

HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE ABHINAND KUMAR SHAVILI

WRIT PETITON No.17469 of 2019

ORDER:

Heard Sri P.Govinda Rajulu, learned counsel for the petitioner and Sri B.Mayur Reddy, learned Standing Counsel for TSRTC appearing on behalf of the respondents.

2. It has been contended by the petitioner that he was appointed as a Driver in the year 2004 in the respondent Corporation. While so, on the allegation that he committed cash and ticket irregularities while conducting service, a charge sheet was issued against him on 07.05.2018, for which he submitted explanation on 11.05.2018, but the Disciplinary Authority without considering his explanation, ordered departmental enquiry into the charges leveled against him. After conducting the departmental enquiry and initiating disciplinary proceedings, the disciplinary authority had imposed a major punishment of termination of services of the petitioner vide orders dated 05.11.2018. Aggrieved thereby, he preferred an appeal and the same was rejected on 05.02.2019 and, thereafter, he filed a review petition on 13.02.2019 before the reviewing authority-2nd respondent. The reviewing authority allowed the review partly re-engaging the petitioner into service as afresh Driver vide orders dated 29.06.2019. Aggrieved by the denial of continuity of service, back wages and other attendant benefits, the present writ petition is filed.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner has contended that the reviewing authority had modified the order of termination contrary to the Regulations governing employees of the Corporation and as the Regulations did not provide for imposition of punishment of appointment as a Driver afresh, no such punishment could have been imposed. To strengthen his argument, he relied upon a Judgment of this Court in ***K.C.Narayana Vs. Managing Director, APSRTC, Hyderabad and others***¹, wherein it is held as under:

“In view of the judgment of the Supreme Court in T.J.Paul’s case (supra), the earlier judgments of this Court taking a contrary view must be held no longer as good law and as a result the impugned order of the reviewing authority, appointing the petitioner as a conductor afresh, must necessarily be set aside and the matter remanded to the 2nd respondent for his consideration on the question of penalty.

The impugned order of the 2nd respondent is, accordingly, set aside and he is directed to examine the records and determine the appropriate punishment to be imposed on the petitioner strictly in accordance with the A.P.S.R.T.C.Employees (Classification, Control and Appeal) Regulations, 1967, within a period of four months from the date of receipt of a copy of this Court. Needless to state that, since the petitioner has been continuing pursuant to the earlier order of the Reviewing Authority to appoint him afresh as a Conductor, status quo as on today shall continue till final orders are passed by the 2nd respondent on the punishment to be imposed on the petitioner herein.”

4. Per contra, learned Standing Counsel for the respondent Corporation has contended that taking a lenient view, the reviewing authority has directed reinstatement of the petitioner as a Driver afresh and that can never be treated as arbitrary

¹ 2007 (5) ALD 416

and illegal and the same cannot be challenged in the Court of law.

5. Having considered the rival submissions made by the learned counsel for the parties as well as the judgment of this Court relied upon by the learned counsel for the petitioner, this Court is of the considered view that this writ petition can be disposed of in terms of the judgment of this Court cited supra. The impugned order passed by the reviewing authority is, accordingly, set aside and the matter is remanded back to the reviewing authority to take appropriate decision and impose lesser punishment than that of termination, in accordance with the Regulations of the Corporation, within a period of four (4) weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.

6. The writ petition is, accordingly, disposed of. No order as to costs.

Consequently, miscellaneous petitions, if any, pending shall stand closed.

ABHINAND KUMAR SHAVILI, J

16.08.2019
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