Maiden Issue

IILM LAWJOURNAL Volume I,Issue1,2023

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IILM School of Law IILM UNIVERSITY Knowledge Park-II, Greater Noida (INDIA) This volume should be cited as: Vol. I, IILMLJ Issue1,2023

Maiden issue

Published By: ILM School of Law, IILM University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

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EDITORIAL

It is a matter of immense pleasure to put the maiden issue of the *IILM Law Journal*, April2023 in the hands of our respectful and responsive members of the legal Fraternity. As a new initiative, it is to provide opportunity to law researchers and those who are doing research in allied subjects, to publish their research, after *peer reviewing*, for the benefit of people interested in legal studies, social studies, legislation, judicial decisions and working of the law. The journal is expected to emerge as a vehicle for thought transmission in multiple dimensions across disciplines and sharing of concerns with critical thinking. Original focused studies with purpose, after appropriate choice of methodology, in preference to stereotypes, will be highly appreciated.

Researches for exploring traditional wisdom and historical context, scientific enquiry, apposite scrutiny and futuristic outlook will be a priority for this journal. Case comments, research notes, review articles, rejoinders and book reviews will be highly appreciated.

This maiden issue covers entries on the themes: Indian Constitutional Stance and Achievements on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of Equality And Justice; Indian Approach to International Arbitration; India's Target to be a Carbo-Free Country; Data Protection vis-a-vis Right to Privacy In India; Medical Tourism and the Law in India; Collective Investment Scheme; Role of Judiciary in Prevention of Custodial Death with Special Reference to Human Right Jurisprudence; Enforceability of Non-Compete Covenants in Employment Contracts vis-a-vis Judicial Pronouncements in India, and the Movement of Criminal Law towards Equality and Justice for All Regardless of Gender. These are providing ideas for national development, international understanding, working of law in society, policy framing, legislation, judging, public administration, diplomacy, systemmanagement, regulation of technology and social reform. I wish the journal to contribute to Indian Jurisprudence as a rich plate form for projection of well researched factual situations and viable ideas and suggestions.

I am grateful to the contributors, advisors, reviewers and the members of the editorial committee of the journal for their efforts cooperation in bringing out this issue of the journal in a shortest possible period of time. Further, critical comments and constructive suggestions from any one for improvement are most welcome.

Thanks.

Prof. M. Afzal Wani Editor

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 Law & Justice in Globalizing World The Movement of Criminal Law towards Equality and Justice for All Regardless of Gender *Megha Chadha*

ROLE OF JUDICIARY IN PREVENTION OF CUSTODIAL DEATH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HUMAN RIGHT JURISPRUDENCE

Asma Ishaque*

Abstract

The incidents of custodial violence are not new for the Indian society. Human rights violation is the core of the criminal justice system and initiation of its action. This research article deals with the legal framework in India against torture and custodial violence and the role of the Indian police force in such crimes. It discusses the various rights to protection against torture and the role played by Indian judicial system to protect such human violation, besides giving guidelines through the verdicts of the supreme court of India. It refers to relevant laws of the country and the Constitution of India. The problem of custodial deaths frequently attracts the attention of press, NGO'S, in the field of human rights, political parties, people's representatives, National human rights commission, judiciary and all have contributed in their own way to trace the causes of custodial deaths and suggested remedies for its prevention.

Key Words: Custodial Violence, Torture, Criminal Justice System, Human Rights.

Introduction:

Justice to pretrial detainees is predominantly within the purview of the execution branch if government, particularly the police which often has negative approach in respect of individual's life liberty

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and human dignity a concept basis to the norms of justice. Use of third degree methods by the police, atrocities, harassment, cruelty to men and women detained in custody, molestation, rapes, physical and mental torture, exploitation, coercing near relatives of the alleged accused for early surrender, not registering genuine complaints, custodial death etc are common grievances of the pretrial detainees. Under such precarious conditions justice to pre-trial determines is a pertinent question of human rights, constitutional guarantees, protection of detainees under substantive laws and special statutes, invite special concern and assume great significance. Ambit of Human Rights represent such natural right s which lead and contribute to a balanced development of individual guaranteeing life, liberty and dignity of human beings, protecting from oppressions, mal-practices cruelty, slavery, servitude, arbitrary arrests, inhuman or degrading treatment of the individuals by the executive and ensuring equality before law.

Constitution of India also guarantees that no person shall be deprived of this life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by Law. Encroachment upon persona liberty by executive is not permitted save in accordance with law, and in conformity with the provisions thereof. There is not doctrine of state necessity in India. Before a person is deprived of his life or personal liberty the procedure established by law must be strictly followed and must not be advantage of the person affected.

Prior to Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India¹ Article 21 was construed narrowly only as a guarantee again executive action unsupported by law. But Meneka's case opened up a new dimension and laid down that it imposed a limitation upon lawmaking as well,' namely, that while prescribing a procedure for depriving a person of his life or personal liberty, it must prescribe a procedure which is reasonable, fair and just. Court on receiving

¹ AIR 1978 SC597

complaint of deprivation- of such a right, under its power of judicial review, has to decide whether there is a law authorizing such deprivation and whether, in the given case, the procedure prescribed by such law is reasonable, fair and just and not arbitrary, whimsical and fanciful.

Apart from Human Rights and Constitutional guarantees, substantive Law, such as Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Evidence Act and special Statutes also provide protection against atrocities and exploitation of Individuals. Section 330 of the Indian Penal Code lays down that whoever voluntarily causes hurt for the purpose of extorting from the sufferer or any person interested in him any confession or any information which may lead to the detection of an offence or restoration of any 2 property or valuable security, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine. Inspite of legal guarantees and protection, violation of fundamental rights of citizens by the custodians of law and order is the rule rather than exception. The law becomes a mockery when its enforcement agencies begin to indulge in lawlessness. Crime figures in such conditions are bound to go up if the machinery meant for its prevention and control happens to have a culpable conduct.

Torture including rape and ill-treatment were endemic throughout the country. Victims included suspected political activitists, Criminal suspects, members of vulnerable groups, and those defending economic and social rights. In February, seven men who had been detained by police for several days were admitted to hospital in Rajkot, Gujrat state, with serious eye injuries. Police officials had apparently rubbed a medicinal balm and chilli powder into their eyes. According to reports, the detainees had been ordered to strip and slap one another before being thrashed with belts. Investigations into the incident were continuing at the end of year. There were increasing reports of rape by members of the armed forces. In September, an 18 years old girl was allegedly raped by soldiers during a search operation in her village in Assam. Doctor confirmed that she had been raped. No action was known to have been taken against the alleged perpetrators

Law is to protect liberties. But the state authorities and its duty to maintain law and order at any cost are always are in conflict with the human feelings and the liberty of the people. Liberty as history has shown is the basic thing that goes to make up the ethos of man and civilization without it no one can attain happiness. Which is the ultimate objective of the human being but liberty has to be regulated so that all may enjoy it equally. Absolute liberty is neither possible nor exist in any society whatsoever.

Safeguards Available to Pre-trial Detainees

The human being is the beginning and the end of all organized societies within the state or within the international community. In the present set of society, the state has the fundamental task to create conditions of life affording adequate protection to the individual person. The realization of human rights must be effected in every country within the pattern of national life. The International Law of human rights must be interpreted, applied and enforced in every country with proper care which builds up the collective character of the peoples.

National safeguards are to be studied under the head of Protection of Human Rights Act, constitutional guarantee and protection under substantive law of the land.

i. "Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993" India being a signatory to the U.N Charter, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, number of conventions related thereto, decided to pass an. Act to provide, promote Human Rights, and make their implementation more effective, safe and protective. Thus the Act of 1993, was passed and made effective on 8th january,1994 with an aim to constitute a National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights

Commissions in State and Human Rights Courts for hearing grievances of Human Rights oppressions and redress them effectively.

- **ii.** Constitutional Guarantees and Protection under ordinary Laws of Land. It is well known that if the pre-trial events manage mainly by the police are not subject to the control of the constitution they may render administration of justice almost impossible. Example may be given of 1975 during emergency the deflation of fundamental rights reached the high water mark. The disturbing disclosure of emergency excesses before the Shah Commission brought the police system and the criminal justice system into disrepute. With the lifting of emergency the judiciary again re-discovered its role, democratic liberalism resurgence and regained the legitimacy forfeited partially. Therefore, for criminal administration of justice constitutional control is the basic requirement.
- Right against Self Incrimination: The Suspect/ accused in India have a right to refuse to answer any incriminating questions and as pronounced by the apex court in Nandini Satpati² has a right to silence in custodial interrogation. The court held that any mode of pressure by the police whether subtle or crude, mental or physical, direct or indirect is violative of the rights against self incrimination. The constitutional right against self incrimination under Article 20 (3) is reiterated in Sections 24, 25, 26 and 27 of the Indian Evidence Act which excludes involuntary confessions by conclusively presuming all confessions to police and in police custody as involuntary.
- iv. Torture Commission of 1858 report was the reason for these provisions in the Indian Evidence Act, which are intended to discourage police from torturing the suspects /accused in

A.I.R 1978 SCR(3) 608

their custody. Similarly, Sections 162, 163 (1), 315, and 342 (a) of the Code of Criminal Procedure are designed towards prohibiting torture of suspects /accused by the police. Right to be informed of the ground of arrest, right to consult a legal practitioner, right to be produced before a judicial magistrate within 24 hours of police custody, etc., are the other rights assured by Article 22 of the Constitution and sections 57, 167 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

- v. Critical evaluation of the role of National Human Rights Commission shows that the Commission acted very effectively in investigating into all custodial deaths and the commissions guidelines issued from time to time has salutary effect. But the study reveals that the commission's directions with regard to payment to compensation were followed by the States but its directions to prosecute the erring police personnel were not heeded.
 - 1. The Government should acknowledge the reality of widespread torture practices and against a commission (like the Torture Commission of British days or more appropriately, like the truth and Reconciliation commission of South Africa which enquired into all torture practices) to conduct a full 8 fledged enquiry into the torture practices indulged in by the police against ordinary suspects as well as political activists and suspected terrorists.
 - 2. The Government should at the earliest ratify the Convention against torture and carry out the obligations under eh Convention, such as enacting a special law against torture (like the Torture Victims Protection Act of USA). Such a law should consolidate and incorporate all the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court and NHRC on custodial deaths from time to time. In specific, such a law should provide for:

- a. Impartial and speedy enquiry into all allegations of custodial torture and deaths by judicial officers and ensure quick prosecution of the guilty police personnel,
- b. Presumption of guilt against the Station House Officer (or other responsible official for detention as the case may be) for torture and death and the burden of proof shall be placed on the concerned official to prove his innocence, as suggested by the 113th Report of the Law Commission,
- c. Plugging the loopholes and strengthening the existing safeguards regarding arrest, period of police custody etc that are provided in the Constitution and various laws,
- d. Constitution of independent bodies at the district level consisting of persons of integrity and human rights understanding, who shall have unlimited access to any place where persons are deprived of their liberty, including the right to move inside such places without restriction, the power to interview in private persons deprived of their liberty, the power to see all buildings and installations not only the cells, the power to sell all papers not only the records of those detained, the power to make surprise visits at any time,
- e. Continuous education of people on human rights, in particular the detainees of their rights,
- f. Medical treatment of victims of torture,
- g. Statutory right for compensation.

Joint Committee on Human Rights under authority of House of Lords and House of Commons (2004) in U.K. shows that 38 deaths in Police custody have been reported in England and Wales between April 2003 to March 2004. There were 7 deaths in police stations, 22 in hospitals, and the remaining were reported for the scene of arrest or following arrest. None of the deaths at police station involved the use of restraint, although six of those who died in hospitals had been restrained by the police shortly prior to death. All of those who died at police stations were white; one of those who died in hospital having earlier been restrained was black. In 2002-03, there were 8 deaths in police custody in Scotland. In 2001, there were 5 deaths in police custody in Northern Ireland. A research study by the POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY (PCA) illustrates the extreme vulnerability of those who die in police custody. The PCA found that, in the period between1998-2003, there was an over 10 representation of ethnic minorities in deaths in police custody. The study also found that there were restraint issues in a higher proportion of the deaths involving nonwhite individuals than among white individuals. There are very high rates of drug and alcohol dependency, and of mental illness, amongst those who died in police custody. The PCA survey found that just half of those who died had prior indications of mental health problem. The study concluded that the vulnerable people are dying in the custody of state and no coordination between police custody and mental health Act which may prevent the malady.

Similarly, Human Rights watch (1998) an international

organization working for human rights conducted a study on SHIELDED FROM JUSTICE: POLICE BRUTALITY IN THE UNTED STATES in U.S.A. The study found the followings are contributing factors in police custody.

- (i) Weak Civilian Review Citizen review agencies, tasked with monitoring and, in some cases, investigating cases of excessive force, are under funded by city officers who refuse to cooperate with them, under attack by police unions and others, and underutilized by the public. External citizen review should be an integral part of police oversight and policy formulation, but instead has been sidelined in most cities examined.
- (ii) Leadership Failure Police administrators, the officials most responsible for addressing the problem of police abuse, are not yet taking issue seriously. Lack of effective leadership and the failure of the judiciary system are the major shortcoming common to all the cities. The study concludes that the problem of excessive use of force is "fundamentally" a problem of supervision, management and leadership.
- (iii) Ineffective Civil Remedies In past because police often are not held responsible for their actions through administrative or criminal proceedings, many police abuse victims or their families rely solely on civil remedies for redress. In practice, civil lawsuits usually allow police departments to continue to ignore abuses committed by officer. Some victims have succeeded in obtaining compensation, and a small percentage of civil lawsuits have forced police department to accept liability for abuses, leading to reforms in training or flawed policies.

(iv) Race as a factor Race continues to play a central role in the use of excessive force in the United States. In 1991, Christopher Commission was set up to examined the Rodney Kinds beating case.

Custodial crime in Indian

The review of empirical studies on custodial crimes in Indian context includes various studies undertaken by individuals, academic institutions, police research and training institutions, non government organizations and various Committees and Commissions. These studies have been broadly divided into five subs-themes such as

- (a) Illegal arrest and detention;
- (b) Custodial violence;
- (c) Custodial torture & deaths;
- (d) Custodial rapes and other abuses against women and
- (e) Disappearances

Illegal Arrest and Detention

Although it is prohibited under Constitution and legal provisions and International law, the illegal detention is a common phenomenon in every part of India. Few studies that have been conducted have focused on the issue. Over the years, it is significant that arrests made by police under the Local and Special Laws are around twice as compare to the arrest under the Indian Penal Code. It is noteworthy to mention here that arrests under Indian Penal Code, 1860 are usually based on individual complaints which might provide some immediate and direct reasons for police to make arrest offenders to satisfy the aggrieved person against whom crime committed.

However, on the other hand, majority of the arrests under the local and special laws related to prohibited laws such as Excise Act, Arms Act, Gambling Act, Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, Motor vehicle Act etc. In such cases, no complaint registered by aggrieved parties as such but merely on information and intelligence available to the police in their field work arrests are made. Thus a large number of persons arrested every year would view the police as having acted harshly on their own information network and not by complainants. A large section of the arrest of this types belong to preventive part of police functioning on the basis of their discretionary decision which not only affect police image among the public but also provide as scope for malpractice and highhandedness.

As National Police Commission (1981) estimates that around 60% of total arrests made by police are unnecessary and unjustified. This discriminatory practice is very common in India. Moreover, the incident of informal arrest is more common in the police stations located in rural areas where awareness about their rights against unlawful arrest is minimal. It was also found a kind of police subculture prevailing in the police organization (Bajpai, 2000). But, illegal arrest and detention reported to continuing even after the ruling of the Supreme Court in leading cases of *Joginder Kumar* v. *State of Uttar Pradesh*³ and *D.K. Basu* v. *State of West Bengal*⁴

Landmark Judgments on Custodial Death:

In all of its recent decision of the Supreme Court one finds extensive reference of the human rights by the Supreme Court of India, particularly for protecting prisoners from various inhuman and barbarous treatments. Custodial crime which includes deaths in police custody has drowned attention of public media and legislature over the past many years. Despite human rights laws and constitutional jurisprudence, the police are still using third degree

³ AIR 1994 4 SCC 260 Cr. L.J.

⁴ AIR1997SC 610.

methods and illegal torture which often lead to custodial deaths. This represents a grim drawback of the legal system.

Joginder Kumar v. State Of U.P and Others⁵

The rights are inherent in Articles 21 and 22(1) of the Constitution and require be recognising and scrupulously protecting. For effective enforcement of these fundamental rights, Hon'ble Court issued the following guidelines:

The police officer shall inform the arrested person when he is brought to the police station of this right. An entry shall be required to be made in the diary as to who was informed of the arrest. These protections from power must be held to flow from Articles 21 and 22 (1) and enforced strictly. It was further directed that, it shall be the duty of the Magistrate, before whom the arrested person is produced, to satisfy himself that these requirements have been complied with.

J. Prabhavathiamma v/s The State of Kerala & Others⁶

The two serving police personnel were awarded the death sentence by a CBI court, after hearing the case for over a decade, in Thiruvananthapuram, over the death of a scrap metal shop worker, who the court believes was murdered in custody.

While sentencing the two, Judge J Nazar had said: "This is a brutal and dastardly murder by accused (number) one and two... The acts of the accused persons would definitely adversely affect the very institution of the police department... If the faith of the people in the institution is lost, that will affect the public order and law and order, and it is a dangerous situation.

D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal.

The Court issued a list of 11 guidelines in addition to the

⁵ AIR 1349: 1994 SCC (4) 260

⁶ WP(C) NO 24258 OF 2007(K) and CRL .R.P.2902 OF 2007

Constitutional and Statutory Safeguards to be followed in all cases of arrest and detention. The guidelines are as follows: –Details of all personnel handling the interrogations of the arrested person must be recorded in a register. A memorandum of arrest at the time of the arrest should be prepared. It must also be signed by the detainee and must contain the time and date of the arrest. Police must notify a detainee's time, place of detention, and place of custody. Police of the affected area telegraphically within the period of 8 to 12 hours after the arrest. An entry must be made in the Case Diary at the place of detention. The "Inspection Memo" must be signed by both the detainee and the arresting police officer and a copy must be provided to the detainee. The detainee must undergo a medical examination by a trained physician every 48 hours while in custodial Copies of all documents, including the arrest memo, must be sent to the Magistrate for registration.

In recently, Jayaraj Bennex Custodial case on 19 June 2020 Jayaraj and his son Bennex were picked up for inquiry by the Tamil Nadu police in Sathankulam, Thoothukudi district after a heated argument over closure of their during the lockdown. They were taken to the police station and booked on charges of disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant, preventing a public servant from discharging duties by using criminal force and also negligent act that was likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life. They were produce in magistered court and remanded in judicial custody. The police took them to the sub-jail where the visible bodily injuries were entered in the registered. Javaraj and his So Bennex reported health issues after which prison official first called in a doctor and then shifted them to the government hospital where they died. The incident sparked instant protests from traders ,human rights activists and political parties who accused the police of high handedness and demanded that a case be registered against those responsible for the excesses. The Madurai bench of the Madras High Court that took suo moto cognizance of the incident has ordered a court monitored

investigation into the case.7

Conclusion

Death in police custody is one of the worst kinds of crime in a civilized society. Custodial death in police stations even in jail seems to be common happening these days. There are numerous laws available in the country but enforcing agencies are making no appropriate use of them.

Laws are rules written on paper that can be overlooked very easily by any person if not sensitized and motivated.. In most cases, the poor couldn't fight against them due to police threat and the financial situation, being walls between them and justice. However, the custodial deaths are becoming an issue, yet people's opinions towards the police are quite negative. The NHRC will intervene of course when it comes to the violation of human rights in prisons. But if an organization like the UN fails to stop wars, how could NHRC prevent the police from committing atrocities. Force is indeed a necessary evil to prevent any future crime in society. It is up to judiciary to take action against custodial deaths as they have the power over the police. It is high time that the laws become stricter just to protect the victims and punish the perpetrators of the custodial deaths.

⁷ The Hindu newspaper, june 28, 2020

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IILM Law Journal (IILMLJ) Volume I, Issue No. 1, 2023 *Maiden Issue* Declaration

S.No.	Particulars	Details
1	Place of publication	Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh
2	Periodicity	Biannual
3	Language	English only
4	Editor	Prof. M. Afzal Wani
5	Owner, Publisher & Printer	IILM University, Knowledge Park-II, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201306

TRUTH OF THESE PARTICULARS IS CERTIFIED BY THE EDITOR

IILM School of Law, IILM University, Knowledge Park-II, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201306

About the Journal

IILM Law Journal (IILMLJ) is a *peer reviewed journal* of the IILM School of Law, IILM University, Knowledge Park-II, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201306at a distance of just 30 km from the Supreme Court of India connected by Noida Express Way. With an open airy location and delightful sentinel building, amidst the faculties of technology, management and liberal arts, its main feature is a holistic academic atmosphere in interdisciplinary settings.Students have an opportunity to excel to meet professional requirement at all possible levels. Experiential learning at the core of the academic programming with finely defined outcome. The present journal is a humble attempt to proceed ahead with the hope of developing best research and writing skills.

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Original accounts of research in the form of articles, short articles, reports, notes, comments, review articles, book reviews and case comments shall be most appreciated.

Mode of citation: Foot notes as followed by the *Journal of the Indian Law Institute* for books, articles, case law etc.

Font; Times New Roman

Font size: 12 points for text and 10 points for foot notes.

Spacing: 1.5

Quotations: Indented towards right

Mode of Submission: Email

Email Id. iilmulj@iilm.edu

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