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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED 06.08.2021

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE Mr.JUSTICE P.N.PRAKASH
AND
THE HONOURABLE Ms.JUSTICE R.N.MANJULA

H.C.P.No.113 of 2021

Revathi

...Petitioner

Vs.

1.State of Tamil Nadu
Rep. by the Secretary
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department
Fort St. George, Chennai-9

2.The Commissioner of Police
The Greater Chennai City
Vepery, Chennai-7

3.The Superintendent of Prison
Central Prison, Puzhal
Chennai-66

4.The Inspector of Police
S-1, St. Thomas Mount Police Station
Chennai

...Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying to issue a WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS to call for the entire records in BCDFGISSSV No.501/2020 dated 15.12.2020 passed by the 2nd respondent under the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 and set aside the same and direct the respondent to produce the petitioner's husband Mahesh, aged about 29 years, S/o.Mani now confined in Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai before this Hon'ble Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.D.Gopi Krishnan

For Respondents : Mr.R.Muniyapparaj
Government Advocate (Crl. Side)



O R D E R

[Order of the Court was made by R.N.MANJULA, J.]

The petitioner is the wife of the detenu viz., Mahesh, aged about 29 years, S/o.Mani. The detenu has been detained by the 2nd respondent by his order dated 15.12.2020 in BCDFGISSSV No.501/2020, holding him to be a "Drug Offender", as contemplated under Section 2(e) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982. The said order is under challenge in this Habeas CorpusPetition.

2. We have heard the learned counsel appearing for the petitioner and the learned Government Advocate (Crl. Side) 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 Government Advocate (Crl. Side) filed his counter affidavit and strongly 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 Government Advocate (Crl. Side), 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 15.12.2020. The petitioner made a representation on 18.01.2021. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 21.01.2021. The remarks were duly received on 25.01.2021. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 08.02.2021.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 4 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 2 days were Government Holidays and hence, there was an inordinate delay of 2 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 25.01.2021 and there was a delay of 8 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 2 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 6 days in considering the representation.

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7. In *Rekha Vs. State of Tamil Nadu* [2011 (5) SCC 244], the Hon'ble 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 Hon'ble 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 2 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 6 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.

In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in BCDFGISSSV No.501/2020, dated 15.12.2020, passed by the 2nd respondent is set aside. The detenu viz., Mahesh, aged about 29 years, S/o.Mani is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS III)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

- 1.The Secretary
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department
Fort St. George, Chennai-9
- 2.The Joint Secretary to Government
Public, Law and Order Department
Secretariat, Chennai-9
- 3.The Commissioner of Police
The Greater Chennai City
Vepery, Chennai-7
- 4.The Superintendent of Prison
Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai-66
- 5.The Inspector of Police
S-1, St. Thomas Mount Police Station, Chennai
- 6.The Public Prosecutor
High Court, Madras

H.C.P.No.113 of 2021

JP-II[co]
NSK 10/08/2021