



IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

Dated: 18.01.2024

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THE HONOURABLE **DR. JUSTICE ANITA SUMANTH**

W.P.Nos.499 & 505 of 2024
& WMP.No.513 of 2023

In W.P.No.499 of 2024

- 1.Dr.M.Srinivasan
- 2.Dr.Atif Abdullah C
- 3.Dr.A.Shiva Kumar
- 4.Dr.Karikal Chakaravathi

... Petitioners

VS

- 1.The State of Tamil Nadu
Represented by its Principal Secretary,
Health and Family Department,
Secretariat, Chennai-600 009.
2. The Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine
Anna Salai, Teynampet,
Chennai- 086.
3. The director of Medical and Rural Health Services
Anna Salai, Chennai.
4. Directorate of Medical Education,
Kilpauk, Chennai- 600 010.



5. Government Chengalpattu Medical College
G.S.T. Road, Chengalpattu District,
Kancheepuram- 603 001.

6. Government Madurai Medical College,
Panagal Road,
Madurai-625 020.

7. Government Stanley Medical College,
No.1 Old Jail Road,
Chennai-600 001.

8. Thoothukudi Government Medical College and Hospital,
Kamaraj Nagar,
Thoothukudi-628 008.

9. Government Tirunelveli Medical College,
High Ground Road, Palayamkottai,
Tirunelveli-627 011.

10.ESI Hospital
Ayanavaram,
Chennai.

11. Government Vellore Medical College,
Adukkamparai,
Vellore-632 011.

.... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Mandamus directing the respondent to treat the petitioners' two-year compulsory bond period as completed, and to consequently permit the Petitioners to relieve from service and to return all original certificates



of the Petitioners that were submitted by them at the time of their admission to Post Graduate higher Speciality Degree course, within a time period stipulated by this Honble Court.

In W.P.No.505 of 2024

Dr.Deepak David Chellappa

... Petitioner

VS

1.The State of Tamil Nadu

Represented by its Principal Secretary,
Health and Family Department,
Secretariat, Chennai-600 009.

2. The Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

Anna Salai, Teynampet,
Chennai- 086.

3. The director of Medical and Rural Health Services

Anna Salai, Chennai.

4. Directorate of Medical Education,

Kilpauk, Chennai- 600 010.

5. Government Stanley Medical College,

No.1 Old Jail Road,
Chennai-600 001.

6. Government Royapettah Hospital,

No,1, West Cott Road,
Chennai 600014.

.... Respondents



PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Mandamus directing the respondents to treat the petitioners' two-year compulsory bond period as completed, and to consequently permit the Petitioners to relieve from service, within a time period stipulated by this Hon'ble Court.

In both W.P.'s
For Petitioner : Mr.C.Vidhusan

For Respondents : Mr.Vadivelu Deenadayalan
Additional Government Pleader

COMMON ORDER

These matters were disposed on 10.01.2024. However, while finalizing the order it was found that the certificates for quantification of covid duty has not been placed on record by the petitioners. Hence, the matters are re-posted today when the certificates have been produced.

2. WMP No.513 of 2024 filed seeking permission to file a single Writ Petition is ordered on payment of separate Court fee.

3. Mr.Vadivelu Deenadayalan, learned Additional Government Pleader accepts notice for the respondents and is armed with instructions to enable final disposal of the matter, even at this juncture. Hence, by consent of both learned counsel, the Writ Petition is taken up for final disposal, even at the stage of admission.



4. I have considered an identical prayer as in the present Writ Petitions in

W.P.No.28238 of 2023 and have held as follows:

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"The petitioner is a Doctor, who had completed Post Graduation in General Medicine from KAP Viswanathan Medical College in the non service category. He had completed the course in May, 2022 and had, at the time of admission to the course, executed a bond for a sum of Rs.40 lakhs undertaking that he would serve the State for a period of two years after completion of the course. The bond period, admittedly, runs till 31.05.2024.

2. Within a few months of commencing the course, the Covid 19 pandemic had struck and the petitioner, and, in fact several other identically / similarly placed candidates, were required to be on covid duty in R5 Hospital. Though no appointment orders could be issued seeing as the petitioner was a student then, his services during the covid period is not disputed as duty sheets for the service rendered have duly been produced by the petitioner and verified by the respondent counsel.

3. The question as to whether covid duty would constitute in-bond service is no longer res integra having been considered and accepted by two learned Judges in W.P.No.26556 of 2022 (decision dated 02.02.2023) and W.P.No.22894 of 2023 (decision dated 08.09.2023). In these cases, the petitioners were students who were required to perform covid duty during their course and this Court has held, and I concur with these decisions, that the covid duty



rendered by the students should be taken note of as service during the bond period.

4. An additional question that arises in this case is as to whether quarantine relatable to covid period is also be taken as bond service. The period of quarantine is, in my considered view, nothing but an extension of covid duty itself as the Rules prevalent then required mandatory quarantine. The petitioner would well have continued with the duty in the covid ward itself has it not been for the mandate of compulsory quarantine. Thus, taking the period of quarantine also as on-duty, such period in this case is quantified as 150 days. On-duty call sheets duly signed by the Dean of R5 college have been produced by the petitioner. This will advance the closure of bond period to 02.01.2024 from 31.05.2024.

5. The petitioner's request for a mandamus directing the respondents to treat compulsory bond period as concluding on 02.01.2024 is accepted. R5 is directed, upon completion of bond period on 02.01.2024, to return to the petitioner, his original certificates received at the time of admission to PG course. 6. Allowed in the above terms. No costs. Connected miscellaneous petition is closed."

5. Yet another development has been noted by me in W.P.Nos.32073, 33124, 32505, 32512, 29724 and 32380 of 2023 to following effect:

"The issue of treating Covid duty as period of duty for the purpose of computing of bond service now stands settled categorically by virtue of an order passed by the First



Bench in W.P.Nos.25827, 25785 and 27568 of 2023, decided on 16.11.2023.

2. Those Writ Petitions relate to the recruitment of Assistant Surgeons. In the course of the discussion, the First Bench has settled the position that, both for the purpose of Under Graduate (UG) as well as Post Graduate (PG) medical education, the duties performed during covid period/treating covid patients should be treated as eligible duty.

3. The discussion from paragraph 7 onwards is clear to this effect and reads as follows:

7. It is true that the services rendered by the Post-Graduate students is part of their 36 months period training which they undergo. The said period is supposed to be the practical training towards the subject in which they undergo the study. Because of the abnormal situation arising out of the COVID - 19 pandemic, they were also roped in COVID - 19 duty in the COVID - 19 wards in the Government Hospitals. It is not in dispute that they put in the same kind of duty and underwent the same rigors as that of the other medical officers recruited by the State Government. As a matter of fact, the persons, who were recruited by the State Government for the said purpose of performing COVID - 19 duty in these wards which are set up as part of the disaster management, are categorised as 'Medical Officers'.

7.1. It may be seen that both these temporary appointees as well as the Post-Graduate medical



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students are registered medical practitioners eligible to be appointed as Assistant Surgeons. Service to the Health Department, Government of Tamil nadu is governed by the Statutory Rules known as Tamil Nadu Medical Service Rules. It contains two parts namely, Branch-I Medical and Branch-II Nursing. As far as the medical cadre is concerned, as per Rule 2, it is divided into Civil Surgeon cadre and Assistant Surgeon cadre. All the entry level posts of Assistant Surgeon in the general line, Non-Clinical Lectures, Tutors / Assistant Professors, Clinical Lecturers, Senior Residents / Assistant Professors and the Women State Family Planning Officer are all grouped under the cadre of Assistant Surgeon. Thus, it can be seen that there is no such post as such called 'Medical Officer'. But, the term 'Medical Officer' is widely used in the rules to denote every registered medical practitioner appointed to any post. When it comes to deputing personnel for the Chennai City Police, they are called Medical Officers to the Chennai City Police. The Senior Residents are also termed as 'Resident Medical Officers' Similarly, the term 'Medical Officer' is generally used in the context of referring to the person who is working in any capacity with the qualified medical degree (in common parlance, the Doctors working in the department).

4. Thus, the submission of the respondents to the effect that PG students were only been given 'training' and that such service must be disregarded for computation of duty/bond period cannot be accepted. In light of the decision of the



First Bench cited supra affirming the principle that the duty performed by PG students during Covid period must be taken as regular medical service.

5. The State has now issued G.O.Ms.No.371 dated 18.11.2023 directing that the term 'Medical Officers' mentioned at Para 5.1(i) of G.O.(MS.) No.278, Health and Family Welfare (B1) Department dated 17.08.2023 be replaced as 'Medical Officers including Post Graduate Students'. The authorities have been directed to issue certificates confirming the number of days when covid duty was performed by the students.

6. In light of the above, let such certificates be issued to the petitioners at least two days prior to the next date of hearing. List on 05.12.2023. Written instructions/counter, if any, by then with an advance copy to the petitioners."

6. The petitioners have received and have placed on record covid duty certificates in terms of G.O.Ms.No.371 dated 18.11.2023 and G.O.(MS.) No.278 dated 17.08.2023. The details of the post-graduation courses completed by the petitioners and the number of days of covid duty rendered by the petitioners as per the certificates issued by the respondents, are as follows:

W.P. No.	PETITIONERS' NAME	PG HIGHER SPECIALITY COURSE	PG DETAILS AND COURSE SEPTEMBER 2019 TO AUGUST 2022	DURATION OF COVID-19 DUTY	DATE OF POSTING ORDER	DURATION MENTIONED IN THE POSTING ORDER	JOINING DATE	NO OF DAYS SERVED AFTER JOINING TILL TODAY (10.01.2024)
499 of 2024	Dr.M.Srinivasan	Government Stanley Medical College	Degree of Master of Chirurgie (M.Ch.) in Surgical	01.03.2020 to 31.05.2022 (2 years 3	21.10.2023 Government Vellore	11 months	01.12.2023	41 days



W.P. No.	PETITIONERS NAME	PG HIGHER SPECIALITY COURSE	PG DETAILS AND COURSE SEPTEMBER 2019 TO AUGUST 2022	DURATION OF COVID-19 DUTY	DATE OF POSTING ORDER	DURATION MENTIONED IN THE POSTING ORDER	JOINING DATE	NO OF DAYS SERVED AFTER JOINING TILL TODAY (10.01.2024)
			Gastroenterology	months)	Medical College			
	Dr.Atif Abdullah C	Government Chengalpattu Medical College	Degree of Master of Chirurgie (M.Ch.) on Urology	24.03.2020 to 08.09.2022 (2 years 5 months)	21.10.2023 Thoothukku di Government Medical College and Hospital	11 months	08.11.2023	64 days
	Dr.A.Shiva Kumar	Government Madurai Medical College	Degree of Master of Nephrology	11.03.2020 to 05.09.2022 (2 years 2 months)	17.05.2023 Government Tirunelveli Medical College	2 years	02.06.2023	222 days
	Dr.Karikal Chakaravathi	Government Stanley Medical College	Degree of Master of Chirurgie (M.Ch.) in Surginal Gastroenterology	01.03.2020 to 31.05.2022 (2 years 3 months)	24.11.2023 ESI Hospital, Ayanavaram	11 months	29.12.2023	13 days
505 of 2024	Dr.Deepak David Chellapa	Government Stanley Medical College	Degree of Master of Chirurgie (M.Ch.) on Urology	20.03.2020 to 31.05.2022 (2 years 2 months)	21.10.2023 (letter received on 31.10.2022) Government Royapettah Hospital	11 months	06.11.2023	66 days

7. Mr.Vadivelu Deenadayalan, learned Additional Government Pleader for the respondents would categorically confirm that the particulars as set out in the tabulation above have been verified with the authorities to be correct and representing the proper sequence of events.



8. The petitioners have completed their course in August, 2022 and as per the decision of the First Bench of this Court in *State of Tamil Nadu vs P.S.Sairam and others* (2020) 7 Madas LJ 513, the posting orders are to run co-terminus with the period of successful completion of course of the candidate.

9. That apart, the Health and Family Welfare (MCA-1) Department vide G.O.Ms.No.17 dated 11.01.2024 has issued an order to the effect that the bond period for Non Service Post Graduates (Degree/Diploma) who have completed their Post Graduate courses in the year 2022 will be reduced from two years to one year. The benefit of this reduction is thus available to the present petitioners.

10. In respect of Dr.A.Shiva Kumar, one of the petitioner in W.P.No.499 of 2024, the duration mentioned in the posting order is two years, as against which the petitioner has rendered regular duty for a period of 222 days. In respect of other petitioners in W.P.Nos.499 and 505 of 2024 the duration mentioned in the posting order is 11 months, as against which the petitioners have rendered regular duty of 41 days, 64 days, 13 days and 66 days respectively.

11. However, the petitioners have rendered covid duty for a period more than two years and this, combined with the regular duty is far in excess of the requirement of one duty of one year as per the latest Government Order dated



11.01.2024. Hence, seen from any quarter, the petitioners are entitled to the return of the certificates as sought for.

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12. The petitioners are hence released from bonded Government service and there is a direction to the Deans of the respective medical colleges, all arrayed as respondents, to return their original certificates when the petitioners presents themselves before them, forthwith.

13. These Writ Petitions are disposed in the aforesaid terms. No costs.

18.01.2024

Index : Yes/No

Speaking Order:Yes

Neutral Citation:Yes

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To

1.The State of Tamil Nadu

Represented by its Principal Secretary,

Health and Family Department,

Secretariat, Chennai-600 009.

2. The Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

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DR.ANITA SUMANTH, J.

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W.P.Nos.499 & 505 of 2024
and
W.M.P.No.513 of 2024

18.01.2024

W.P.Nos.499 and 505 of 2024



and WMP No.513 of 2024

Dr.ANITA SUMANTH,J.

These Writ Petitions are listed under the caption 'for being mentioned'.

2. Paragraph 9 of order dated 18.01.2024 stands deleted and paragraph 11 of order dated 18.01.2024 replaced as follows:

'However, the petitioners have rendered covid duty for a period of more than two years and this, combined with the regular duty is far in excess of the requirement of the bond. Hence, seen from any quarter, the petitioners are entitled to the return of the certificates as sought for.'

3.Except the aforesaid modification, order dated 18.01.2024 remains unaltered.

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19.03.2024

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