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Crl.O.P.No.12333 of 2023

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 02.06.2023

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE **G.CHANDRASEKHARAN**

Crl.O.P.No.12333 of 2023
and Crl.M.P.No.7567 of 2023

1.A.M.Mathiyazhagan

2.Kumar

3.Thangamani

4.Murugan

... Petitioners

Vs.

1.State Rep by its
Inspector of Police,
Sethiyathope Police Station,
Cuddalore District
(Crime No.815 of 2020)

2.Manickaraja
Sub-Inspector of Police ,
Sethiyathope Police Station,
Cuddalore District.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Criminal Original Petition filed under Section 482 Cr.P.C. praying to call for the records in Crime No.815 of 2020 pending Inspector of Police, Sethiyathope Police Station, Cuddalore District, and quash the same.

For Petitioners : Mr.P.Dhileepan

For Respondents : Mr.Leonard Arul Joseph Selvam



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Government Advocate (Crl. Side)
(For R1)

ORDER

This Criminal Original Petition has been filed to call for the records in Crime No.815 of 2020 pending on the file of the Inspector of Police, Sethiyathope Police Station, Cuddalore District, and quash the same.

2.The learned counsel for the petitioners submitted that, petitioners are accused in First Information Report in Crime No.815 of 2020 2020 being prosecuted for the offences under Sections 188 & 269 I.P.C. It is the case of the prosecution that petitioners are members of DMK Political party. On 21.07.2020, near Agaraalambadi bus stop, petitioners without obtaining prior permission, protested against collection of increased electricity tariff by the State Government. This protest was arranged and conducted during the spread of Covid-19 and Section 144 promulgation was in force, thereby, causing spread of Covid-19 among the general public and prevented free flow of traffic.

2a.It is the further submission of the learned counsel for the petitioners that FIR allegations do not make out the offence under Section 269 of IPC against the petitioners that, they unlawfully or negligently does any act which



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is, and which they knows or has reason to believe to be, likely to spread the infection of any disease dangerous to life. Therefore, this petition is filed for quashing.

3.He further submitted that this Court in Crl.O.P.No.17903 of 2021 and Crl.O.P.No.11291 of 2022 quashed the cases registered under Section 143 and 341 of IPC and 143, 188 and 341 of IPC respectively, on the ground that, the petitioners therein were engaged in protest, which is their fundamental right. No public lodged complaint and no public got affected, due to the protest conducted by the petitioners. Petitioners had only raised slogans against the Government and the same would not amount to commission of offence and it is a fundamental right under the constitution of India.

4. The learned counsel for the petitioners relied upon a Judgment in ***Mahaboob Basha Vs. Sambanda Reddiar and others*** reported in ***1994(1) Crimes, Page 477***. He also relied upon a Judgment in a batch of quash petitions, reported in ***2018-2-L.W. (Crl.) 606*** in ***Crl.O.P. (MD).No. 1356 of 2018***, dated 20.09.2018 in the case of ***Jeevanandham and others Vs. State rep. by the Inspector of Police, Karur District***, and this Court held in



Paragraph-25, as follows :-

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"25. In view of the discussions, the following guidelines are issued insofar as an offence under Section 188 of IPC, is concerned:

a) A Police Officer cannot register an FIR for any of the offences falling under Section 172 to 188 of IPC.

b) A Police Officer by virtue of the powers conferred under Section 41 of Cr.P.C will have the authority to take action under Section 41 of Cr.P.C., when a cognizable offence under Section 188 IPC is committed in his presence or where such action is required, to prevent such person from committing an offence under Section 188 of IPC.

c) The role of the Police Officer will be confined only to the preventive action as stipulated under Section 41 of Cr.P.C and immediately thereafter, he has to inform about the same to the public servant concerned/authorised, to enable such public servant to give a complaint in writing before the jurisdictional Magistrate, who shall take cognizance of such complaint on being prima facie satisfied with the requirements of Section 188 of IPC.

d) In order to attract the provisions of Section 188 of IPC, the written complaint of the public servant concerned should reflect the following ingredients namely;



i) that there must be an order promulgated by the public servant;

ii) that such public servant is lawfully empowered to promulgate it;

iii) that the person with knowledge of such order and being directed by such order to abstain from doing certain act or to take certain order with certain property in his possession and under his management, has disobeyed; and

iv) that such disobedience causes or tends to cause;

(a) obstruction, annoyance or risk of it to any person lawfully employed; or

(b) danger to human life, health or safety; or

(c) a riot or affray.

e) The promulgation issued under Section 30(2) of the Police Act, 1861, must satisfy the test of reasonableness and can only be in the nature of a regulatory power and not a blanket power to trifle any democratic dissent of the citizens by the Police.

f) The promulgation through which, the order is made known must be by something done openly and in public and private information will not be a promulgation. The order must be notified or published by beat of drum or in a Gazette or published in a newspaper with a wide circulation.



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g) No Judicial Magistrate should take cognizance of a Final Report when it reflects an offence under Section 172 to 188 of IPC. An FIR or a Final Report will not become void ab initio insofar as offences other than Section 172 to 188 of IPC and a Final Report can be taken cognizance by the Magistrate insofar as offences not covered under Section 195(1)(a)(i) of Cr.P.C.

h) The Director General of Police, Chennai and Inspector General of the various Zones are directed to immediately formulate a process by specifically empowering public servants dealing with for an offence under Section 188 of IPC to ensure that there is no delay in filing a written complaint by the public servants concerned under Section 195(1)(a)(i) of Cr.P.C.

5.The learned Government Advocate (Criminal side) opposed this petition on the ground that petitioners were requested to stop the protest, but they continued their protest on behalf of their political party and raised slogans against the Government, thereby causing spread of Covid-19. Therefore, First Information Report in Crime No.815 of 2020 was registered. Thus, he prayed for dismissal of this petition.

6.Considered the rival submissions and perused the records. It is



pertinent to refer to the offences for which FIR was registered in this case.

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7. Section 188 of IPC reads as follows:

“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 person 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 trends 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.*

In the Judgment reported in [2018 2 LW (CrI) 606] “***Jeevanandham and others Vs The Inspector of Police Velayuthampalayam Police Station,***



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Karur District” dated 20.09.2018, it has been held that the police has no right to file a case under Section 188 IPC and to investigate the same without informing about the commission of offence under Section 188 IPC to the public servants concerned/authorities to enable such public servants to give complaint in writing before the learned Jurisdictional Magistrate who shall take cognizance of the complaint, on being *prima facie* satisfied with the requirements of Section 188 IPC. No such procedure has been followed in this case. In such circumstances, the respondent has no right to register the case and to investigate the matter.

8. Section 269 of IPC reads as follows:

“Whoever unlawfully or negligently does any act which is, and which he knows or has reason to believe to be, likely to spread the infection of any disease dangerous to life, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with both.”

Section 269 of Cr.P.C states that a person can be prosecuted if he unlawfully or negligently does any act which is, and which he knows or has

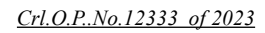


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reason to believe to be, likely to spread the infection of any disease dangerous to life. In the case before hand, except the allegation that the petitioners violating the prohibition order, there is no other material produced to show that the petitioners were affected by Covid-19, when they came out of their house in a public place and that resulted in spread of Covid -19 or any other dangerous disease.

9. In the absence of any material in support of the allegations that petitioners were responsible for spreading the infectious disease which is dangerous to life, this Court is of the considered view that, petitioners cannot be prosecuted under Section 269 of IPC.

10.As per Section 468 of Cr.P.C., the final report ought to have been filed within a period of one year from the date of commission of offence when an offence is punishable with imprisonment which may extend to one year. The F.I.R. was registered in this case on 21.07.2020. Till date, final report is not filed. Therefore, even if the final report is filed now, in view of the bar under Section 468 of Cr.P.C., the Court cannot take cognizance of the offences. In view of the above, continuance of the criminal proceeding in Crime No.815 of 2020 against the petitioners is nothing but an abuse of



11. In conclusion, for the reasons stated above, this Court finds that petitioners cannot be prosecuted for the offences under Sections 188 and 269 of I.P.C.

12. In this view of the matter, this Criminal Original Petition is allowed and F.I.R in Crime No.815 of 2020 pending on the file of the Inspector of Police, Sethiyathope Police Station, Cuddalore District, against the petitioners is quashed. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petition is closed.

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Index: Yes/No
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To:

1. Inspector of Police,
Sethiyathope Police Station,
Cuddalore District
(Crime No.815 of 2020)

2. Manickaraja
Sub-Inspector of Police ,
Sethiyathope Police Station,
Cuddalore District.

3. The Public Prosecutor,
High Court of Madras.



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G.CHANDRASEKHARAN, J.

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