

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 27-07-2026

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THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE S.M.SUBRAMANIAM
AND
THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE N.SENTHILKUMAR

W.P.No.20252 of 2025

AND

W.M.P.No.22840 OF 2025

M.Raveendiran

... Petitioner

-VS-

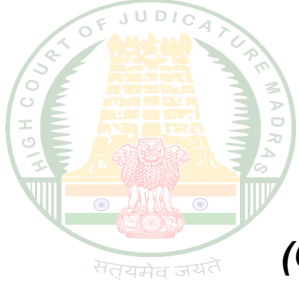
Principal District Judge
Appointing-cum-Disciplinary Authority
Thiruvananthapuram District,
Thiruvananthapuram - 606 601.

... Respondent

Prayer: Calling for the records of the principal district Judge
Tiruvannamalai on the file of Dis. No 371/2020 vide order dated
21.01.2020 and quash the same.

For Petitioner: Ms.Rita Chandrasekar
For M/s.Aiyar & Dolia

For Respondent: Mr.S.Giridharan



ORDER

(Order of the Court was made by S.M.Subramaniam J.)

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Writ on hand has been instituted, challenging final order passed in Departmental Disciplinary Proceedings, imposing penalty of stoppage of five annual increments with cumulative effect.

2. Petitioner is working as Night Watchman. Question papers for selection to the post of Junior Administrative Assistant to the District Legal Services Authority were under preparation on 25.11.2017 at 7.00 am in the Server Room situated in the Court premises. Petitioner entered into Server Room and asked staff members working there that draft question paper was sought for by Judicial Officer. Staff members, who were preparing question papers in the Server Room said that Judicial Officer will not ask any such question paper and asked Watchman to go out of Room. Complaint was given against Watchman, based on which, Departmental Disciplinary Proceedings were initiated setting out allegations that petitioner is a Watchman, who, without permission, entered into Server Room where question papers were under preparation and further, asked staff members to hand over draft question papers, stating that Judicial Officer asked them to produce the same.



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3. Charge memo has been issued and petitioner denied charges. Not satisfied with the explanation, Enquiry Officer was appointed. By affording opportunity, enquiry was conducted and Enquiry Officer submitted his final report, holding that charge against petitioner is held proved. Further opportunity was afforded to petitioner to submit his explanation on the findings of Enquiry Officer. After considering materials available on record, and by accepting the report of Enquiry Officer, penalty of stoppage of five annual increments with cumulative effect was imposed.

4. Pertinently, petitioner has not preferred any department appeal as contemplated under Rule 19 of Tamil Nadu Civil Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules. That apart, the present Writ Petition has been filed after a lapse of five years from the date of passing of impugned order. Impugned order was passed on 21.01.2020 and Writ Petition was filed on 06.01.2025 after lapse of five years.

5. Learned counsel for the petitioner would mainly contend that petitioner was a Watchman. Being unaware about preparation of question papers inside Server Room, he entered into the Room and therefore, the punishment is to be set aside.



6. Perusal of documents would show that staff members, who were preparing question papers have given evidence as D.W.1 to D.W.3 and their depositions would show that without obtaining any prior permission from the concerned authority, petitioner knocked the doors of Server Room, entered inside and asked staff members to hand over draft question paper by stating that Judicial Officer is asked for the same. However, staff members refused to hand over question papers. Thus, competent authority drew a factual interference that the conduct of petitioner is unbecoming of public servant with an intention to secure question papers for reasons known to him. As a Watchman, he is not supposed to ask staff members to hand over question papers by stating that Judicial Officer asked the same. That apart, he entered into Server Room without any permission from the concerned Authority / Officer. Depositions of D.W.1 to D.W.3 are consistent and they had clearly narrated the incident occurred on 25.11.2017. Pertinently, petitioner cross examined witnesses, but he could not elicit any contra statements from witnesses. Based on depositions and other factors, Enquiry Officer held that charge is proved.

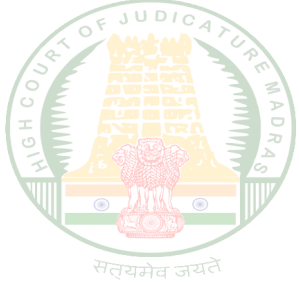
7. Power of judicial review to examine the final order in the Departmental Disciplinary Proceedings is well settled. Courts have to consider whether i) Rules of natural justice have been followed; ii)



mandatory procedures as contemplated under Discipline and Appeal Rules are complied with and iii) the punishment is grossly disproportionate to the gravity of charges proved.

8. In the present case, procedures as contemplated under the Discipline and Appeal Rules were followed and sufficient opportunities were afforded to the delinquent. He participated in the process of enquiry, defended his case by cross examining witnesses and submitted his written explanations. Thus, Rules of natural justice have been duly followed in all respects and there is no violation of Rules established.

9. The power of judicial review of High Court under Article 226 of the Constitution of India is to ensure processes through which decision has been taken in consonance with Statute and Rules in force and not the decision itself. When procedures have been followed by Authority, only point to be considered is whether punishment imposed is grossly disproportionate. In the present case, allegations are no doubt serious. However, staff members inside Server Room somehow prevented petitioner from taking away question papers from Server Room. In other words, staff members have not acceded to the request of petitioner nor handed over question papers to him based on his



S.M.SUBRAMANIAM,J.
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statement that Judicial Officer asked for draft question paper. This being seriousness involved and punishment imposed is only stoppage of annual increments for five years with cumulative effect, this Court does not find any disproportionality.

Accordingly, Writ Petition, being devoid of merits, is dismissed. No costs. Consequently, connected Miscellaneous Petition is closed.

(S.M.S.,J.) (N.S.,J.)
27-07-2026

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

The Principal District Judge
Appointing-cum-Disciplinary Authority,
Thiruvanamalai District,
Thiruvanamalai - 606 601.

W.P.No.20252 of 2025