

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH, SHIMLA****CWP No. : 5049 of 2025****Reserved on : 19.05.2025****Decided on : 30.05.2025**

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Gulab Singh

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Himachal Pradesh and others

...Respondents

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*Coram***The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Virender Singh, Judge.***Whether approved for reporting?<sup>1</sup>*

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For the petitioner : Mr. Rakesh Kumar and Mr. Panku Chaudhary, Advocates.

For the respondents : Mr. Mohinder Zharaick and Mr. H.S. Rawat, Additional Advocate General, with Ms. Ranjna Patial, Deputy Advocate General.

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**Virender Singh, Judge.**

By way of the present writ petition, petitioner-  
Gulab Singh has invoked the extra ordinary writ  
jurisdiction of this Court, under Article 226 of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Whether Reporters of local papers may be allowed to see the judgment? Yes.*

Constitution of India, seeking the following substantive reliefs, amongst others:

*“i) That the impugned rejection letter/order dated 18.3.2025 (Annexure P-2) issued by the respondent No. 2, whereby the claim of the petitioner for grant of parole has been rejected may very kindly be quashed and set aside;*

*ii) That the respondents may very kindly be directed to grant parole for 42 days to the petitioner, in a time bound manner, as per law laid down, therefor.”*

2. As per the case set up by the petitioner, he has been convicted for the offence, punishable under Section 20 of the NDPS Act by the Court of learned Special Judge, Mandi, and sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of twelve years and to pay a fine of ₹ 1,20,000/-. In default of payment of fine, he has further been directed to undergo simple imprisonment for a period of one year.

3. The petitioner applied for grant of parole for a period of 28 days, by way of application, dated 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, in order to look after his wife and other family members, including his minor daughter and for agriculture work.

4. According to the petitioner, his application has been rejected by respondent No. 2, on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2025, without assigning any justifiable reason.

5. On the basis of the above facts, a prayer has been made to quash and set aside the order (Annexure P-2), by virtue of which, the request of the petitioner for releasing him on parole, has been rejected. A prayer has also been made to allow his request for parole.

6. When put to notice, the factual position, with regard to conviction and sentence has not been disputed by the respondents. It has also not been disputed that the petitioner had applied for grant of 28 days' parole, on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, to meet his family members.

7. According to the respondents, the request of the petitioner was duly forwarded to the District Authorities, i.e. District Magistrate, Mandi, District Mandi, and Superintendent of Police, Mandi, District Mandi, however, District Magistrate, Mandi, has not recommended the prayer of the petitioner, on the ground that the petitioner has been convicted in a heinous crime. The other

allegations have also been controverted by the respondents.

8. On the basis of the above facts, a prayer has been made to dismiss the writ petition.

9. As per the custody certificate, the total sentence undergone by the petitioner is four years, one month and five days. The petitioner has applied for 28 days' parole, which was recommended to be rejected by the District Magistrate, Mandi, vide letter, dated 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2025.

10. The primary purpose of releasing the convict on parole has elaborately been discussed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, in **Asfaq versus State of Rajasthan and others**, reported in **(2017) 15 SCC 55**. Relevant paras-17 to 24, of the judgment, are reproduced, as under:

*"17. From the aforesaid discussion, it follows that amongst the various grounds on which parole can be granted, the most important ground, which stands out, is that a prisoner should be allowed to maintain family and social ties. For this purpose, he has to come out for some time so that he is able to maintain his family and social contact. This reason finds justification in one of the objectives behind sentence and punishment, namely, reformation of the convict. The theory of criminology, which is largely accepted, underlines that the main objectives which a State intends to achieve by punishing the*

culprit are: deterrence, prevention, retribution and reformation. When we recognise reformation as one of the objectives, it provides justification for letting of even the life convicts for short periods, on parole, in order to afford opportunities to such convicts not only to solve their personal and family problems but also to maintain their links with the society. Another objective which this theory underlines is that even such convicts have right to breathe fresh air, albeit for periods. These gestures on the part of the State, along with other measures, go a long way for redemption and rehabilitation of such prisoners. They are ultimately aimed for the good of the society and, therefore, are in public interest.

18. The provisions of parole and furlough, thus, provide for a humanistic approach towards those lodged in jails. Main purpose of such provisions is to afford to them an opportunity to solve their personal and family problems and to enable them to maintain their links with society. Even citizens of this country have a vested interest in preparing offenders for successful re-entry into society. Those who leave prison without strong networks of support, without employment prospects, without a fundamental knowledge of the communities to which they will return, and without resources, stand a significantly higher chance of failure. When offenders revert to criminal activity upon release, they frequently do so because they lack hope of merging into society as accepted citizens. Furloughs or parole can help prepare offenders for success.

19. Having noted the aforesaid public purpose in granting parole or furlough, ingrained in the reformation theory of sentencing, other competing public interest has also to be kept in mind while deciding as to whether in a particular case parole or furlough is to be granted or not. This public interest also

*demands that those who are habitual offenders and may have the tendency to commit the crime again after their release on parole or have the tendency to become threat to the law and order of the society, should not be released on parole. This aspect takes care of other objectives of sentencing, namely, deterrence and prevention. This side of the coin is the experience that great number of crimes are committed by the offenders who have been put back in the street after conviction. Therefore, while deciding as to whether a particular prisoner deserves to be released on parole or not, the aforesaid aspects have also to be kept in mind. To put it tersely, the authorities are supposed to address the question as to whether the convict is such a person who has the tendency to commit such a crime or he is showing tendency to reform himself to become a good citizen.*

*20. Thus, not all people in prison are appropriate for grant of furlough or parole. Obviously, society must isolate those who show patterns of preying upon victims. Yet administrators ought to encourage those offenders who demonstrate a commitment to reconcile with society and whose behaviour shows that aspire to live as law-abiding citizens. Thus, parole program should be used as a tool to shape such adjustments.*

*21. To sum up, in introducing penal reforms, the State that runs the administration on behalf of the society and for the benefit of the society at large cannot be unmindful of safeguarding the legitimate rights of the citizens in regard to their security in the matters of life and liberty. It is for this reason that in introducing such reforms, the authorities cannot be oblivious of the obligation to the society to render it immune from those who are prone to criminal tendencies and have proved their susceptibility to indulge in criminal activities by being found guilty (by a*

Court) of having perpetrated a criminal act. One of the discernible purposes of imposing the penalty of imprisonment is to render the society immune from the criminal for a specified period. It is, therefore, understandable that while meting out humane treatment to the convicts, care has to be taken to ensure that kindness to the convicts does not result in cruelty to the society. Naturally enough, the authorities would be anxious to ensure that the convict who is released on furlough does not seize the opportunity to commit another crime when he is at large for the time-being under the furlough leave granted to him by way of a measure of penal reform.

22. Another vital aspect that needs to be discussed is as to whether there can be any presumption that a person who is convicted of serious or heinous crime is to be, ipso facto, treated as a hardened criminal. Hardened criminal would be a person for whom it has become a habit or way of life and such a person would necessarily tend to commit crimes again and again. Obviously, if a person has committed a serious offence for which he is convicted, but at the same time it is also found that it is the only crime he has committed, he cannot be categorized as a hardened criminal. In his case consideration should be as to whether he is showing the signs to reform himself and become a good citizen or there are circumstances which would indicate that he has a tendency to commit the crime again or that he would be a threat to the society. Mere nature of the offence committed by him should not be a factor to deny the parole outrightly. Wherever a person convicted has suffered incarceration for a long time, he can be granted temporary parole, irrespective of the nature of offence for which he was sentenced. We may hasten to put a rider here, viz. in those cases where a person has been convicted for committing a serious offence, the competent

authority, while examining such cases, can be well advised to have stricter standards in mind while judging their cases on the parameters of god conduct, habitual offender or while judging whether he could be considered highly dangerous or prejudicial to the public peace and tranquility etc.

23. There can be no cavil in saying that a society that believes in the worth of the individuals can have the quality of its belief judged, at least in part, by the quality of its prisons and services and recourse made available to the prisoners. Being in a civilized society organized with law and a system as such, it is essential to ensure for every citizen a reasonably dignified life. If a person commits any crime, it does not mean that by committing a crime, he ceases to be a human being and that he can be deprived of those aspects of life which constitute human dignity. For a prisoner all fundamental rights are an enforceable reality, though restricted by the fact of imprisonment. {See – Sunil Batra (II) v. State (UT of Delhi) (1980) 3 SCC 488 , Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978) 1 SCC 248 and Charles Sobraj v. Superintendent Central Jail, Tihar, New Delhi, (1978) 4 SCC 104.

24. It is also to be kept in mind that by the time an application for parole is moved by a prisoner, he would have spent some time in the jail. During this period, various reformatory methods must have been applied. We can take judicial note of this fact, having regard to such reformation facilities available in modern jails. One would know by this time as to whether there is a habit of relapsing into crime in spite of having administered correctional treatment. This habit known as “recidivism” reflects the fact that the correctional therapy has not brought in the mind of the criminal. It also shows that criminal is hardcore who is beyond correctional therapy. If the correctional therapy



*has not made in itself, in a particular case, such a case can be rejected on the aforesaid ground i.e. on its merits."*

*(self emphasis supplied)*

11. In light of the above decision, this Court would now proceed to consider the fact as to whether the rejection of the petitioner's prayer, seeking his release on parole, is sustainable in the eyes of law.

12. Alongwith the reply, the certificate issued by Ward Member, Ghunag, has also been annexed, in which, the Ward Member has given no objection, in case, parole, as prayed for by the petitioner, is given to him. Not only this, Pradhan, Gram Panchayat Kathog, has also issued a certificate, recommending that the benefit of parole, as claimed by the petitioner, be given to him.

13. When, the Ward Member and the Gram Panchayat have given no objection for grant of parole to the petitioner, then, rejection of the application of the petitioner for grant of parole, merely, on the ground that the petitioner has been convicted for the offence punishable under Section 20 of the NDPS Act, is not sustainable in the eyes of law.

14. Consequently, rejection order, dated 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 (Annexure P-2), passed by respondent No. 2, is quashed and set aside. The prayer, so made in the application for parole is allowed and the petitioner is ordered to be released on parole, for a period of 28 days.

15. Accordingly, the present petition is allowed, in the following terms:

*(i) Order, dated 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 (Annexure P-2), rejecting the request of the petitioner for parole, is quashed and set-aside;*

*(ii) Respondents are directed to extend the concession of parole to the petitioner, for a period of 28 days, on his furnishing a personal bond in the sum of ₹ 1,00,000/-, with two sureties in the like amount, to the satisfaction of Superintendent of Jail, Model Central Jail, Nahan, District Sirmaur, H.P.;*

*(iii) It is made clear that the petitioner shall surrender before Superintendent of Jail, Model Central Jail, Nahan, District Sirmaur, H.P., on expiry of parole period. In case, the petitioner breaches any of the conditions of parole order or creates any law and order problem, then, the respondents are free to cancel the parole and take action against the petitioner, in accordance with law;*

*(iv) In peculiar facts and circumstances, of the case, the respondents are at liberty to impose any other just and reasonable condition(s), in addition to the conditions mentioned hereinabove, if deemed fit and proper, to meet the ends of justice; and*

*(v) Violation of any of the above conditions shall be treated as a negative factor for consideration of similar prayer, in future.*

16. Pending miscellaneous applications, if any, shall also stand disposed of, accordingly.

17. Registry to communicate this order to the Superintendent of Jail, Model Central Jail, Nahan, District Sirmaur, H.P., for compliance.

**( Virender Singh )**  
**Judge**

**May 30, 2025**  
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