

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 30.06.2020

Coram

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.M.SUNDRESH
and
The Hon'ble Mr. Justice D.KRISHNAKUMAR

H.C.P. No. 2825 of 2019

Selvi, F/37
W/o.Venkatesaperumal
Seelakara Street, Thattanchavadi
Panruti Taluk, Cuddalore District. Petitioner

-vs-

- 1.The District Collector and District Magistrate
Cuddalore District, Cuddalore.
- 2.The Principal Secretary to the Government
of Tamil Nadu, Home, Prohibition
and Excise Department
Fort St. George, Chennai-9. Respondents

Prayer:Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a writ of habeas corpus call for the records in C3/D.O./109/2019 on the file of the first respondent, set aside the detention order dated 03.12.2019 and direct the first respondent to produce the detenu Ramachandran son of Murugesan aged about 49 years, presently detained at the Central Prison, Cuddalore, under the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 as a Bootlegger, before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.K.Balasubramaniam

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 sister of the detenu viz., Ramachandran, aged 49 years S/o Murugesan. The detenu has been detained by the first respondent by his order in

C3/D.O.No.109/2019 dated 03.12.2019, holding 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 03.12.2019. The petitioner made a representation on 09.12.2019. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 10.12.2019. The remarks were duly received on 09.01.2020. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 20.01.2020.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 30 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 10 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 20 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 09.01.2020 and there was delay of 7 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 3 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 4 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 20 days in submitting the remarks and unexplained delay of 4 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 C3/D.O.No.109/2019 dated 03.12.2019 passed by the first respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Ramachandran, male, S/o Murugesan aged about 49 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS III)

//True Copy//सत्यमेव जयते

Sub Assistant Registrar

mmi

To

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

2.The Principal Secretary to the Government
of Tamil Nadu, Home, Prohibition
And Excise Department
Fort St. George, Chennai-9.

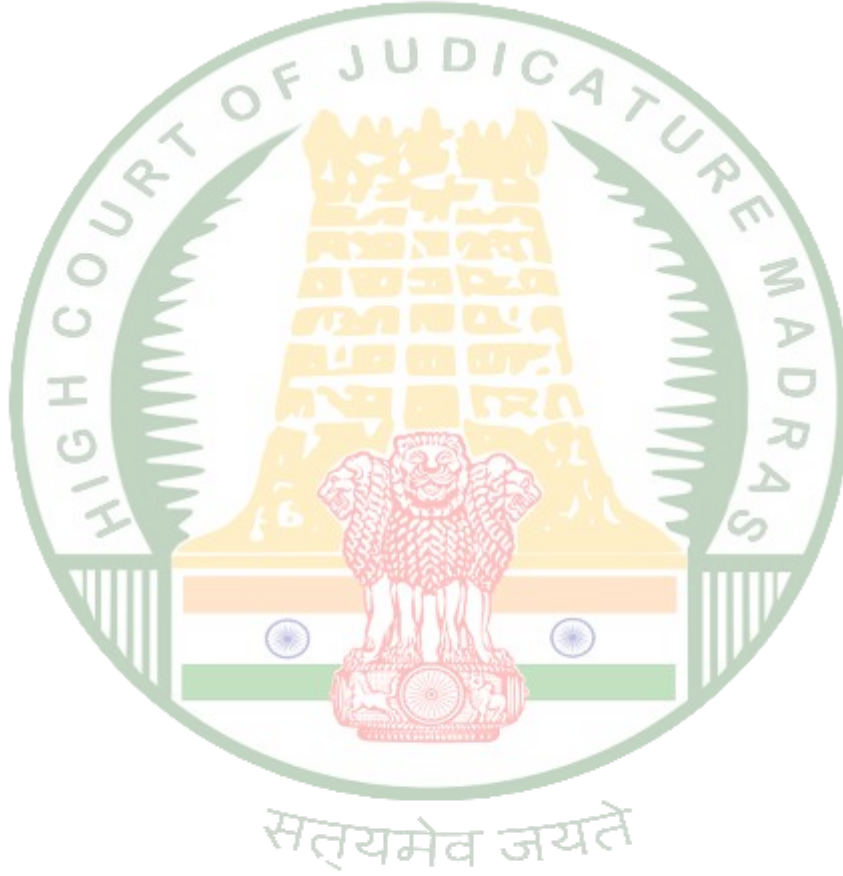
3.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

4.The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Cuddalore.

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

H.C.P. No. 2825 of 2019

A.SK(04/08/2020)



WEB COPY