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H.C.P.(MD) No.440 of 2020

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 30.11.2020

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE K.KALYANASUNDARAM

and

THE HONOURABLE MRS.JUSTICE T.KRISHNAVALLI

H.C.P. (MD) No.440 of 2020

Thilagavathy ... Petitioner/Wife of the Detenue

-vs-

- 1.The State of Tamil Nadu
rep.by Principal Secretary to Government
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department
Fort St.George, Chennai-9
 - 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate
Theni District, Theni
 - 3.The Superintendent
Central Prison, Madurai
 - 4.The Inspector of Police
Cumbum North Police Station
Theni District
- ... Respondents

PRAYER : Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for the issue of a Writ of Habeas Corpus calling for the records relating to the detention order passed by the second respondent in detention order No.26/2020 dated 20.06.2020 and to quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the body or person of the detenu, Selvam @ Selvaraj (aged 45 years), son of Mokayathevar, before this Court and set him at liberty, now detained at Central Prison, Madurai.

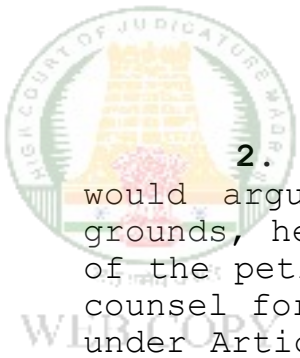
For Petitioner : Mr.D.Ramesh Kumar

For Respondents : Mr.K.Dinesh Babu
Additional Public Prosecutor

O R D E R

(Order of the Court was made by K.KALYANASUNDARAM, J.)

This habeas corpus petition has been filed by the wife of the detenu, namely, Selvam @ Selvaraj, son of Mokayathevar, aged 45 years, challenging the detention order No.26/2020 dated 20.06.2020, passed by the second respondent, branding him as "Drug Offender" as contemplated under Section 2(e) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982.



2. Mr.D.Ramesh Kumar, learned counsel for the petitioner, would argue that even though the petitioner has raised several grounds, he has confined his arguments only to the delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation. It is submitted by the learned counsel for the petitioner that the procedural safeguards guaranteed under Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution of India have not been followed in this case and there is unexplained and inordinate delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation, which would vitiate the impugned order of detention.

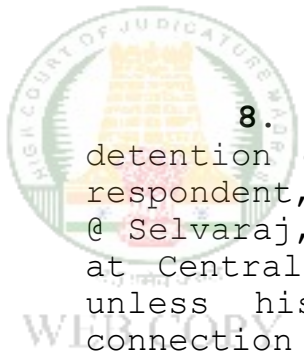
3. Mr.K.Dinesh Babu, learned Additional Public Prosecutor, on instructions, submitted that after satisfying with the materials placed by the Sponsoring Authority, the Detaining Authority has passed the detention order and there is no illegality or infirmity in the detention order. It is also stated that even if there is any delay in disposal of the representation, it has not caused any prejudice to the rights of the detenu and hence, prayed for dismissal of the habeas corpus petition.

4. Heard both sides and perused the materials available on record.

5. In the instant case, the proforma furnished by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor would indicate that as against the impugned detention order, the petitioner made a representation to the first respondent on 09.07.2020 and it was received on 23.07.2020. Remarks were called for on the same day i.e.23.07.2020 and it was received on 12.11.2020. The Deputy Secretary dealt with the matter on the same day i.e.12.11.2020. The concerned Minister dealt with the matter on 23.11.2020 and the representation came to be rejected on the same day i.e.23.11.2020. It is seen that in between 23.07.2020 and 23.11.2020, there was a delay of 95 days, after excluding the Government Holidays of 26 days, in considering the petitioner's representation.

6. At this juncture, it is useful to refer the decision of the Honourable Apex Court in the case of **Rajammal vs. State of Tamil Nadu and another**, reported in **1999 (1) SCC 417**, wherein the Apex Court has observed and held that it is for the Authority concerned to explain the delay, if any, in disposal of the representation and if any delay was caused on account of nay indifference or lapse in considering the representation, such delay will adversely affect further detention of the prisoner.

7. In the case on hand, as stated supra, the delay of 95 days in considering the representation of the petitioner has not been properly explained by the respondents. Hence, in our considered view, the detention order is liable to be set aside solely on the ground of delay by following the decision of the Honourable Apex Court referred supra.



8. In fine, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detention order No.26/2020 dated 20.06.2020, passed by the second respondent, is set aside. Consequently, the detenu, namely, Selvam @ Selvaraj, son of Mokkayathevar, aged 45 years, who is now detained at Central Prison, Madurai, is directed to be released forthwith unless his presence or custody or detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (CS-I)

// True Copy //

/ /2020

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

Note :In view of the present lock down owing to COVID-19 pandemic, a web copy of the order may be utilized for official purposes, but, ensuring that the copy of the order that is presented is the correct copy, shall be the responsibility of the advocate / litigant concerned.

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To:

- 1.The Principal Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
State of Tamil Nadu,
Fort St.George, Chennai-9.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Theni District, Theni.
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- 4.The Joint Secretay to Government,
Public (Law & Order)
Fort St. George, Chennai-9
- 5.The Inspector of Police,
Cumbum North Police Station,
Theni District.
- 6.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

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VB (15.12.2020) 3P 7C

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