

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS
DATED: 17.06.2019

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE M.M.SUNDRESH
AND
THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE M.NIRMAL KUMAR

H.C.P.No.492 of 2019

Selvi

.. Petitioner

Vs

1. The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Cuddalore District, Cuddalore

2.The Principal Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise
Department, Secretariat,
Fort St. George, Chennai - 9.

..Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for a writ of habeas corpus, to call for the records in No.C3/D.O/78/2018 on the file of the first respondent, quash the detention order dated 20.12.2018 and direct the production of the detenu Sathish @ Siva @ Sivakumar S/o Veeramani presently detained at the Central Prison, Cuddalore, under the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 as a Goonda, before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner .. Mr.K. Balasubramaniam

For Respondents.. Mr.R. Prathapkumar
Addl. Public Prosecutor

ORDER

(Judgment of the Court was delivered by M.M.SUNDRESH, J.)

The petitioner is the mother of the detenu viz., Sathish @ Siva @ Sivakumar, aged 21 years, S/o Veeramani, who has been detained by the second respondent by his order in No. C3/D.O/78/2018 dated 20.12.2019 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 20.12.2018. The petitioner made a representation on 27.02.2019. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 01.03.2019. The remarks were duly received on 13.03.2019. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 02.05.2019.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 08.03.2019 and there was delay of 51 days in considering the representation by the Hon'ble Minister for Electricity, Prohibition and Excise Department after the Deputy Secretary dealt with it, of which 17 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 34 days in considering the representation.

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 34 days in considering the representation by the Hon'ble Minister for Electricity, Prohibition and Excise Department. 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 Ref..C3/D.O/78/2018 dated 20.12.2018 by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, Sathish @ Siva @ Sivakumar, Male, aged 21 years is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(J)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

- 1.The Principal Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise
Department, Secretariat,
Fort St. George, Chennai - 9.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Cuddalore District, Cuddalore
- 3.The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Cuddalore.
- 4.The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (Law & Order),
Fort St.George, Chennai -9.
- 5.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

+1cc to Mr.K.K.Bala Subramanian, Advocate, S.R.No.50016

H.C.P.No.492 of 2019

RRS (12/07/2019)