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H.C.P.(MD) No.675 of 2021

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 27.10.2021

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE V. BHARATHIDASAN

and

THE HONOURABLE MRS.JUSTICE S.ANANTHI

H.C.P. (MD) No.675 of 2021

Nagalakshmi

... Petitioner/Wife of detenu

-vs-

1.The State of Tamil Nadu,

Represented by its Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Exercise Department,
Fort.St.George,
Chennai-600 009.

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Pudukkottai District,
Pudukkottai.

3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Thiruchirappalli

... Respondents

PRAYER: Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for the issue of a Writ of Habeas Corpus, or any order or direction or to issue a Writ in the nature of Habeas Corpus, calling for the records from the second respondent in P.D.O.No.21/2021 dated 10.04.2021, by setting aside the said order of detention passed by the 2nd respondent and setting the detenu Achuthan, aged about 32 years, S/o.Annasamy, at liberty now detained in the Central Prison, Thiruchirappalli.

For Petitioner : Mr.K.Prabhu

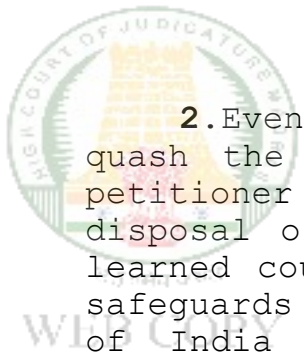
For Respondents : Mr.S.Ravi

Addl.Public Prosecutor

O R D E R

(Order of the Court was made by V. BHARATHIDASAN, J.)

This Habeas Corpus Petition has been filed by the Wife of the detenu, namely, Achuthan, S/o. Annasamy, aged about 32 years, challenging the detention order in P.D.O.No.21/2021 dated 10.04.2021, passed by the second respondent, branding him as "Drug Offender", as contemplated under Section 2(e) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982.



2. Even though the petitioner has raised several grounds to quash the impugned detention order, the learned counsel for the petitioner would mainly place arguments on the ground of delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation. In this regard, the learned counsel for the petitioner would state 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. S. Ravi, the learned Additional Public Prosecutor, appearing for the respondents would state that after satisfying with the materials placed by the sponsoring authority, the detaining authority has passed the impugned detention order and therefore, there is no infirmity or illegality in the same. He would produce the proforma regarding the disposal of the petitioner's representation and would state that even if there is any delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation, it has not caused any prejudice to the rights of the detainee. Thus, he would pray for dismissal of this petition.

4. Heard the learned counsel for the petitioner as well as the respondents.

5. Perusal of the proforma furnished by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the respondents would show that as against the impugned detention order, the petitioner made a representation to the first respondent dated Nil and it was received on 21.04.2021. Remarks were called for on 21.04.2021 and it was received on 30.04.2021. The Deputy Secretary dealt with the matter on 04.05.2021. The concerned Minister dealt with the matter on 08.05.2021 and the representation came to be rejected on 07.06.2021. It is seen that in between 21.04.2021 and 30.04.2021 and in between 04.05.2021 and 08.05.2021, there was a delay of 11 days, after excluding the Government Holidays of 5 days, there was a delay of 6 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 6 days in considering the representation of the petitioner remains unexplained 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 above decision of the Apex Court.

8.In fine, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detention order in P.D.O.No.21/2021 dated 10.04.2021, passed by the second respondent, is set aside. Consequently, the detenu, namely, Achuthan, S/o. Annasamy, aged about 32 years, who is now detained at Central Prison, Palayamkottai, is directed to be released forthwith, unless his presence or custody or detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (CRL)

// True Copy //

/ /2021

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

gbg/rm

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.

To

- 1.The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
State of Tamil Nadu,
Home, Prohibition and Exercise Department,
Fort.St.George,
Chennai-600 009.
- 2.The Joint Secretary to Government,
State of Tamil Nadu,
Public (Law & Order),
Fort St.George,
Chennai.
- 3.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Pudukkottai District,
Pudukkottai.
- 4.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Thiruchirappalli.



5.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

+1 CC to M/s.K.PRABHU, Advocate (SR-32928[F] dated 27/10/2021)

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ORDER MADE IN
H.C.P. (MD) No.675 of 2021
27.10.2021

SJ(CO)
RS/JGB (08.11.2021) 4P 7C