

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 29.01.2021

Coram

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice P.N.PRAKASH
and

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice V.SIVAGNANAM

H.C.P. No. 1461 of 2020

M.Manimegalai

.. Petitioner

Vs

- 1.The State of Tamil Nadu
rep. By its Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 9.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Chengalpattu District, Chengalpattu.
- 3.The Superintendent of Police,
Chengalpattu District, Chengalpattu.
- 4.The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai - 66.
- 5.The Inspector of Police,
Achirapakkam Circle,
Chengalpattu District.

.. Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a writ of Habeas Corpus to call for the records in BCDFGISSSV No.21/2020 dated 29.07.2020 on the file of the second respondent and quash the same as illegal and consequently direct the respondents to produce the petitioner's husband Thiru.Mari @ Nandu Mari, Son of Sadayan, aged about 55 years, who is now detained at Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai - 66 before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.G.Punniakoti

For Respondents : Mr.R.Prathap Kumar,
Addl.Public Prosecutor

ORDER

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

The petitioner is the wife of the detenu, Mari @ Nandu Mari, Son of Sadayan, aged about 55 years. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in BCDFGISSSV No.21/2020 dated 29.07.2020 holding him 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 29.07.2020. The petitioner made two representations on 08.08.2020 and 09.09.2020 respectively. Insofar as the first representation is concerned, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 12.08.2020. The remarks were duly received on 03.09.2020. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 14.09.2020. Insofar as the second representation is concerned, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 12.09.2020. The remarks were duly received on 28.09.2020. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 06.11.2020.

6. Insofar as the first representation is concerned, it is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 22

days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 6 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 16 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 03.09.2020 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. Insofar as the second representation is concerned, it is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 17 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 5 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 12 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 28.09.2020 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 12 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 25 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 28 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 31 days in considering the representations 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 BCDFGISSSV No.21/2020 dated 29.07.2020, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Mari @ Nandu Mari, Son of Sadayan, aged about 55 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (C.S.VII)

/True Copy/

Sub Assistant Registrar

To

- 1.The Secretary to Government,
State of Tamil Nadu
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 9.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Chengalpattu District, Chengalpattu.
3. The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (Law & Order), Department,
Fort St.George, Chennai -9.
- 4.The Superintendent of Police,
Chengalpattu District, Chengalpattu.
- 5.The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai - 66.
- 6.The Inspector of Police,
Achirapakkam Circle,
Chengalpattu District.
- 7.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

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