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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 20.04.2022

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THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA

Crl.O.P.No.8778 of 2022

and

Crl.M.P.No.5105 of 2022

M.V.Vasanthakumar,
S/o.Munirathinam Subrama Naidu

...Petitioner

Vs

1. The State Represented by,
The Inspector of Police,
RK Pet Police Station,
Tiruvallur District.
(Crime.No.415 of 2021)

2. Mr.Krishna Raj,
Sub-Inspector of Police,
RK Pet Police Station,
Tiruvallur district.

...Respondents

Prayer: Criminal Original Petition is filed under Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code, pleased to call for the records and quash the proceedings as against the petitioner in Crime No.415 of 2021, pending on the file of the first respondent.

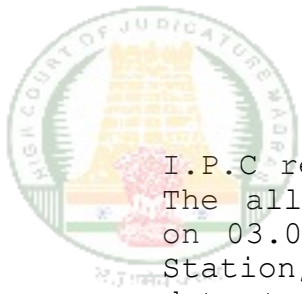
For Petitioner : Mr.B.Pachaiyappan

For Respondents : Mr.A.Gokulakrishnan
Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

This Criminal Original Petition has been filed, to call for the records and quash the proceedings as against the petitioner in Crime No.415 of 2021, pending on the file of the first respondent.

2. The brief facts of the case is that the second respondent has suo motu registered a case in Crime No.415 of 2021 against the petitioner for the offence punishable under Section 188 of



I.P.C read with Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The allegation in the complaint against the petitioner is that on 03.06.2021, when the Sub-Inspector of Police, RK Pet Police Station, accompanied with two other policemen were on patrol duty to see whether anyone was violating the Section 144 Cr.P.C issued by the Central and State Government to prevent the spread of the Corona, the petitioner was found roaming around and when the second respondent had enquired the petitioner, he has not stated any reasons. Based on the complaint given by the Sub-Inspector of Police, a case in Crime No.415 of 2021 was registered for the offence punishable under Section 188 read with Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

3. The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner would submit that only when the petitioner applied for passport seeking job in abroad, he came to know that the case was pending against him before the respondents police. He would further submit that due to the pendency of the case, enquiry regarding issuance of the Passport is kept pending. He would further submit that the respondent cannot straight away registered the case under Section 188 of IPC and there is no material to show that the petitioner had intentionally come out to spread infection to others.

4. The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner would further submit that the Government has also issued orders directing the withdrawal of cases registered during Covid-19 pandemic period and the withdrawal cases have registered for violation of Covid-19 pandemic rules.

5. The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner would further submit that the facts of the case are similar to the case covered in the decision reported in 2018 2 LW (Cr1) 606 [Jeevanandham and others Vs The Inspector of Police Velayuthampalayam Police Station, Karur District] dated 20.09.2018 and in Sri Raja Vs Inspector of Police, Sivakasi Town Police Station Virudhunagar District and other in Cr1.O.P(MD). No.7922 of 2019 etc batch dated 30.08.2019.

6. The learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the respondent would submit that the petitioner was found loitering on 03.06.2021 during Covid-19 pandemic/lockdown period, in defiance the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by the Central and State Government. He would further submit that the facts of this case are covered under the Judgment referred to above.

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



8. In the Judgment reported in 2018 2 LW (Crl) 606 [Jeevanandham and others Vs The Inspector of Police Velayuthampalayam Police Station, Karur District] dated 20.09.2018, it has been held that the police has no right to file a case under Section 188 of IPC and to investigate the same without getting proper permission from the concerned Jurisdictional Magistrate. Here, there is no material to show that before registering the case, permission of the concerned jurisdictional Magistrate has been obtained. In such circumstances, the respondent has no right to register the case and to investigate the matter.

9. Further, there is no material to prove that the petitioner had knowingly attempted to spread infection of any disease dangerous to life and it is also not the case of the respondents that at the time of the incident, the petitioner was affected by Covid-19. So, the contention that coming out during pandemic period will spread the disease is without any basis and thereby the offence under Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

10. Section 188 of IPC defines disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant to spread infection as under:-

"188. Disobedience to order duly promulgated by Public Servant:

Whoever, knowing that, by an order promulgated by a public servant lawfully empowered to promulgate such order, he is directed to abstain from a certain act, or to take certain order with certain property in his possession or under his management, disobeys such direction.

Shall, if such disobedience causes or tends to cause obstruction, annoyance or injury, or risk of obstruction, annoyance or injury, to any persons lawfully employed, be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month or with fine which may extend to two hundred rupees, or with both;

and if such disobedience causes or tends to cause danger to human life, health or safety, or causes or tends to cause a riot or affray, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both."



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11. Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 is reproduced below:-

"51. Punishment for obstruction, etc.-

(1) Whoever, without reasonable cause-

(a) obstructs any officer or employee of the Central Government or the State Government, or a person authorised by the National Authority or State Authority or District Authority in the discharge of his functions under this Act; or

(b) refuses to comply with any direction given by or on behalf of the Central Government or the State Government or the National Executive Committee or the State Executive Committee or the District Authority under this Act,

shall on conviction be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine, or with both, and if such obstruction or refusal to comply with directions results in loss of lives or imminent danger thereof, shall on conviction be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years."

12. Considering the nature of allegations and the offence involved in this case, this Court is of the opinion that coming out of the house during pandemic period should not held to be a reason for spoiling the future of the petitioner. Unintended casual act, without any act of violence, should not take away the future of the petitioner. Moreover, it is also brought to the notice of this Court that the Government is also going to drop all these cases, which have been registered during the pandemic period against the public.

13. Taking all these aspects into account, this Court is of the considered view that the proceedings pending in Crime No.415 of 2021 dated 03.06.2021 on the file of the respondents is nothing but abuse of process of law and is hereby quashed. This Criminal Original Petition stands allowed. Consequently, connected Criminal Miscellaneous Petition is closed.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (CS-III)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

rgm/arb



To

1. The Inspector of Police,
RK Pet Police Station,
Tiruvallur District.

2. The Public Prosecutor,
High Court of Madras.

+lcc to Mr.B.Pachaiyappan, Advocate SR. No. 27782

Cr1.O.P.No.8778 of 2022
and
Cr1.M.P.No.5105 of 2022

RK (CO)
PR (13/05/2022)