

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 26.10.2016

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE R.SUBBIAH

Writ Petition No.37628 of 2016

1. A.Vedamanickam
2. A.Lakshmanan
3. K.Palanivelu
4. M.Elayaperumal
5. M.Chidambaram
6. C.Ramalingam

... Petitioners

Vs

1. Government of Tamilnadu
rep. by its Secretary
Environment and Forest Department
Secretariat Chennai-9

2. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Panagal Building
Saidapet Chennai-15

.... Respondents

Writ petition has been filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying for a Writ of mandamus directing the respondents to appoint the Petitioners as regular time scale Forest Watchers taking into account of their seniority and qualification on par with their Juniors in the light of the orders passed in W.P.No.15561 of 2006 dated 10.3.2008, W.A.No.690 of 2008 dated 13.10.2009, W.P. No.23374 of 2008 dated 30.10.2009, W.A.No.607 of 2010 dated 20.3.2010 and proceedings of the Second Respondent dated 7.1.2011 and confer all consequential benefits.

For Petitioners : Mr.S.Mani

For Respondents : Mr.N.Inbanathan,
Government Advocate (Forest)

ORDER

By consent, the main writ petition itself is taken up for final disposal.

2. The petitioners have come up with the present writ petition for a mandamus, directing the respondents to appoint them as regular time scale Forest Watchers taking into account their seniority and qualification on par with their Juniors in the light of the orders passed in W.P.No.15561 of 2006 dated 10.3.2008, W.A.No.690 of 2008 dated 13.10.2009, W.P. No.23374 of 2008 dated 30.10.2009, W.A.No.607 of 2010 dated 29.3.2010 and proceedings of the Second Respondent dated 7.1.2011 and confer all consequential benefits.

3. The petitioners have joined the Forest department on daily wage basis on various dates during the year 1974 to 1983 on daily wage basis. They were brought into regular service after a period of 20 years and some of them have retired from service. The contention of the petitioners is that till the year 1994, for appointment to the post of Plot Watcher, the only qualification is ability to read and write. However, in the year 1994, the Government issued G.O.Ms.No.332 Environment and Forest Dept., dated 22.12.1994 prescribing SSLC as minimum general educational qualification for appointment to the post of Forest Watcher, by which number of Plot Watchers who were engaged on daily wage basis were not considered for appointment as Forest Watcher, for the reason that they did not possess the SSLC qualification as prescribed in the G.O.Ms.No.332, dated 22.12.1994.

4. Now, the grievance of the petitioners is that even though they have possessed SSLC qualification and were given regular time scale as Forest Watcher in the year 1995 itself along with 425 others, by virtue of interim stay granted by the Tribunal, the petitioners could not join the regular post of Forest Watcher. However, some of the other persons who got promoted during the same period have joined the regular post of Forest Watcher before the grant of interim stay by the Tribunal and they continued in the regular post to the detriment of the petitioners. Subsequently, the Government issued another G.O.Ms.No.64, Environment and Forest Dept., dated 8.3.1999 whereby the order prescribing SSLC as a minimum educational qualification has been revoked.

5. I have heard the learned counsel appearing for the petitioners and the learned Government Advocate (Forest), who has taken notice on behalf of the respondents and perused the materials available on record.

6. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioners submits that the issue involved in the present writ petition is covered by the decision of this Court made in W.P.No32498 of 2013 dated 28.11.2013 (A.Gopalakrishnan and 12 others vs. Govt.

Of Tamil Nadu, Forest & Environment Dept. and another), wherein this Court held as follows:-

" 3. The issue involved in this writ petition is already settled by this court in W.A.No.607 of 2010 dated 20.3.2010 and W.P.No.23374 of 2008 dated 30.10.2009. In view of that, the writ petition is allowed directing the respondents to appoint the petitioners in the regular time scale of Forest Watchers by taking into account of their seniority and qualification on par with their juniors and in the light of the earlier orders of this Court, within a period of sixteen weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. No costs."

7. In view of the above, the present writ petition is allowed, directing the respondents to appoint the petitioners in the regular time scale of Forest Watchers by taking into account their seniority and qualification on par with their juniors, in the light of the earlier orders of this Court, and confer all consequential benefits, within a period of six weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. No costs.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar(CS VI)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

sbi

To

1. The Secretary,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Environment and Forest Dept.
Secretariat, Chennai-9.
2. The Principal Chief Conservator
of Forests,
Panagal Building,
Saidapet, Chennai-15.

+4cc's to Mr.S.Mani, Advocate, S.R.No.61180
+1cc to the Government Pleader, S.R.No.61553

W.P.Nos.37628 of 2016

VD(CO)
CA(23/11/2016)