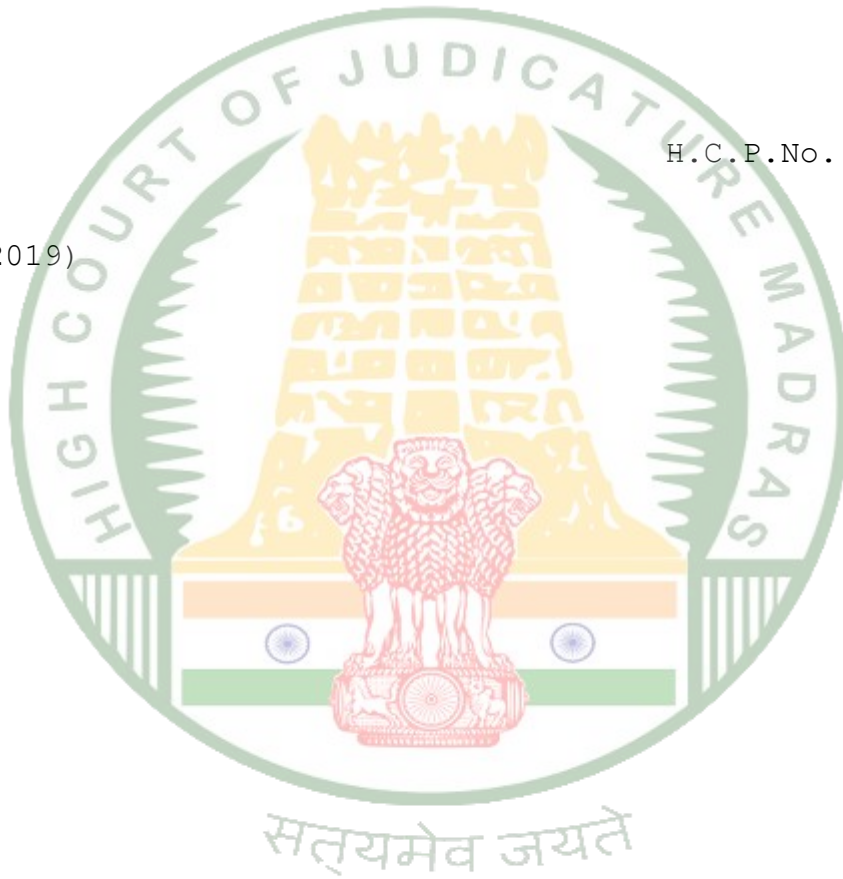
3.The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Vellore.

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

5.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras

H.C.P.No. 92 of 2019

RGN(CO)
SP(15/07/2019)



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