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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 26.02.2020

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE R.SUBBIAH

and

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN

H.C.P.No.2484 of 2019

Lakshmi
W/o.Babu

...

Petitioner

versus

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

2.The Commissioner of Police,
Greater Chennai.

...

Respondents

Prayer: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, seeking to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, calling for the records relating to the detention order passed by the second respondent pertaining to the order made in Memo.No.703/BCDFGISSSV/2019 dated 22.10.2019 in detain the detenu under 2(b) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982, as a Goonda and quash the same and direct the respondent to produce the detenu, Saravanan @ Kuppa Saravanan, S/o.Babu, aged about 24 years, who is detained at Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai, before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.G.Nirmal Krishnan

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

* * * * *



O R D E R

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

The petitioner herein is the mother of the detenu, namely, Saravanan @ Kuppa Saravanan, S/o.Babu, aged about 24 years, has filed this petition, challenging the order of detention passed by the second respondent in Memo.No.703/BCDFGISSSV/2019 dated 22.10.2019, branding him as a "Bootlegger" under the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Cyber Law offenders, Drug Offenders, Forest Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Sand Offenders, Sexual Offenders, Slum Grabbers and Video Pirates Act, 1982 [Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982].

2. The alleged ground case has been registered against the detenu in Crime No.851 of 2019 on the file of S-11 Tambaram Police Station for offences under Sections 341, 294 (b), 336, 427, 392, 397 and 506(ii) of IPC. Aggrieved by the order of detention, the present Habeas Corpus Petition has been filed.

3. Heard learned counsel appearing for the 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 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. 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 appearing for the petitioner relied on the judgment of the Hon'ble Apex Court in RAJAMMAL vs. STATE OF TAMIL NADU reported in (1999) 1 SCC 417.

5. Learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for respondents 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 22.10.2019. The petitioner submitted the representation dated 13.11.2019 and the same was received on 18.11.2019. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 18.11.2019. The remarks were duly received on 22.11.2019, after a delay of 3 days. He adds that



though the file was dealt with by the Deputy Secretary on 27.11.2019, the said file was dealt with by the Minister concerned only on 14.12.2019, with a further delay of 12 days. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 16.12.2019.

7. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was an inordinate delay of 3 days, in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority. Thereafter, there was yet another delay of 12 days, of which 4 were Government holidays and hence, there was 15 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:

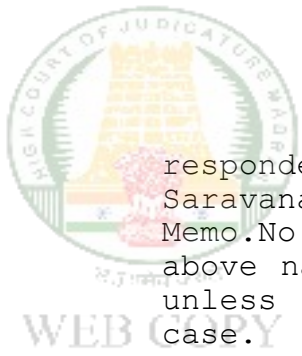
"It is a constitutional obligation of the Government to consider the representation forwarded by the detenu without any delay. Though no period is prescribed by Article 22 of the Constitution for the decision to be taken on the representation, the words "as soon as may be " in clause (5) of Article 22 convey the message that the representation should be considered and disposed of at the earliest."

9. As per the dictum laid down by the Hon'ble 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, 15 days delay has not been properly explained at all.

10. Further, in a recent decision in UMMU SABEENA vs. STATE OF KERALA reported in 2011 STPL (Web) 999 SC, in which, the Hon'ble Apex 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.

12. Accordingly, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the detention order passed by the second



respondent against the detenu, namely, Saravanan @ Kuppa Saravanan, S/o.Babu, aged about 24 years in Memo.No.703/BCDFGISSSV/2019 dated 22.10.2019, 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

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

sri

To

- 1.The Secretary,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St.George, Chennai-600 009.
- 2.The Commissioner of Police,
Greater Chennai.
- 3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Puzhal, Chennai.
- 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.2484 of 2019

GMR(CO)
CB(09/07/2020)