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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 27.07.2021

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THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE P.N.PRAKASH
and
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE R.PONGIAPPAN

H.C.P.No.299 of 2021

P.Muniyammal
W/o.Periyasami

.. Petitioner

Vs.

- 1.The State of Tamil Nadu,
represented by its
Secretary to Government,
Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St.George, Chennai - 9.
- 2.The District Magistrate and District Collector,
Dharmapuri District.
- 3.The Superintendent of Police,
Dharmapuri District.
- 4.The Superintendent of Central Prison,
Office of the Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison, Hasthampatti,
Salem District.
- 5.The Inspector of Police,
Pennagaram Police Station,
Dharmapuri District.

.. Respondents

Habeas Corpus Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus to produce the body of the detenu, namely, Raja S/o.Periyasamy, aged about 32 years, before this Court, now confined at Central Prison, Salem and set him at liberty forthwith, by calling for the records pertaining to the detention order in S.C.No.01/2021 dated 07.01.2021 passed by the second respondent, quash the same as illegal, incompetent and ultra vires.

For Petitioner : Mr.A.M.Esakkiappan
For Respondents: Mr.R.Muniyapparaj
Government Advocate [Crl.side]



ORDER

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

The petitioner is the mother of the detenu viz., Raja S/o.Periyasamy, aged about 32 years. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in S.C.No.01/2021 dated 07.01.2021, holding him to be a "Goonda", as contemplated under Section 2(f) 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 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] strongly opposed the Habeas Corpus Petition by filing his counter. 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 07.01.2021. The petitioner made a representation dated Nil. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 10.02.2021. The remarks were duly received on 08.03.2021. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 15.04.2021.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 25 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 8 days were Government Holidays and hence, there was an inordinate delay of 17 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 08.03.2021 and there was a delay of 37 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 13 days were Government Holidays. Hence, there was inordinate delay of 41 days in considering the representation.

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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 17 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 24 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 S.C.No.01/2021 dated 07.01.2021 passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, viz., Raja S/o.Periyasamy, aged about 32 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

s/d-
Assistant Registrar(CS VIII)

True Copy

Sub-Assistant Registrar

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To

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- 1.The Secretary to Government,
Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St.George, Chennai - 9.
- 2.The District Magistrate and District Collector,
Dharmapuri District.
- 3.The Superintendent of Police,
Dharmapuri District.
- 4.The Superintendent of Central Prison,
Office of the Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison, Hasthampatti,
Salem District.
- 5.The Inspector of Police,
Pennagaram Police Station,
Dharmapuri District.
- 6.The Joint Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu,
Public, Law and Order Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 9.
- 7.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

H.C.P.No.299 of 2021

SR-II (CO)
EU 28.7.2021