



WEB COPY

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 03.03.2021

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE K.KALYANASUNDARAM

and

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.ILANGO VAN

H.C.P.(MD) No.548 of 2020

Meera

... Petitioner

-vs-

1.The Additional Chief Secretary to the Government
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department
Secretariat, Chennai-600 009

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

3.The Superintendent of Prison
Central Prison, Tiruchirappalli

... Respondents

PRAYER : Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for the issue of a Writ of Habeas Corpus calling for the records pertaining to the impugned detention order passed by the second respondent made in his proceedings in Cr.M.P.No.62/2020, dated 13.07.2020, in detaining the detenu under Section 2(gg) of the Tamilnadu Act 14 of 1982 as a Sand Offender and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the detenu namely Ashok Metha, son of Ramachandran, male, aged about 28 years, who is detained in Central Prison, Tiruchirappalli, before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.K.M.Karunakaran

For Respondents : Mr.K.Dinesh Babu

Additional Public Prosecutor

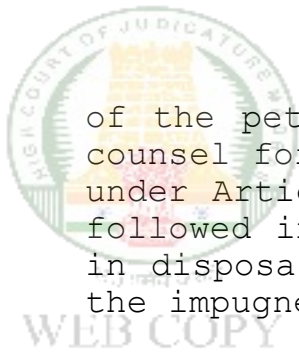
O R D E R

(Order of the Court was made by K.KALYANASUNDARAM, J.)

This habeas corpus petition has been filed by the mother of the detenu, namely, Ashok Metha, son of Ramachandran, aged about 28 years, challenging the detention order in Cr.M.P.No.62/2020, dated 13.07.2020, passed by the second respondent, branding him as "Sand Offender" as contemplated under Section 2(gg) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982.

2. Mr.K.M.Karunakaran, learned counsel for the petitioner, would argue that even though the petitioner has raised several grounds, he has confined his arguments only to the delay in disposal

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of the petitioner's representation. It is submitted by the learned counsel for the petitioner 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.

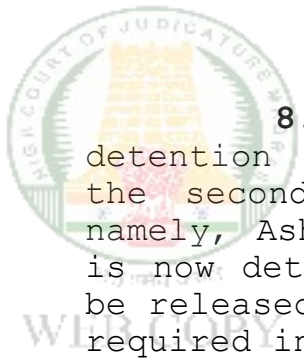
3. Mr.K.Dinesh Babu, learned Additional Public Prosecutor, while reiterating the counter affidavit filed by the second respondent, submitted that after satisfying with the materials placed by the Sponsoring Authority, the Detaining Authority has passed the detention order and there is no illegality or infirmity in the detention order. It is also stated that even if there is any delay in disposal of the representation, it has not caused any prejudice to the rights of the detenu and hence, prayed for dismissal of the habeas corpus petition.

4. Heard both sides and perused the materials available on record.

5. In the instant case, the proforma furnished by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor would indicate that as against the impugned detention order, the petitioner made a representation to the first respondent on 05.08.2020 and it was received on 17.08.2020. Remarks were called for on 18.08.2020 and it was received on 10.09.2020. The Deputy Secretary dealt with the matter on 11.09.2020. The concerned Minister dealt with the matter on 17.09.2020 and the representation came to be rejected on the same day i.e.17.09.2020. It is seen that in between 18.08.2020 and 10.09.2020, there was a delay of 18 days, after excluding the Government Holidays of four days and in between 11.09.2020 and 17.09.2020, there was a delay of four days, after excluding one day Government Holiday and in toto, there was a delay of 22 of 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 22 days in considering the representation of the petitioner has not been properly explained 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 decision of the Honourable Apex Court referred supra.



8. In fine, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detention order in Cr.M.P.No.62/2020, dated 13.07.2020, passed by the second respondent, is set aside. Consequently, the detenu, namely, Ashok Metha, son of Ramachandran, aged about 28 years, who is now detained at Central Prison, Tiruchirappalli, is directed to be released forthwith unless his presence or custody or detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (CO)

// True Copy //

/ /2021

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

KRK

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 the Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Chennai-600 009.
- 2.The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (Law & Order),
Fort St.George, Chennai-9.
- 3.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Tiruchirappalli District, Tiruchirappalli.
- 4.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Tiruchirappalli.
- 5.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

Order made in
H.C.P. (MD) No.548 of 2020
03.03.2021

SJ(CO)

SRS (11/03/2021) 3P : 6C

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