



BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 07.01.2021

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE K.KALYANASUNDARAM

and

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.ILANGO VAN

H.C.P. (MD) No.918 of 2020

Pothumani

...Petitioner/Detenu

-vs-

1.The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
State of Tamil Nadu,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St. George,
Chennai-600 009.

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Office of the District Collector and District Magistrate,
Theni District, Theni.

3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Madurai Special Prison for Women,
Madurai District.

... 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 entire records, connected with the detention order of the Respondent No.2 in Detention Order No.53 of 2020 dated 30.09.2020 and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the body or person of the detenu by name Tmt.Pothumani, wife of Ramu, aged about 48 years, now detained as "Drug Offender" at Madurai Special Prison for Women before this Court and set her at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.R.Alagumani

For Respondents : Mr.R.Anandharaj

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 detenu, namely, Pothumani, wife of Ramu, aged about 48 years, challenging the detention order No.53 of 2020, dated 30.09.2020, passed by the second respondent, branding her as "DRUG OFFENDER" as contemplated under Section 2(e) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982.

2. Mr.R.Alagumani, 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 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.

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3. Mr.R.Anandharaj, 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.

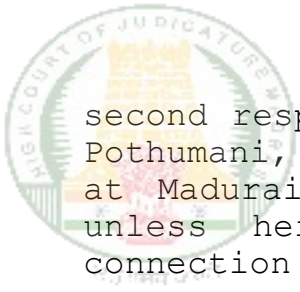
4. Heard both sides and perused the materials available on record.

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 22.10.2020 and it was received on 31.10.2020. Remarks were called for on the same day i.e., on 31.10.2020 and it was received on 16.11.2020. The Deputy Secretary dealt with the matter on 16.11.2020. The concerned Minister dealt with the matter on 23.11.2020 and the representation came to be rejected on 23.11.2020. It is seen that in between 31.10.2020 and 23.11.2020, there was a delay of 22 days, after excluding the Government Holidays of 5 days, there was a delay of 17 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 17 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 No.53 of 2020, dated 30.09.2020, passed by the



second respondent, is set aside. Consequently, the detenu, namely, Pothumani, wife of Ramu, aged about 48 years, who is now detained at Madurai Central Prison, is directed to be released forthwith unless her presence or custody or detention is required in connection with any other case.

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Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (AS)

// True Copy //

/ /2021

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

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.

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To:

- 1.The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
State of Tamil Nadu,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Sort St. George,
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- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
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- 3.The Superintendent of Prison,
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4. The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (Law &Order) Fort St.Goerge,
Chennai 600 009.
- 5.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

H.C.P. (MD) No.918 of 2020
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SE(CO)

KB(22.01.2021) 3P 6C

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