

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED :31.08.2017

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE S.M.SUBRAMANIAM

W.P.No.22739 of 2017

and

W.M.P.No.23840, 23841 & 23842 of 2017

A.Thoulath Basha

.. Petitioner

Vs.

The Chairman,
Tamil Nadu uniformed Services,
Recruitment Board,
Old Commissioner of Police Office Campus,
Pantheon Road, Egmore,
Chennai-600 008.

..Respondent

PRAYER : Petition filed Under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue of Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, to call for the records connected with the proceedings issued in Annexure-9 A Disqualification Slip in C.No.R2/150/2017 dated 01.08.2017 passed by the respondent herein and quash the same and consequently direct the respondent to appoint the petitioner as Grade II Police Constable.

For Petitioner : Mr.S.Ilamvaludhi

For Respondent : Mr.K.Venkataramani

Additional Advocate General-VII
Assisted by Mr.K.Dhananjayan
Special Government Pleader

ORDER

The order of disqualification issued to the writ petitioner is under challenge in this writ petition.

2. The writ petitioner pursuant to the notification issued by the Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board for Recruitment to the Post of Grade - II Police Constable, submitted his application and participated in the written examination. The writ petitioner has successfully passed in the

written examination and received a call letter for Physical Eligibility Test, Endurance Test and Physical Efficiency Test.

3. The learned Additional Advocate General Mr. K. Venkataramani submitted that the Board constituted for the purpose of conducting the recruitment has conducted the Physical Eligibility Test, Endurance Test and Physical Efficiency Test in 15 centres from 27.07.2017 onwards. For each centre, a Sub-Committee has been constituted to conduct tests on behalf of TNUSRB. The Sub-committee has been constituted consisting Chairman in the rank of DIG of Police and Members in the rank of I-Superintendent of Police, II-Additional Superintendent of Police, III-Deputy Superintendent of Police, IV-Superintendent of Prison or Additional Superintendent of Prison, V-District Officer for Fire and Rescue.

4. It is relevant to extract the recruitment rules for the post of Grade - II Police Constable as per the Notification:

I. Physical Measurement Test - PMT (Minimum requirement)

Height

Category	Men	Women
OC, BC, BC (M), MBC/DNC	170 cms	159 cms
SC, SC (A), ST	167 cms	157 cms

Chest - Men

Normal	81 cms
Expansion	5 cms

* No chest measurement for Women

* No PMT for Ex-Servicemen

II. Endurance Test - ET

Men	-	1500mtrs	-	7 minutes
Ex-Service	-	1500mtrs	-	8 minutes
women	-	400mtrs	-	2 minutes 30 sec.

Note: PMT and Et are in qualifying nature and no marks awarded

III. Physical Efficiency Test - PET

Norms for Men

Sl.No	Event	1 Star - 2 Marks	2 Star - 5 Marks
1	Rope Climbing (compulsory)	5.0 mtrs	6.0 mtrs
2	Long Jump or High Jump	3.80 mtrs 1.20 mtrs	4.50 mtrs 1.40 mtrs
3	Running 100 mtrs or Running 400 mtrs	15.0 Sec. 80.0 Sec.	13.50 Sec. 70.0 Sec.

Norms for Women

Sl.No	Event	1 Star - 2 Marks	2 Star - 5 Marks
1	Long Jump (compulsory)	3.00 mtrs	3.75 mtrs
2	Cricket Ball throw or Shot put	17.0 mtrs 4.25 mtrs	24.0 mtrs 5.50 mtrs
3	Running 100 mtrs or Running 200 mtrs	17.50 Sec. 38.0 Sec.	15.50 Sec. 33.0 Sec.

Norms for Ex-servicemen

Sl.No	Event	1 Star - 2 Marks	2 Star - 5 Marks
1	Shot put (7.26Kg)	5.00 mtrs	6.00 mtrs
2	Long Jump or High Jump	3.25 mtrs 0.90 mtrs	4.50 mtrs 1.40 mtrs
3	Running 100 mtrs or Running 200 mtrs	17.00 Sec. 85.0 Sec.	13.50 Sec. 70.0 Sec.

5. Accordingly, the Educational Qualifications and age norms are verified. This apart, the writ petitioner was also successfully completed the physical measurement test and endurance test. In relation to the Physical Efficiency Test, the writ petitioner having not reached the minimum level in Rope climbing as prescribed in the notification, he was issued with

the disqualification slip by the Chairman Sub-Committee and he had moved this Court, quashing the disqualification slip issued by the respondents.

6. The learned counsel appearing for the writ petitioner states that one, Mr. Ramkumar, who had participated in the physical Efficiency Test along with the writ petitioner got selected and the writ petitioner had seen that he has touched the rope while performing the Rope Climbing Test. Thus, the authorities had acted in an illegal manner in favouring the said Mr. Ramkumar. When Mr. Ramkumar was declared as selected, the writ petitioner was also similarly placed and to be considered for selection.

7. The learned Additional Advocate General Mr. K. Venkataramani submitted that it is true that the said Mr. Ramkumar was originally selected in Rope Climbing by the Field Officer, who had conducted the physical Efficiency Test. However, it was subsequently found through Video graph recorded by the department that the said Mr. Ramkumar was not actually qualified and the selection was made erroneously by the Field officer. The respondents had taken immediate action and issued an order on 28.08.2017, disqualifying the said Mr. Ramkumar (Enrolment No. 0114003). The case of Mr. Ramkumar was reviewed without any further delay based on the video clipping and the said Mr. Ramkumar was declared as not qualified. Thus, the writ petitioner cannot claim on the ground that Mr. Ramkumar was selected.

8. The learned counsel for the writ petitioner submits that the Father of Mr. Ramkumar is also working in the Police Department and the Field Officer who conducted the Physical Efficiency Test, is known to the Father of Mr. Ramkumar and there is a possibility of collusion in this regard. The learned Additional Advocate General made a submission that after finding out this irregularity, immediate action was taken against the officials concerned and the department will continue to proceed with the enquiry and take appropriate action against the officials who committed such misconduct or irregularity.

9. Thus, this Court is of the view that the writ petitioner was not qualified as per the norms prescribed in the selection notification and the case of Mr. Ramkumar was duly noticed and the respondents had taken action and passed an order, disqualifying the said Mr. Ramkumar also.

10. This apart, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has also laid down the legal principles in the case of Dr. B. R. Bapuji Vs. Dr. N. Sivaramamurthy, Registrar, TU & Ors. in the High Court of

Andhra Pradesh, reported in 1994 (2) Labour Law Journal 650 in paragraphs 17 and 20 as follows:-

"17. Once it is found that the second respondent possesses the two preferential qualifications and that the constitution of the Selection Committee was not vitiated in any manner, his appointment cannot be interfered with. In a judicial review, it is not open to this Court to assess the relative merits of the candidates interviewed by the Selection Committee consisting of experts in that field.

20. The file produced before me by the University shows that the Selection Committee was headed by the Vice-Chancellor and it consisted of four members besides himself. Out of the four, one was a nominee of the Vice-Chancellor and the other three were external experts. They interviewed six candidates including the petitioner and the second respondent decided unanimously to recommend the second respondent for the post in question. In the absence of any vitiating factors like defect in the constitution of the Selection Committee, breach of principles of natural justice, failure to adhere to any mandatory statutory provisions etc., it is not open to this Court to interfere with the recommendation of the Selection Committee."

11. The Constitution Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in the case of the University of Mysore Vs. Govinda Rao and another reported in AIR 1965 Supreme Court 491 made an observation in this regard. His Lordship Gajendragadkar, J. while speaking for the Bench made an observation in paragraph no.12 as follows :

"In our opinion, in coming to the conclusion that appellant No. 2 did not satisfy the first qualification, the High Court is plainly in error. The judgment shows that the learned Judges concentrated on the question as to whether a candidate obtaining 50 per cent marks could be said to have secured a high Second Class Degree, and if the relevant question had to be determined solely by reference to this aspect of the matter, the conclusion of the High Court would have been beyond reproach. But what the High Court has failed to notice is the fact that the first

qualification consists of two parts-the first part is: a high Second Class Master's Degree of an Indian University, and the second part is: its equivalent which is an equivalent qualification of a foreign University. The High Court does not appear to have considered the question as to whether it would be appropriate for the High Court to differ from the opinion of the Board when it was quite likely that the Board may have taken the view that the Degree of Master of Arts of the Durham University. which appellant No. 2 had obtained was equivalent to a high Second Class Master's Degree of an Indian University. This aspect of the question pertains purely to an academic matter and Courts would naturally hesitate to express a definite opinion, particularly, when it appears that the Board of experts was satisfied that appellant No. 2 fulfilled the first qualification. If only the attention of the High court had been drawn to the equivalent furnished in the first qualification, we have no doubt that it would not have held that the Board had acted capriciously in: expressing the opinion that appellant No. 2 satisfied all the qualifications including the first qualification. As we have already observed though the High Court felt some difficulty about the two remaining qualifications, the High Court has not rested its decision on any definite finding that these qualifications also had not been satisfied. On reading the first qualification, the position appears to be very simple; but unfortunately, since the equivalent qualification specified by cl. (a) was apparently not brought to the notice of the High Court, it has failed to take that aspect of the matter into account. On that aspect of the matter, it may follow that the Master's Degree of the Durham University secured by appellant No. 2, would satisfy the first qualification and even the second. Besides, it appears that appellant No. 2 has to his credit published works which by themselves would satisfy the second qualification. Therefore, there is no doubt that the High Court was in error in coming to the conclusion that since appellant No. 2 could not be said to have secured a high Second Class Master's Degree of an Indian University, he did not satisfy the first qualification. It is plain that Master's Degree of the Durham University which appellant No. 2 has obtained, can be and

must have been taken by the Board to be equivalent to a high Second Class Master's Degree of an Indian University, and that means the first qualification is satisfied by appellant No. 2. That being so, we must hold that the High Court was in error in issuing a writ of quo warranto, quashing the appointment of appellant No. 2. Before we part with these appeals, however, reference must be made to two other matters. In dealing with the case presented before it by the respondent, the High Court has criticised the report made by the Board and has observed that the circumstances disclosed by the report made it difficult for the High Court to treat the recommendations made by the experts with the respect that they generally deserve. We are unable to see the point of criticism of the High Court in such academic matters. Boards of Appointments are nominated by the Universities and when recommendations made by them and the appointments following on them, are challenged before courts, normally the courts should be slow to interfere with the opinions expressed by the experts. There is no allegation about mala fides against 38-2 S. C. India/64 the experts who constituted the present Board; and so, we think, it would normally be wise and safe for the courts to leave the decisions of academic matters to experts who are more familiar with the problems they face than the courts generally can be. The criticism made by the High Court against the report made by the Board seems to suggest that the High Court thought that the Board was in the position of an executive authority, issuing an executive fiat, or was acting like a quasi-judicial tribunal, deciding disputes referred to it for its decisions. In dealing with complaints made by citizens in regard to appointments made by academic bodies, like the Universities, such an approach would not be reasonable or appropriate. In fact, in issuing the writ, the High Court has made certain observations which show that the High Court applied tests which would legitimately be applied in the case of writ of certiorari. In the judgment, it has been observed that the error in this case is undoubtedly a manifest error. That is a consideration which is more germane and relevant in a procedure for a writ of certiorari. What the High Court should have considered is whether the appointment made by the Chancellor had contravened

any statutory or binding rule or ordinance, and in doing so, the High Court should have shown due regard to the opinions expressed by the Board & its recommendations on which the Chancellor has acted. In this connection, the High Court has failed to notice one significant fact that when the Board considered the claims of the respective applicants, it examined them very carefully and actually came to the conclusion that none of them deserved to be appointed a Professor. These recommendations made by the Board clearly show that they considered the relevant factors carefully and ultimately came to the conclusion that appellant No. 2 should be recommended for the post of Reader. Therefore, we are satisfied that the criticism made by the High Court against the Board and its deliberations is not justified. "

12. This apart, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of S.L.Soni Vs. State of MP and another reported in 1995 Supplementary (3) SCC 156 held in paragraph 4 as follows:-

"4. Pursuant thereto, excluding the adverse comments made for the year ending with March, 1978, the Committee reconsidered the matter and found the appellant not eligible for promotion. Though Sri Pandey sought to canvass the claim on merits, we cannot evaluate ourselves the relative merits. A high level committee objectively considered the claim and found the appellant was not fit for promotion on merits. We are satisfied about this on perusal of the proceedings of the Committee. "

13. In the case of Durga Devi and Another Vs. State of HP and Ors. reported in (1997) 4 SCC 575 in paragraph 4 held as follows :-

" 4. In the instant case, as would be seen from the perusal of the impugned order, the selection of the appellants has been quashed by the Tribunal by itself scrutinising the comparative merits of the candidates and fitness for the post as if the Tribunal was sitting as an appellate authority over the Selection Committee. The selection of the candidates was not quashed on any other ground. The Tribunal fell in error in arrogating to itself the power to judge the comparative merits of the candidates and consider the fitness and suitability for appointment. That was the function of the Selection Committee. The

observation of this Court in Dalpat Abasaheb Solunke case are squarely attached to the facts of the present case. The order of the Tribunal under the circumstances cannot be sustained. The appeal succeeds and is allowed. The impugned order dated 10.12.1992 is quashed and the matter is remitted to the Tribunal for a fresh disposal on other points in accordance with the law after hearing the parties."

14. In the case of Vijay Syal and Another Vs. State of Punjab and Ors. reported in 2003 (9) SCC 401, para 12 are relevant and are extracted hereunder :

"12. As can be seen from the difference of marks secured by the candidates in the interview, it does not appear abnormal or per se does not smell of any foul play or does not appear patently arbitrary. The lowest of the marks given in the interview are 11.5 and the highest are 22.87. Further, marks secured in the interview and the marks secured in the written test are also not grossly disproportionate. This apart, out of total marks of 240, only 25 marks were earmarked for interview. So, 25 marks for interview out of 240 as against 200 for the written test and 15 marks for qualification and other activities do not admit an element of arbitrariness or given scope for use of discretion by members of the Interview Committee recklessly or designedly in giving more marks to show favour in the interview so as to give an advantage or march to an undeserving candidates over others who had shown extraordinary merit in the written test. From the chart, we find among the candidates, marks secured in the written test were between 119 to 128 except in one case belonging to a Scheduled Caste were 114. This apart, the marks secured in the interview are based on the assessment of the Interview Committee. Normally, it is not for the court to sit in judgment over such assessment and particularly in the absence of any malafides or extraneous considerations attributed and established. The interview marks of 25 as against total marks of 240, cannot be taken as excessive. It comes to 10.4%. Possibly the selection

would have been vitiated, if the marks for interview were 100 as against 150 marks for written test as sought to be made out. Unfortunately, for the appellants, their misrepresentation in this regard, is unfolded very clearly as already stated above. Further, the appellants, knowing the criteria fixed for selection and allocation of marks, did participate in the interview; when they are not successful, it is not open to them to turn around and attack the very criteria. The High Court in the impugned order has found that the criteria contained. The High Court in the impugned order has found that the criteria contained in Annexure R-1 filed in the writ petition was published and that such criteria was adopted earlier also in respect of other selections."

15. Relying on the legal principles settled in the matter of selection by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India as well as by the High Courts as enumerated in the cases cited supra, this Court is also of the firm opinion that a mere selection will not confer any right and the process of selection can be challenged by the candidates only on the limited grounds i.e., to say if the process of selection is in violation of the statutory rules or certain malpractices or irregularities occurred on account of the act of the authorities, while conducting the process of selection. Thus, the Constitutional Courts can interfere with the process of selection only on exceptional circumstances i.e., if there is any illegality or irregularity found in the process of selection.

16. Merely for providing a second chance to the candidates for performing their Physical Efficiency Test /Endurance Test / Physical Measurement Test, a writ cannot be filed and this Court cannot issue any such directions for the Competent Authorities for the purpose of re-doing the Tests as cited above. The events of 100 meters, 200 meters, 400 meters, long jump and rope climbing etc., are competitions and a small slipperiness while performing such events will not confer any right to the candidates for seeking another round of chance. Success in athletic competitions are momental in nature and a slipperiness cannot be a ground to seek another chance and this Court cannot issue any direction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to the Competent Authorities to re-do the events.

17. What is to be considered is the principles of reasonableness and fairness. This Court is bound to analyze the reasonableness in the process of selection. Once the selection process has been conducted by following the procedures uniformly to all the candidates which is accepted in normal parlance, the same will be final and the Courts cannot issue any direction to re-do the events.

18. The learned counsel further raised a ground that the events may be conducted by some other authorities in order to get the fairness. Such an idea mooted out by the learned counsel cannot be considered as this Court found that the procedures adopted in the selection process is just and fair.

19. Thus, question of doubting the method or procedures adopted by the respondents /Police department will not arise on the facts of this case on hand. Further, most of the counsels have viewed the video clippings produced by the respondents/Police department with regard to the events performed by the writ petitioners and this Court has not received any complaint from any of the counsels appearing on behalf of the writ petitioners that the events were conducted contrary to the procedures nor any malpractices or illegality are occurred. The learned counsels are very fair in making a submission that they could not able to identify any mistakes in conducting the said events from the video clippings viewed by them.

20. Thus, this Court is of the opinion that the writ petitioners who have not qualified themselves in any of the Physical Eligibility Test, Endurance Test and Physical Efficiency Test, cannot claim selection based on the said Mr. Ramkumar, who was also subsequently disqualified.

21. Such being the factum of this case, the grounds raised in this writ petition and the relief seeking for a direction to grant permission to re-do the events, cannot be considered.

22. Hence, the writ petition stands dismissed. However, there shall be no order as to costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petition is also closed.

Sd/-
Asst.Registrar (CS VI)

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Sub Asst. Registrar

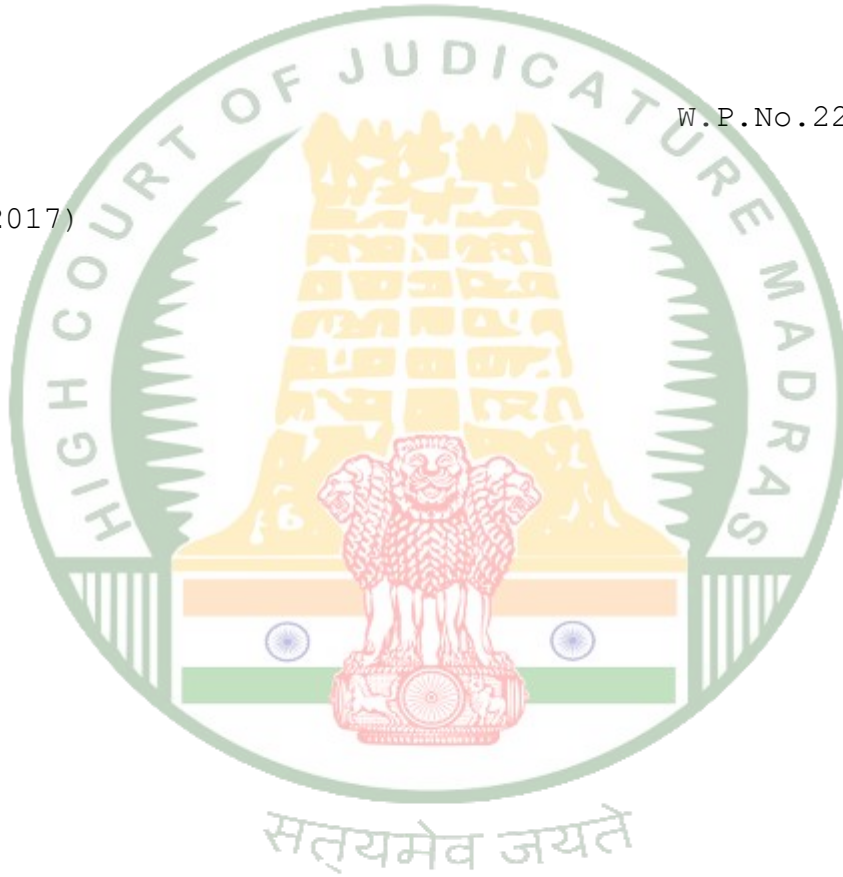
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To

The Chairman,
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