

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 10.01.2020

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THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE R.SUBBIAH
and
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE R.PONGIAPPAN

H.C.P.No.2117 of 2019

Muthupillai

... Petitioner

Vs

1. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep.by Secretary to Government
Prohibition & Excise Department
Fort St.George,
Chennai 600 009.
2. The District Collector & District Magistrate,
Nagapattinam District,
Nagapattinam. ... Respondents

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus call for the records relating to the detention order dated 10.09.2019 passed by the second respondent in their proceedings C.O.C.No.38 of 2019 dated 10.09.2019 and quash the same and direct the respondents herein to produce the petitioner's wife namely Ganga, femal aged about 50 residing at Tsunami Nagar, Thoduvai Village, Sirkazhi Taluk and Nagapattinam district who is presently under going detention in the Special Prison for Women, Trichy as a Bootlegger under Section 3(1) of the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug Offenders, Forest Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Sand Offenders, Slum Grabbers and Video Pirates Act, 1982 (Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982) before this Court and set her at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : M/s.M.Vinoth
For Respondents: Mr.R.Prathap Kumar
Additional Public Prosecutor

O R D E R

[Order of this Court was made by R.SUBBIAH, J]

Petitioner is the husband of the detenu viz., Ganga,
<https://hcservices.ecourts.gov.in/hcservices/>
W/o.Muthupillai, aged 50 years, who has been branded as a

'Boot Legger' under the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 and detained under order of second respondent passed in C.O.C.No.38/2019 dated 10.09.2019.

2. The detenu came to adverse notice in the following cases:

Sl.No	Police Station & Crime No.	Section of Law
1.	Sirkazhi P.E.W. Crime No.620/2018	U/s.4(1) (aaa), r/w 4 (1-A) TNP Act 1937 @ 4 (1) (aaa) TNP Act 1937
2.	Sirkazhi P.E.W. Cr.No.1031 of 2018	U/s.4(1) (aaa) TNP Act 1937

The alleged ground case has been registered against the detenu in Crime No.213 of 2019 on the file of Nangavalli Police Station for offences u/s.4(1) (aaa), 4(1) (i) r/w 4 (1-A) TNP Act 1937. Aggrieved by the order of detention, the present writ petition has been filed.

3. Heard learned counsel for petitioner and learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing 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 10.09.2019. The petitioner submitted the representations dated 20.09.2019 and 20.09.2019 and the same was received on 23.09.2019 and 23.10.2019. Thereafter, remarks were called for

by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 24.09.2019 and 23.10.2019. The remarks were duly received on 14.10.2019 and 19.11.2019. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representations on 30.10.2019 and 29.11.2019 and served on the detenu on 31.10.2019 and 02.12.2019.

7. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was an inordinate delay of 20 and 27 days, of which 9 and 8 were Government holidays, in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority. Thereafter, there was yet another delay of 15 and 8 days, of which 4 and 2 were Government holidays and hence, there was 22 and 6 days delay in considering the representation.

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. Here, 22 and 45 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.

12. Accordingly, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the detention order passed by the second respondent against the detenu viz., Ganga W/o. Muthupillai, in

C.O.C.No.38/2019 dated 10.09.2019, is quashed. The above named detenu is ordered to be set at liberty forthwith, unless his custody is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

dpq
To

- 1.The Secretary to Government
Prohibition & Excise Department
Fort St.George,
Chennai 600 009.
 2. The District Collector & District Magistrate,
Nagapattinam District,
Nagapattinam.
 - 3.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.
 - 4.The Superintendent,Special prison for woman,Trichy.
 - 5.5. The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (Law and order) Fort.St.George, Chennai 9.
- H.C.P.No.2117 of 2019
A.SK(26/02/2020)

सत्यमेव जयते
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