

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED 22.02.2021

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THE HONOURABLE Mr.JUSTICE P.N.PRAKASH
AND
THE HONOURABLE Mr.JUSTICE V.SIVAGNANAM

H.C.P.No.704 of 2020

R.Mahalakshmi ... Petitioner

Vs.

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

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate
Nagapattinam District
Nagapattinam

3.The Commissioner of Police
(Law & Order)
O/o.The Commissioner of Police
Tiruchirapalli District ... 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 pertaining to the impugned order made in C.O.C.No.08/2020 dated 05.03.2020 passed by the 2nd respondent and approved by the 1st respondent herein and quash the same as illegal and consequently direct the respondents to produce the detenu Santhoshkumar, S/o.Rajendiran, aged about 25 years, now confined and kept in Central Prison, Trichy before this Hon'ble Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.S.Kingston Jerold

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

O R D E R

[Order of the Court was made by V.SIVAGNANAM, J.]

The petitioner is the mother of the detenu, Santhoshkumar, S/o.Rajendiran, aged about 25 years. The detenu has been detained by the 2nd respondent by his order dated 05.03.2020 in C.O.C.No.08/2020, holding him to be a "Sexual Offender", as contemplated under Section 2(ggg) 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 05.03.2020. The petitioner made a representation on 12.03.2020. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 16.03.2020. The remarks were duly received on 06.06.2020. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 30.06.2020.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 82 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 29 days were Government Holidays and hence, there was an inordinate delay of 53 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 06.06.2020 and there was a delay of

24 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 7 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 17 days in considering the representation.

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 53 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 17 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 C.O.C.No.08/2020, dated 05.03.2020, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu viz., Santhoshkumar, S/o.Rajendiran, aged about 25 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS VIII)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

- 1.The Principal Secretary to the Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St. George, Chennai 9.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Nagapattinam District,
Nagapattinam.
- 3.The Commissioner of Police,
(Law & Order)
O/o.The Commissioner of Police,
Tiruchirapalli District.
- 4.The Superintendent,
District Jail, Nagapattinam.
- 5.The Public Prosecutor
High Court, Madras.

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