

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED :04.09.2017

CORAM

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

W.P.No.20566 of 2015

P. Indhra

.. Petitioner

Vs

1.The Managing Director,
State Transport Corporation Tamil Nadu Ltd.,
Thiruvalluvar Illam,
No.2, Pallavan Salai,
Chennai-600 002

2.The General Manager (Operation and Administration),
State Transport Corporation Tamil Nadu Ltd.,
Thiruvalluvar Illam,
No.2, Pallavan Salai,
Chennai-600 002.

3.The Branch Manager,
State Transport Corporation Tamil Nadu Ltd.,
State Transport Corporation Office,
Old Bus Stand, Kalliamman Street,
Kumbakonam-612 001.

.. Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus or any other writ or orders or direction in the nature of writ to call for the records pertaining to the impugned rejection order dated 04.12.2014 passed by the 2nd respondent vide Notification No.Dip1448/MaVa2/SETC/2014 and quash the same and consequently direct to the respondents to consider the petitioner's representation dated 10.01.2014 and provide an employment to one of the legal heirs of late T. Ponmozhi under compassionate appointment for any suitable post in the place of Late. Mr. T. Ponmozhi, within a time frame fixed.

For Petitioner : Mr. K. Arunagiri
For Respondents : Mr.R.P. Prathap singh

O R D E R

The husband of the writ petitioner was working as selection grade Conductor in the Tamilnadu State Transport Corporation and died on 12.11.2000, while he was in service.

2. The learned counsel appearing for the writ petitioner made a submission that the writ petitioner has made an application seeking compassionate appointment in time and further submitted representations to the Hon'ble Chief Minister's cell and also to the respondents. However, those representations were not considered but the subsequent representation was considered and an order of rejection was passed in proceedings dated 04.12.2014, stating that the application seeking compassionate appointment was not preferred within a period of three years from the date of death of the deceased Government employee.

3. Though, the representation was submitted on 18.12.2002, there is no proof attached to that effect nor there is any acknowledgment or admission from the respondents stating that the application was submitted. Thus, this court is not in a position to consider the same. However, in the order impugned dated 04.12.2014, it is stated that application seeking compassionate appointment was not preferred within a period of three years from the date of death of the husband of the writ petitioner. Apart from these factors, the deceased employee expired on 12.11.2000 and now, after a lapse of 17 years from the date of death of the deceased employee, the question of considering the indigent circumstance of the family of the deceased employee does not arise at all. Therefore, at these two points, the writ petition has to be considered. Even it is presuming that the application seeking compassionate appointment was filed in time, now, after a lapse 17 years from the date of death of the deceased Government employee, the question of considering the indigent circumstance will not arise at all. In this regard, the legal principles are settled as follows:

The Inspector General of Prisons vs. P.Marimuthu [2016 (5) CTC 125], in paragraphs 36 to 41, held as follows:

"36. In National Institute of Technology v. Niraj Kumar Singh reported in 2007 (2) SCC 481, an employee died, leaving behind his wife. She made an application to the respondent therein, for appointment of her grandson on compassionate grounds. Thereafter, he was appointed on daily wages and his services were extended from time to time. After a gap of about 15 years, he made an application for his appointment on compassionate grounds on regular basis. Thereafter, wife of the deceased employee, sought for appointment for her son

and while claiming so, she also requested cancellation of the respondent's appointment. As her request was rejected, she filed a writ petition, which was dismissed. One of the reasons assigned for dismissal of the writ petition filed by the wife was that at the time of death of the deceased employee, her son was aged one and half years old and that the application was submitted only after attaining majority i.e. after 18 years and therefore, no appointment can be given to the employee's son on compassionate ground. Letters patent appeal was also dismissed by the Hon'ble Division Bench. There were other issues of making a false claim by the grandson. Suo-motu contempt notice was issued. On the above facts and considering the policy of the Government, at Paragraphs 21 and 22, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, held as follows:

"21. The appointment on compassionate ground, thus, could have been offered only to a person who was the widow of the deceased or a dependent child. Admittedly, the son of the deceased Ashutosh Kumar was only one year old at the time of his father's death. He could not, thus, have been given any appointment on compassionate ground. It may be true that Smt. Vidhya Devi filed an application for grant of appointment on compassionate ground in favour of the respondent. But, it now stands admitted that he was not the natural grandson of late Shri B.P. Sinha but was a grandson of his cousin brother. Therefore, he was not entitled for appointment in terms of the scheme of the Institute. The Institute, therefore, committed an illegality in granting him such an appointment. Moreover the purported the appointment on compassionate ground had been given in 2001, i.e., after more than 15 years from the date of death of the said Shri B.P. Sinha.

22. If the appointment of the respondent was wholly illegal and without jurisdiction and such an appointment had been obtained by practising fraud upon the appellant, the same was a nullity. We are, however, not oblivious of the fact that the same attained finality in view of the fact that the writ petition of the said Vidhya Devi was dismissed. Despite the same, the principles of res judicata shall not apply in a case of this nature. It is well-known that where an order is passed by an authority which lacks inherent jurisdiction, the principles of res judicata would not apply, the same being nullity. [See Chief Justice of A.P., v. L.V.A.Dixitulu, 1979 (2) SCC 34 and Union of India v. Pramod Gupta (D) by LRs. And Ors., (2005) 12 SCC 1]"

37. Though learned counsel for the writ petitioner submitted that under the existing scheme, and the Government orders issued from time to time, on the aspect of considering the right of the minors, at the time of death of breadwinner, in making an application for employment assistance, on attaining majority, there are no rules or guidelines restricting the period, for consideration of such application and further submitted that what is relevant to be considered by the authorities, is whether the penury of the family continued to exist, or not, even after a long time and it should be the only objective factor, to subserve proper implementation of the scheme and further contended that when the scheme does not contemplate that on the date of death of the employee, the applicant should be an adult member irrespective of the period prescribed for submission of the application, this Court is not inclined to accept the said submissions, for the reason that even if indigent circumstances of the family continued to exist for a long time, the scheme of employment assistance on compassionate grounds and modified by various Government orders issued from time to time, makes it clear that though indigent circumstance is one of the factors to be considered, while examining the eligibility of an applicant to seek for employment assistance, equally, the other requirement under the Government orders issued from time to time, that the application should be submitted within three years from the date of death, cannot be ignored. A member of the family, otherwise eligible, on the date of death of the employee, has to submit the application within three years from the date of death or in a given case, if he was a minor at the time of death aged between 15 to 18 years, he can also submit an application, within three years from the date of death, on attaining majority.

38. Needless to state that for entry into any service in the State, the minimum age is 18 years, and no minor can be appointed to any service. Therefore, he cannot make any application for appointment to any post in service and no post can be kept vacant for him, till he attains majority. Posts which fall vacant have to be filled up as per the recruitment rules. Employment assistance on compassionate appointment, is only a concession, extended to an eligible member of the family, to apply for a suitable post, in the service, in which, the employee/Government servant died in harness and it is not a right, which can be exercised by a minor on attainment of majority.

39. Thus, for the reasons stated supra, we are of the view that continuation of penury or indigent circumstances of the family, alone is not the factor to be considered by the department, while examining the request of an applicant for appointment on compassionate grounds. Reading of the Government orders shows that scheme can be extended only to eligible member of the family and not to an ineligible person. Scheme has not been framed to provide employment assistance as and when the son or daughter of the deceased employee attains majority. Under the scheme, the department is not obligated to keep any post vacant, till the applicant attains majority or to consider his candidature on attaining majority. Scheme only enables those who are eligible and satisfy all the eligibility criteria including age, within three years from the date of death.

40. In view of the above discussion, the request of the petitioner for appointment on compassionate grounds, ought not to have been entertained, as on the date of application, he was minor, aged about 12 years. Reference can also be made to a decision made in Sushma Gosain v. Union of India reported in 1989 (4) SCC 468.

41. In the result, the Writ Appeal is allowed. No costs. Order made in W.P(MD)No.6538 of 2009 dated 22.04.2014 is set aside. Consequently, connected Miscellaneous Petition is closed."

4. In view of these factors and the legal principles stated in this regard, no further adjudication on the ground arise in this writ petition needs to be undertaken. Thus, the order impugned in this writ petition does not suffer from any infirmity. Accordingly, the writ petition stands dismissed. However, no order as to costs.

-s/d-

Assistant Registrar (CS-II)

True Copy

Sub-Assistant Registrar

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To

1. The Managing Director,
State Transport Corporation Tamil Nadu Ltd.,
Thiruvalluvar Illam,
No.2, Pallavan Salai,
Chennai-600 002

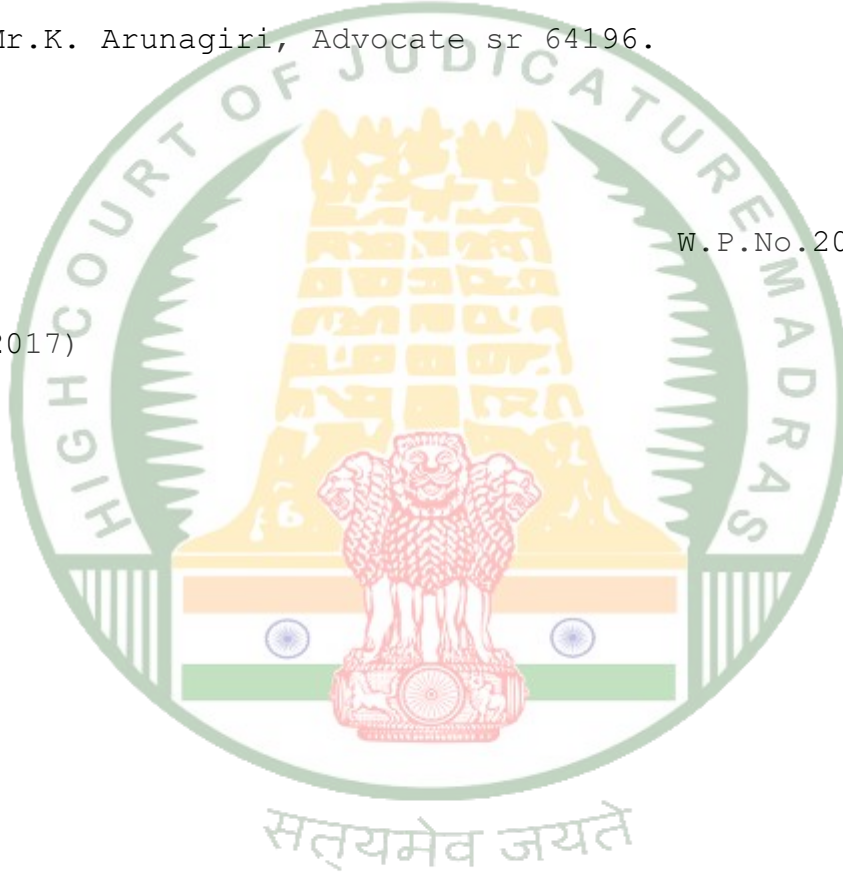
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Kumbakonam-612 001.

+1 CC to Mr.K. Arunagiri, Advocate sr 64196.

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CA(CO)
sp(11/10/2017)



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