



BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 22.12.2020

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE KRISHNAN RAMASAMY

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W.P(MD) No.7888 of 2019

V.Mary Sneka Rita

... Petitioner

Vs.

- 1.The Chief Educational Officer,
Tirunelveli,
Tirunelveli District.
- 2.The District Educational Officer,
Tirunelveli,
Tirunelveli District.
- 3.The Correspondent,
Schaffter Higher Secondary School,
Tirunelveli-1,
Tirunelveli District.

... Respondents

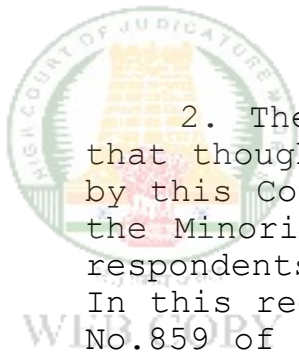
PRAYER: Writ Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying for issuance of Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus to call for the records relating to the impugned order in O.Mu.No.6199/A2/2018, dated 08.0.12019 of second respondent and quash the same and consequently direct the respondents herein to award annual increments, incentive, surrender leave benefits and other attendant benefits to the petitioner from the date of petitioner's appointment as B.T.Assistant (Maths) in the third respondent's School with effect from 17.11.2011 with all attendant benefits including pay fixation and allowance.

For Petitioners : Mr.T.Pon Ramkumar, Advocate

For R1 & R2 : Mr.A.Thiagarajan
Government Advocate

O R D E R

This writ petition has been filed challenging the impugned order passed by the second respondent, dated 08.01.2019 and thereby the annual increments, incentive increments, surrender leave benefits and other attendant benefits were denied to the petitioner holding that the petitioner has not completed the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET).



2. The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner submitted that though the issue in the writ petition has already been settled by this Court in a number of judgments that the Teachers working in the Minority Institution were exempted from TET qualification, the respondents failed to confer all service benefits to the petitioner. In this regard, he relied on the judgment of this Court in W.A(MD) No.859 of 2019 dated 26.09.2019, wherein the Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court has held as follows:-

5.This issue came up for consideration before several Division Benches of this Court and it has been held that the department cannot mandatorily insists the teachers working in minority institution to have TET qualification. One of the recent decision of the Division Bench is in *P.Savarimuthu Maria George v. The District Elementary Educational Officer, Virudhunagar District & Others* [2018 0 Supreme (Mad) 4017] (W.A.(MD) No.948 of 2018), wherein the Division Bench noted all the decisions on this issue and allowed the appeal filed by the Teacher. It will be beneficial to refer to the following portions of the order.

"4.Shortly after the disposal of the Writ Petition which is the subject matter of this appeal, a Division Bench of this Court in *Secretary to Government, Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai -vs- S. Jeyalakshmi* [(2016) 5 CTC 639], held in paragraph nos. 39 and 40, as follows:-

"39.In the decision relied upon by the Learned Senior Counsel for the Petitioners in *Ashwini Thanappan -vs- Director of Education* [(2014) 8 SCC 272], the issue that arose for consideration related to the interpretation of Article 27. The matter was referred to the Bench of appropriate strength for further examination. Since the Learned Counsel submitted that the Judgment in *Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust* is inconsistent with the Judgment of the Constitution Bench in *P.A. Inamdar -vs- State of Maharashtra* [(2005) 6 SCC 537]. The matter is pending consideration.

40.In view of the above, the contention of the Learned Additional Advocate General that the order of the Learned Single Judge directing the release of salary is not sustainable, in view of the reference of *Ashwini Thanappan* case to the Bench of appropriate strength, cannot be accepted, since the issue in *P.A. Inamdar* is with respect quota of admission of students in the unaided professional institutions, entrance test



and fee structure. Therefore, the outcome of Ashwini Thanappan has nothing to do with the case on hand."

It would also be relevant to refer the following paragraphs in that Judgment of the Division Bench of this Court:-

"52. However, the Government, before issuing G.O. Ms.No. 181 dated 15.11.2011, lost sight of one important fact, namely imposition of a condition on the Teachers, who were appointed prior to the issue of G.O., in non minority Schools, both aided and unaided, to qualify themselves with TET within a period of five years, in order to continue in service, would cause great hardship to them. Moreover, if the Teachers who have put in more number of years of service, could not pass TET within five years, their contribution in service would be in jeopardy. Further, it is seen that the percentage of pass in the TET examination conducted in 2012 and 2013 was very minimal.

56.We are, therefore, of the considered view that the Government may seek a clarification from the NCTE, in the light of what is stated in the preceding paragraph, whether the prescription of minimum qualification of TET can be made applicable prospectively for the Teachers who were appointed subsequent to the date of issue of G.O., in both non minority and minority institutions and not retrospectively as the same would cause undue hardship to the Teachers who have been serving for a quite a long time.

58.In our opinion, non qualifying in TET by the Teachers already in service should not defeat the object of the Government to provide quality and standard education and therefore, the Government may, in the alternative, conduct a refresher course and also some interactive sessions during annual vacation, in order to ensure and enhance the quality of education.

60.In the light of the above, we are of the view that the Government cannot insist upon the minority institution, both aided or unaided, to abide by any Regulation framed under the provisions of the RTE Act. Therefore, we hold that G.O. Ms. No. 181, School Education (C2) Department dated 15.11.2011 issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu, is not applicable to the minority institutions.

62.However, keeping in mind the larger interest in which the Government has issued the



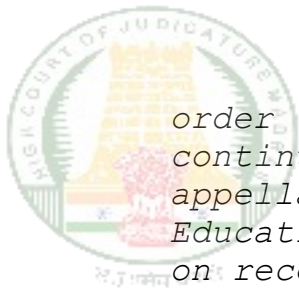
above G.O.s, this Court feels that the minority institutions may also consider conducting a refresher course and also some interactive sessions to all the Teachers during annual vacation, in order to ensure and improve the quality of Teachers."

The resultant effect of that decision is that it is not necessary for teachers in schools run by aided minority institutions to secure a pass in Teacher Eligibility Test for approving their appointment. The said view has been reiterated by the subsequent decisions of the Division Benches of this Court in K. Solomon Jeyaraj -vs- Secretary, Department of School Education (Judgment dated 25.11.2016 in W.A. (MD) No. 1437 of 2016), Y. Kanagaraj -vs- State of Tamil Nadu (Judgment dated 16.06.2017 in W.A. (MD) No. 724 of 2017) and K. Anita -vs- State of Tamil Nadu (Judgment dated 26.02.2018 in W.A. (MD) No. 1090 of 2017)"

6.The learned Special Government Pleader appearing for the respondents 1 and 2 placing reliance on the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in TMA Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka [2005 (5) CTC 201 (SC)] would submit that the respondent State being the controlling authority sanctioning aid for the minority institutions can always prescribe qualifications, salaries as well as experience and other conditions bearing on the merits of an individual for being appointed as a teacher of an educational institution. Further, it is submitted by the learned Special Government Pleader that if the contention advanced by the learned counsel appearing for the appellant is accepted and TET is not made applicable to the minority institutions, then it is a clear discrimination among the teachers because one set of teachers, who are working in the non-minority institutions, are under the threat of losing their jobs for not possessing TET and the other set of teachers, who do not have TET, who are working at aided minority institutions, are safe and the same would be in violation of Article 14 of Constitution of India.

7.In our considered view, various Division Benches have taken consistent stand as regards the legal position and in doing so reference has been made to the decision of the Constitutional Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Paramati Educational & Cultural Trust v. Union of India [2014(8) SCC 1], and a decision has been rendered. This Court does not find any ground to take a different view.

8.It is submitted by the learned counsel appearing for the appellant that the learned Writ Court was of the view that the appellant was not working after the impugned order dated 14.11.2013. However, the fact remains that since an



order of stay was granted on 29.11.2013, the appellant is continuing to serve in the institution and as on date the appellant is working in another school of the same Educational Agency at Surandai. This submission is placed on record.

9.Thus, for the above reasons, the Writ Appeal is allowed and order of the Writ Court in W.P.(MD) No.19467 of 2013 dated 25.07.2019 is set aside. Consequently, the Writ Petition is allowed as prayed for. Consequently, connected Civil Miscellaneous Petition is closed. No costs."

3.The learned Government Advocate appearing for the respondents 1 and 2 fairly submitted that the issue has already been settled by this Court in a number of judgments.

4.On perusal of the aforesaid judgment, it appears that the Teachers, who are working in the Minority Institution are not required to qualify the TET examination. Therefore, the issue is no more *res integra*.

5.Accordingly, this Writ Petition is allowed and the impugned order passed by the second respondent dated 08.01.2019 is quashed and the respondents 1 and 2 are directed to confer all other service benefits such as annual increments, incentives, surrender leave benefits and other attendant benefits to the petitioner from the date of their appointment, within a period of twelve weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. No costs.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(AS)

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/ /2021
Sub Assistant Registrar

To

- 1.The Chief Educational Officer,
Tirunelveli,
Tirunelveli District.
- 2.The District Educational Officer,
Tirunelveli,
Tirunelveli District.

+1. C.C. to M/S.T.Pon Ramkumar, Advocate SR.No. 26958

W.P(MD)No.7888 of 2019
22.12.2020

CP

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<https://hcservices.ecourts.gov.in/hcservices/>