

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR
WPS No. 2197 of 2019

Mr. Leela Ram Sahu S/o Mr. Ram Sohagil Sahu Aged About 40 Years R/o Gram Kusmi Post Kusmi, Tahsil Berla District Bemetara, Chhattisgarh.

---- Petitioner

Versus

1. The State Of Chhattisgarh Through Its The Secretary Panchayat And Rural Development Department Mantralaya, Mahanadi Bhawan Naya Raipur District Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
2. Commissioner Durg Division District Durg, Chhattisgarh.
3. Collector District Bemetara Chhattisgarh.
4. Chief Executive Officer Janpad Panchayat Berla District Bemetara, Chhattisgarh.

---Respondents

For petitioner	:	Mr. Parag Kotecha, Advocate.
For State/ Respondent	:	Mr. Ishaan Verma, Advocate

Hon'ble Shri Justice P. Sam Koshy

Order on Board

28/03/2019

1. The Challenge in the present writ petition is to the order Annexure P/5 dated 09.07.2015 passed by the Collector, District Bemetara, rejecting the appeal preferred by the petitioner filed against the order of termination dated 23.06.2014.
2. The facts of the case is that, the petitioner was appointed as a Shiksha Karmi-Grade-III under Janpad Panchayat, Berla, District Bemetara vide order dated 02/07/2007 Annexure-P/1. The petitioner immediately assumed the office as a Siksha Karmi and continued to work till the services of the petitioner was abruptly terminated vide order dated 23/06/2014 passed by the Chief Executive Officer, Janpad Panchayat, Berla, District Bemetara. The said order was questioned by the petitioner

before the learned Collector, Bemetara in an appeal under Section 91 and the Collector vide his order dated 09/07/2015 dismissed the said appeal. Against the order passed by the Collector, the petitioner had infact not preferred any revision to the Commissioner. At the same time, similarly placed person was appointed along with the petitioner who was terminated by the same order dated 23.06.2014 and whose appeal was rejected by the collector had preferred a revision petition before the Commissioner. That the Commissioner vide his order dated 07.01.2016 had rejected the same.

3. According to the petitioner that the impugned order of termination as also the order passed by the Appellate Authority as well as is bad in law for the reason that, the termination of the petitioner was in total violation of Rule 7 o the Chhattisgarh Panchayat Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1999. He further submits that, the law in this regard is by now well settled by a catena of decisions wherein it has been held that for the purpose of terminating an employee whose services are governed under the Rules of 1999, the respondent authorities are required to comply with the procedure prescribed under Rule 7. Having not done so, the impugned order is liable to be set-aside on this ground.

4. The contention of the respondents is that, it is a case where there were large scale of irregularities detected at the time of appointment and on due verification since it was found that the petitioner also has got advantage of that irregularities, the services have been terminated. Therefore the action of the reThe facts of the case is that, the petitioner was appointed as a Shiksha Karmi-Grade-III under Janpad Panchayat, Berla, District Bemetara vide order dated 02/07/2007 Annexure-P/1. The petitioner immediately assumed the office as a Siksha Karmi and continued to work till the services of the petitioner was abruptly terminated vide order dated 23/06/2014 passed by the Chief Executive Officer, Janpad Panchayat, Berla, District Bemetara. The said order was

questioned by the petitioner before the learned Collector, Bemetara in an appeal under Section 91 and the Collector vide his order dated 09/07/2015 dismissed the said appeal. Against the order passed by the Collector, though the petitioner did not preferred revision but similarly placed persons were also terminated by the same order dated 23/06/2014 and the appeal also was rejected by the Collector on preferring a revision petition and the said revision also was dismissed by the Commissioner on 07/01/2016.

3. According to the petitioner that the impugned order of termination as also the order passed by the Appellate Authority is bad in law for the reason that, the termination of the petitioner was in total violation of Rule 7 of the Chhattisgarh Panchayat Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1999. He further submits that, the law in this regard is by now well settled by a catena of decisions wherein it has been held that for the purpose of terminating an employee whose services are governed under the Rules of 1999, the respondent authorities are required to comply with the procedure prescribed under Rule 7. Having not done so, the impugned order is liable to be set-aside on this ground.

4. The contention of the respondents is that, it is a case where there were large scale of irregularities detected at the time of appointment and on due verification since it was found that the petitioner also has got advantage of that irregularities, the services have been terminated. Therefore the action of the respondents cannot be said to be either malafides or in contravention to the provisions of law. He further submits that, since it was a question of appointment being obtained by playing fraud and mischief, the requirement of compliance of Rule 7 may not be required as it has been duly enquired into by the appointing authorities themselves and have found that there were certain lapses on part of the petitioner on account of which he was not entitled for appointment and thus prayed for rejection of the petition.

5. Recently on an identical set of facts arising out of the same District but from different Janpad Panchayat a bunch of Writ Petitions came up for hearing before this Court i.e. WPS No.1420/2016 d/on 31/10/2018 & Other connected matters. This Court vide order dated 31/10/2018 decided the said petitions and while deciding the same had considered the same issues which have been raised by the parties in the present case.
6. It would be relevant at this juncture to refer to the findings of this Court in the said order. For ready reference, paragraphs 9 to 12 is reproduced herein under:-

“9. Given the aforesaid admitted factual position of the case as also the judgment of this court in the case similarly situated persons belonging to the other Janpad Panchayat i.e. Janpad Panchayat Saja and also taking note that they were also terminated arising out of the same enquiry and in whose case there already is an order of setting aside of the termination order, this court in exercise of judicial discipline proprietary and precedence is inclined to apply the same analogy in deciding the case of the petitioners as well. In the said judgment of Rohini Jha (Supra), this court has observed in paragraphs 3 to 5 as under :

(3) Admittedly, on certain allegations, show cause notice

“was issued to the petitioners and when the respondent

authority was not satisfied with the reply of present petitioners, their services have been terminated. A Division Bench of this Court in the matter of Rooplal Nayak vs. State of Chhattisgarh and others, 2006(4) M.P.H.T. 99 (C.G.) has held that any of the major penalty prescribed under Rule 5(b) (iv) of the Rules, 1999 cannot be imposed on a member of Panchayat service to whom the said Rules are applicable without conducting regular Departmental Enquiry as envisaged under Rule 7 of the Rules, 1999.

(4) In the case at hand, no departmental enquiry has been held as contemplated under Rule 7. The said provisions uses the words 'formal inquiry' with further stipulation that when an order for 'formal enquiry' has been made, the disciplinary authority shall frame Definite charges, communicate the same to the delinquent along with the statement of allegations, requiring him to submit within the specified time a written statement of defence and also to state whether he desires to be heard in person. Thereafter, the defence is required to to be permitted to inspect and take extracts from the records, which can be refused for reasons to be recorded in writing. On submission of reply by the delinquent, the disciplinary authority may himself enquire or appoint an enquiry officer. Appointment of

Presenting Officer and seeking assistance of some other officers by the delinquent is also contemplated therein. The enquiry officer is also enabled to record evidence and thereafter, at the conclusion of the enquiry, the enquiry officer is supposed to prepare enquiry report, the copy of which is required to be furnished to the delinquent. Thus, the 'formal inquiry' envisaged under the Rules is akin to the procedure prescribed for a regular enquiry under Rule 14 of the C.G. Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1966.

(5) The materials made available to this Court nowhere indicate that any enquiry as contemplated under Rule 7 has been initiated or conducted against the petitioner. Therefore, the impugned order of termination is *ex facie* not sustainable in law and the same deserves to be set aside.

"10. In the instant case also learned counsel for the respondents fairly submits that so far as the present petitioners are concerned, admittedly there has not been any Departmental Enquiry as such conducted. It was only a preliminary enquiry conducted and on the basis of the report of the preliminary enquiry the petitioners were issued with show cause notices and thereafter terminated. But,

what is admittedly clear is that in the course of conducting of preliminary enquiry also the petitioners were not taken into confidence neither were they granted opportunity to disprove the contentions which had been raised by the department or which the department was investigating upon.

11. XXXXXXXXX

12. Accordingly, all the writ petitions stand allowed and disposed of in terms of Rohini Jha's case. The impugned orders of termination, rejection of their appeals by the appellate authority as well as revisional authority all stand set aside/quashed for similar reasons as had been held in Rohini Jha's case, reserving the right of the department to proceed further, if they intend to do so, in accordance with provisions of law.

7. Having considered the view of this Court in the aforesaid order and the fact that it has based upon the earlier decision of this Court wherein it has been specifically held that for terminating an employee from service whose services are governed under the Rules of 1999 it is incumbent upon the respondents to have initiated the proceedings as is required under Rule 7.
8. Non-compliance of the said rule vitiates the entire action on part of the respondents. The impugned order in the instant case dated 23/06/2014 and the two orders passed by the Appellate Authority dated 09/07/2015 is thus unsustainable and the same deserve to be and is accordingly set-aside/quashed with consequences to follow.
9. However, this Court is of the view that since the petitioner has not discharged his duties during the intervening period, she would not be

entitled for the wages for the intervening period. However, the said period would be counted for the purpose of continuity in service.

10. Needless to mention that, since the Writ Petition is being allowed on the ground on non-compliance of Rule 7, the right of the department would stand reserved if they feel so may initiate appropriate proceedings in accordance with the said rules.
11. With the aforesaid observations, the writ petition stands allowed and disposed of

Sd/-

(P. Sam Koshy)
JUDGE

Jyoti