

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CWP No.24062 of 2015

Date of Decision: 17.11.2015

Punjab State Forest Development Corporation
Ltd. Amritsar

... Petitioner

Versus

The Presiding Officer Industrial Tribunal
Gurdaspur and others

... Respondents

CORAM:- HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RAJIV NARAIN RAINA

Present: Mr. R.K. Arya, Advocate,
for the petitioner.

1. To be referred to the Reporters or not?
2. Whether the judgment should be reported in the Digest?

RAJIV NARAIN RAINA, J.

1. Heard Mr. Arya on the merits of his client's case.
2. Without going into the correctness of the impugned award dated May 13, 2015 passed by the Presiding Officer, Industrial Tribunal, Gurdaspur, this petition is dismissed since no question of law arises for consideration in judicial review against the award of the Tribunal and especially where the Tribunal has denied reinstatement and awarded lump sum compensation of Rs.50,000/- in lieu of reinstatement for five years of daily wage service rendered with the Punjab State Forest Development Corporation at Amritsar.
3. Without commenting on the reasonableness or adequacy of the compensation package since the award has not been assailed by the workman as yet, then the issue of quantum is left open and the petition is

dismissed as calling for no interference in jurisdiction provided by Article 226 of the Constitution of India while reviewing work of Tribunals which is non-appellate and non-plenary and the limited extent of interference is indicated in **Satyanarayan Laxminarayan Hegde v. Mallikarjun Bhavanappa Tirumale**, AIR 1960 SC 137=(1960) 1 SCR 890, by the Supreme Court in a case arising from the Bombay Revenue Tribunal. The Supreme Court applied its past dicta and relied on the observations of M.C. Chagla, CJ. in **Batuk K. Vyas v. Surat Municipality**, AIR 1933 Bombay 133 delivered in the Bombay High Court, held as follows:-

“6. The character and scope of writs of certiorari have been dealt with by this Court in some detail in its decision Hari Vishnu Kamath v. Syed Ahmed Ishaque AIR 1960 SC 137=(1960) 1 SCR 890. After referring to certain earlier decisions of this Court cited therein this Court observed at p. 1121:-

“On these authorities, the following propositions may be taken as established: (1) Certiorari will be issued for correcting errors of jurisdiction, as and when an inferior Court or Tribunal acts without jurisdiction or in excess of it, or fails to exercise it. (2) Certiorari will also be issued when the Court or Tribunal acts illegally in the exercise of its undoubted jurisdiction, as when it decides without giving an opportunity to the parties to be heard, or violates the principles of natural justice. (3) The Court issuing a writ of certiorari acts in exercise of a supervisory and not appellate jurisdiction. One consequence of this is that the Court will not review findings of fact reached by the inferior Court or Tribunal, even if they be erroneous. This is on the principle that a Court which has jurisdiction over a subject-matter has jurisdiction to decide wrong as well as right, and when the Legislature does not choose to confer a right of appeal against that

decision, it would be defeating its purpose and policy, if a superior Court were to re-hear the case on the evidence, and substitute its own findings in certiorari. These propositions are well-settled and are not in dispute.”

7. Besides the above three propositions, a **fourth proposition** as to which there appears to have been some controversy, was also discussed, namely, whether certiorari can be issued when the decision of the inferior Court or Tribunal is erroneous in law. After referring to certain reported decisions, English as well as Indian, the position was thus summarised by this Court at p. 1123 as follows:

*“It may therefore be taken as settled that a writ of certiorari could be issued to correct an error of law. But it is essential that it should be something more than a mere error; it must be one which must manifest on the face of the record. The real difficulty with reference to this matter, however, is not so much in the statement of the principle as in its application to the facts of a particular case. When does an error cease to be mere error, and become an error apparent on the face of the record? Learned Counsel on either side were unable to suggest any clear-cut rule by which the boundary between the two classes of errors could be demarcated. Mr Pathak for the first respondent contended on the strength of certain observations of **Chagla, C.J.**, in *Batuk K. Vyas v. Surat Municipality* AIR 1933 Bom 133, that no error could be said to be apparent on the face of the record if it was not self-evident, and if it required an examination or argument to establish it. This test might afford a satisfactory basis for decision in the majority of cases. But there must be cases in which even this test might break down, because judicial opinions also differ, and an error that might be considered by one Judge as self-evident might not be so considered by another. The fact is that what is an error apparent on the face of the record cannot be defined precisely or exhaustively, there being an element of indefiniteness inherent in its very nature, and it must be left to be determined judicially on*

the facts of each case.” [emphasis added]

4. The principles of interference were further explained in the Constitution Bench authority in **Syed Yakoob v. K. S. Radhakrishnan**, AIR 1964 SC 477 arising from an order passed by the State Transport Appellate Tribunal refining the principles involved in certiorari jurisdiction of the High Courts in the work of Tribunals, Gajendragadkar, J. holding:-

“A writ of certiorari can be issued for correcting errors of jurisdiction committed by inferior courts or tribunals; these are cases where orders are passed by inferior courts or tribunals without jurisdiction, or in excess of it, or as a result of failure to exercise jurisdictions. A writ can similarly be issued where in exercise of jurisdiction conferred on it, the Court or Tribunal acts illegally or improperly, as for instance, it decides a question without giving an opportunity to be heard to the party affected by the order, or where the procedure adopted in dealing with the dispute is opposed to principles of natural justice. There is, however, no doubt that the jurisdiction to issue a writ of certiorari is a supervisory jurisdiction and the Court exercising it is not entitled to act as an appellate Court. This limitation necessarily means that findings of fact reached by the inferior Court or Tribunal as a result of the appreciation of evidence cannot be reopened or questioned in writ proceedings. An error of law which is apparent on the face of the record can be corrected by a writ, but not an error of fact, however grave it may appear to be. In regard to a finding of fact recorded by the Tribunal, a writ of certiorari can be issued if it is shown that in recording the said finding, the Tribunal had erroneously refused to admit admissible and material evidence, or had erroneously admitted inadmissible evidence which has influenced the impugned finding. Similarly, if a finding of fact is based on no evidence, that would be regarded as an error of law which can be corrected by a writ of certiorari. In dealing with this

category of cases, however, we must always bear in mind that a finding of fact recorded by the Tribunal cannot be challenged in proceedings for a writ of certiorari on the ground that the relevant and material evidence adduced before the Tribunal was' insufficient or inadequate to sustain the impugned finding. The adequacy or sufficiency of evidence led on a point and the inference of fact to be drawn from the said finding are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Tribunal, and the said points cannot be agitated before a writ court. It is within these limits that the jurisdiction conferred on the High Courts under Art. 226 to issue a writ of certiorari can be legitimately exercised."

5. Interference would be unwarranted and improper exercise of power on a trifling matter. No merit. Dismissed.

(RAJIV NARAIN RAINA)
JUDGE

17.11.2015
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