



H.C.P.(MD) No.1707 of 2021

WEB COPY BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 14.07.2022

CORAM:

**THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE P.N.PRAKASH
AND
THE HONOURABLE MRS.JUSTICE R.HEMALATHA**

H.C.P.(MD) No.1707 of 2021

Lavanya

... Petitioner

-VS-

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

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

3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison, Madurai.

... Respondents



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WEB COPY

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue 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 Detention No. 41 of 2021 dated 25.10.2021 in detaining the detenu under Section 2(e) of the Tamilnadu Act 14 of 1982 as a Drug-Offender and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the detenu namely Sundar, S/o.Ramar, Male, aged about 36 years, who is detained in Central Prison, Madurai before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.C.Jegannathan

For Respondents : Mr.S.Ravi,
Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

[Made by P.N.PRAKASH, J.]

The petitioner is the wife of the detenu viz., Sundar, aged about 36 years. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in Detention No.41 of 2021 dated 25.10.2021, holding him to be a "Drug Offender", as contemplated under Section 3(1) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982. The said order is under challenge in this Habeas Corpus Petition.



H.C.P.(MD) No.1707 of 2021

WEB COPY

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 strongly 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.



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WEB COPY

5. The Detention Order in question was passed on 25.10.2021. The petitioner made a representation on 12.11.2021. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 17.11.2021. The remarks were duly received on 13.12.2021. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 03.01.2022.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 25 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 6 days were Government Holiday and hence there was an inordinate delay of 19 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 13.12.2021 and there was a delay of 20 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 6 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 14 days in considering the representation.



H.C.P.(MD) No.1707 of 2021

WEB COPY

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.



H.C.P.(MD) No.1707 of 2021

WEB COPY

10. In the subject case, admittedly, there is an inordinate and unexplained delay of 19 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 14 days in considering the representation 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 Detention No.41 of 2021 dated 25.10.2021, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, viz., Sundar, aged about 36 years, son of Ramar, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

[P.N.P., J.] [R.H., J.]
14.07.2022

Index : Yes / No
Internet : Yes / No
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