

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 17.02.2020

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

H.C.P.No.2358 of 2019

Rajeswari
W/o.Vasu

.... Petitioner/Wife of the Defecto

Vs

1. The Secretary to the Government,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
(Home) Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Fort St.George,
Chennai - 600009.
2. The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Kancheepuram District,
Kancheepuram.

... Respondents

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus calling for entire records connected with the order of second respondent herein BCDFGISSV No.72/2019 dated 17.10.2019 passed against petitioner's husband, the detenu viz., Vasu S/o.Govindaraj, aged 36 years, who is confined at Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai - 600066 and set aside the same, consequently, directing respondents herein to produce the body and person of the detenu before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.A.Murugavel

For Respondents : Mr.R.Prathap Kumar

Additional Public Prosecutor

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

Petitioner is the wife of the detenu viz. Vasu S/o.Govindaraj, aged 36, who has been branded as a 'Bootlegger' under the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 and detained under order of

second respondent passed in BCDFGISSSV No.72/2019 dated 17.10.2019.

2. The detenu came to adverse notice in Crime No.66/2019 on the file of Prohibition Enforcement Wing, Kancheepuram, for offences u/s.4(1)(aaa), 4(1-A) Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act r/w 6 & 11 of Tamil Nadu Rectified Spirit Rules, 2000. The alleged ground case has been registered against the detenu in Crime No.440 of 2019 on the file of Prohibition Enforcement Wing, Kancheepuram, for offences u/s.4(1)(aaa), 4(1-A) of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act r/w 6 & 11 of Tamil Nadu Rectified Spirit Rules 2000 (Transporting). 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 17.10.2019. The petitioner submitted the representation dated 22.10.2019 and the same was received on 05.11.2019. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 06.11.2019. The remarks were duly received on 09.11.2019. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 29.11.2019.

7. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was an inordinate delay of 2 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority. Thereafter, there was yet another delay of 16 days, of which 4 were Government holidays and hence, there

was 12 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, 14 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 representation of the detenu.

Accordingly, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the detention order passed by the second respondent against the detenu viz., Vasu S/o.Govindaraj, aged 36, in Memo No.72/BCDFGISSSV/2019 dated 17.10.2019, is set aside. 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 VI)

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Sub Assistant Registrar

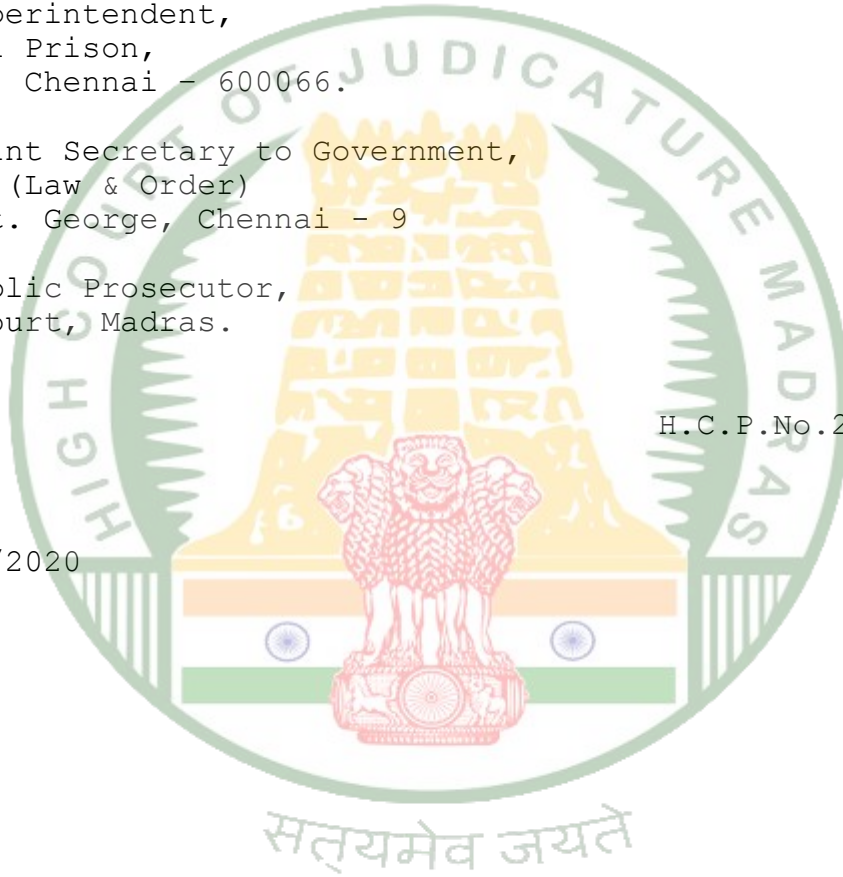
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To

1. The Secretary to the Government,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
(Home) Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Fort St.George,
Chennai - 600009.
2. The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Kancheepuram District,
Kancheepuram.
3. The Superintendent,
Central Prison,
Puzhal, Chennai - 600066.
4. The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (Law & Order)
Fort St. George, Chennai - 9
5. The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

H.C.P.No.2358 of 2019
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SR(CO)
KKV/10/06/2020



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