Order QR

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 29-10-2026

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR JUSTICE G.K. ILANTHIRAIYAN

CRL OP No. 31448 of 2026

CNR:{HCMA012583042026}

and

CRL MP Nos. 20866 and 20868 OF 2026

1. Pushpalatha
   W/o Gopinath,
   No.79, 3rd Street,
   Pallavan Nagar,
   Kasimedu,
   Chennai District.
2. Vijayashanthi
   D/o Nadesan,
   No.174-K, North Street,
   New Colony,
   Thoramangalam,
   Perambalur District.

..Petitioner(s)

Vs

1. State Rep. by, The Inspector of Police
   Kattoor Police Station,
   Coimbatore District,
   Crime No.361 of 2023
2. Saravanan
   S/o Sampandham,
   No.2/148, North Street,
   Anthanapettai,
   Manjakollai,
   Nagapattinam District.

..Respondent(s)

PRAYER: Criminal Original Petition filed under Section 528 of B.N.S.S. 2023, praying to call for records relating to the C.C.No.5000 of 2025 on the file of the Learned Judicial Magistrate, Additional Mahila Court, Coimbatore, and quash the same.

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For Petitioner(s): Mr.S.N.Arun Kumar

For Respondent(s): Mr.R.Ganesh Kumar
Additional Public Prosecutor for R1

ORDER

This Criminal Original Petition has been filed to quash the proceedings in C.C.No.5000 of 2025 on the file of the learned Judicial Magistrate, Additional Mahila Court, Coimbatore, for the alleged offences under sections 4(2) (c), 5(1) (d) and 3(2)(a) of Immoral Traffic [Prevention] Act 1956.

2. The case of the prosecution is that on 23.11.2023, the de-facto complainant/second respondent namely, Saravanan, S/o.Sampandham, lodged a complaint before the first respondent, alleging that while he was purchasing tablets for body pain at a medical shop, A2 approached him and informed him that he had a medicine and asked him to accompany him. Thereafter, A2 took the complainant to the Grand Beauty Spa and introduced him to the petitioners, and instructed them to take him to Radha. The complainant saw the said Radha who is attempting to seduce him. Immediately thereafter, the de-facto complainant left the place and lodged the present complaint. Pursuant thereto, a case has been registered in Crime No.361 of 2023 for the offences punishable under sections 4(2) (c), 5(1) (d) and 3(2) (a), of Immoral Traffic [Prevention] Act 1956.

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3. The learned counsel for the petitioners/A3 & A4 would submit that the entire complaint is a false and concocted one and the petitioners were arrested based on the false information received from the de-facto complainant and the petitioners are no way connected with the alleged offence and they have not committed any such offence. It is his further submission that the first respondent without verifying the veracity of the complaint, registered the case implicating the petitioners as accused and the very registration of the First Information Report against the petitioners is not maintainable. Hence, he submitted that no offence is made out under Sections 3(2) (a), 4(2) (c) and 5(1) (d) of Immoral Traffic [Prevention] Act 1956.

4. Heard both sides and perused the material placed on record.

5. The main ground raised in the present petition is that the respondent police did not follow the mandatory requirements under Section 15 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956. Thus, it is relevant to rely upon the judgment of this Court in ***Kadek Dwi Ani Rasmini and others vs. K. Natarajan and others reported in 2019(1) LW Crl 94,*** are extracted hereunder:~

> *28. A careful look at the provisions of Section 15 would show that a Special Police Officer or a Trafficking Police Officer can enter upon any premises and cause a search without warrant, only after satisfying the following:-*

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(i) he should have reasonable grounds for believing that an offence punishable under this Act has been or is being committed;

(ii) he must believe that such an offence is committed in respect of a person living in the premises;

(iii) he should believe that the search of the premises with warrant cannot be made without undue delay; and

(iv) he must record the grounds of his belief before entering the premises.

29.The expression "Special Police Officer" is defined in Section 2(i) of the Act, to mean a Police Officer appointed by or on behalf of the State Government to be in charge of police duties within a specified area for the purpose of this Act. Similarly, the expression "Trafficking Police Officer" is defined in Section 2(j) to mean a Police Officer appointed by the Central Government under Section 13(4). I do not know and I have not come across any such Trafficking Police Officer appointed by the Central Government in terms of Section 13(4), at least in the State of Tamil Nadu.

30. Under Sub~section (2) of Section 15, the Special Police Officer or the Trafficking Police Officer should also call upon two or more respectable inhabitants, at least one of whom should be a woman of the locality in which the place to be searched is situate, to attend and witness the search. For the purpose of enforcing the attendance of such respectable inhabitants, the Police Officer is obliged to issue an order in writing to them. If the person, who is called upon to attend and witness the search, refuses or neglects to comply with the notice, despite an order in writing being delivered to him, he is liable to be punished for an offence under Section 187 of the IPC, by virtue of Sub~section (3)

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of Section 15. An immunity is granted under Sub~section (6) of Section 15 to persons taking part in or attending and witnessing a search, from any civil or criminal proceedings in respect of anything lawfully done in connection with the search.

31. The Special Police Officer or the Trafficking Police Officer, who makes a search, should be accompanied by at least two women Police Officers. If any woman or girl is removed under Sub~section (4) from the premises of search, she could be interrogated only by the woman Police Officer.

32. Day in and day out, newspapers compete with each other in publishing reports along with photographs of girls, whenever any search is carried out under Section 15 of the Act and any woman is removed from a place. The website of the National Crime Records Bureau shows that a total of about 2,44,270 incidents of crime against women were reported in the whole country during the year 2012. Out of them, about 2563 constitute cases under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956. Interestingly, 19.5% of such cases (about 500 cases out of those 2563 cases) were reported only in Tamil Nadu. This can be taken either as an indication that incidents of crime under the said Act is on the increase in Tamil Nadu or as an indication of the role played by the Police in the State of Tamil Nadu in taking the crimes under this Act more seriously than what their counterparts in the other States do.

33. Unfortunately, no accountability is fixed on the police to see whether all the requirements of Section 15 are complied with or not. No one calls upon the Special Police Officer or the Trafficking Police Officer (i) to produce records to show whether he has minuted the grounds of his belief that an offence

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punishable under the Act is committed or has been committed in respect of a person living in any premises,

(ii) to produce records to show his subjective satisfaction that the search of the premises with warrant cannot be made without undue delay, (iii) to produce records to show whether two respectable inhabitants of the locality attended and witnessed the search, (iv) to show whether persons removed from such premises were subjected to medical examination and produced before the appropriate Magistrate immediately, and (v) to produce proof to show that two women Police Officers accompanied them and the interrogation of any woman was done only by them.

34.Many times, even persons who are booked under the provisions of this Act, do not appear to challenge the procedure adopted. This is perhaps due to the fact that in most of the cases, the Police find it convenient to book a person only for an offence under Section 8, which is punishable on first conviction, either with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to Rs. 5,000/~. Therefore, it appears that people choose to plead guilty and pay the fine even on the first occasion and get off, instead of going through the mill, by facing the prosecution and challenging the procedure followed by the Police. The remedy is seen as worse than the disease.

35. Therefore, the only presumption that I can draw is that as against the writ petitioners herein, the Police did not carry out a search by following all the steps prescribed in Section 15. When the mandate of the law is so clear in Section 15, the respondents cannot carry out a search de hors Section 15.

36.The conclusion that we can arrive at, on the basis of the above discussion, is twofold. If the Police carry out a search of the

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premises where the petitioners are carrying on business activities, after following all the steps prescribed in Section 15, the petitioners cannot come under Article 226, but may have to seek redressal somewhere else. But, if the respondents are in the habit of carrying out searches in a manner not prescribed by Section 15, then the same actually tantamount to an unlawful interference with the fundamental right of the petitioners to carry on any business or profession which is not declared as unlawful by any legislation.

6. In the present case also, the inspection was not carried out by the Special Police Officer or the Trafficking Police Officer and the Officer who carried out the inspection, was not an authorized officer under Section 15 of the Act. Therefore, if the search and inspection is not carried out by following the procedure prescribed under Section 15 of the Act, the entire proceeding becomes illegal and cannot be sustained in law.

7. Accordingly, this Criminal Original Petition stands allowed and the proceedings in C.C.No.5000 of 2025 on the file of the Learned Judicial Magistrate, Additional Mahila Court, Coimbatore, is hereby quashed. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petitions are closed.

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Index: Yes/No
Speaking/Non-speaking order
Neutral Citation: Yes/No
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To

1. The Judicial Magistrate,
   Additional Mahila Court, Coimbatore

2. The Inspector of Police
   Kattoor Police Station,
   Coimbatore District,
   Crime No.361 of 2023

3. The Public Prosecutor
   High Court of Madras.

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