

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
BENCH AT AURANGABAD

61 WRIT PETITION NO.1430 OF 2022

Vandana W/o Gopalrao Dhavale
Age : 42 years, Occ : Peon,
Renukadevi Primary & Higher Secondary
Mahavidyalaya, Vasant Nagar,
Mahapur, Tq. & Dist. Latur. ..PETITIONER

-VERSUS-

1. The State of Maharashtra
Through its Secretary
Social Welfare Department,
Mantralaya, Mumbai.
2. The Director,
V.J.N.T., OBC and SBC Special
Assistant Department,
Maharashtra State, Pune.
3. The Regional Deputy Commissioner,
Social Welfare Latur Division,
Latur.
4. The Assistant Commissioner,
Social Welfare Department,
Latur.
5. Renukadevi Primary & Higher Secondary
Mahavidyalaya, Vasant Nagar,
Mahapur, Tq. & Dist. Latur
Through its Headmaster ..RESPONDENTS

...

Mr.M.S. Taur, advocate for the petitioner.
Mr.P.S. Patil, Addl. GP for the respondent/State.

...

CORAM : S.V. GANGAPURWALA
AND

S.G. DIGE, JJ.

DATE : 31st JANUARY, 2022

ORAL JUDGMENT (PER S.V. GANGAPURWALA, J.)

1. Heard.

2. Rule. Rule made returnable and heard forthwith with the consent of the parties. The petition is taken up for final disposal at admission stage.

3. The petitioner is the employee of aided private Ashram School and is claiming his entitlement to higher pay scale under Assured Career Progress Scheme (for short, "the ACPS") on completion of 12 years of qualifying service from the date of her initial appointment.

4. It is the contention of the petitioner that the employees serving in private aided Ashram Schools are discriminated, and have been denied benefits whereas, the benefits are made available to the Ashram Schools conducted by the Social Welfare Department, and other private aided schools conducted by other Departments.

5. The issue raised in the petition is no more res integra in view of judgment of the Division Bench at Principal Seat in Writ Petition no.2358/2013 and other companion matters decided on Sept., 21st, 2013. The Division Bench in paragraph nos.17 to 19 of the order has observed thus :

"17. The Assured Career Progress Scheme is a welfare scheme which is basically brought about to remove stagnation as very few promotion avenues are available to Group "C" and "D" employees. The ACPS enables the eligible employees to be placed in higher pay scale. The eligible non-teaching staff of the aided Secondary Schools in Group "C" and "D" category gets the benefits of ACPS. But the similar category of employees in the aided private Ashram Schools who perform identical duties have been denied the benefit of ACPS which infringes their fundamental rights under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India. The action of denial of benefits to the similarly placed employees discharging similar duties is arbitrary and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of India.

18. Only on the basis of purported ground of financial crunch, we fail to understand the approach of the State Government of discriminating between the non-teaching staff of aided Ashram Schools and non-teaching staff of aided private Schools. At one stage both the Schools were functioning under the control of only one department.

19. In our view the denial of benefit of ACPS amounts to discrimination, which is hit by the rights guaranteed by Article 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India".

6. In view of the decision rendered by the Division bench, as referred to above, the petition deserves to be allowed, and the same is accordingly allowed.

7. The respondents are directed to examine the case of the petitioner for deciding whether she satisfy the criteria laid down for claiming benefits under the ACPS to the private aided Government School under the Government Resolution dated 30th April, 1998, as modified from time to time, and if it is found that the petitioner is entitled to claim benefits under the Scheme, and she satisfy the eligibility criteria, the respondents shall extend the benefits to the petitioner. The respondents shall scrutinize the case of petitioner within a period of six months, and extend the benefits to the petitioner, if she found eligible, as expeditiously as possible preferably, within a period of four months from such scrutiny.

Rule made absolute in above terms. The writ petition stands disposed of in above terms.

(S.G.DIGE, J.)

(S.V. GANGAPURWALA, J.)