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W.P.No.12854 of 2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 09.04.2025

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THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE **M.DHANDAPANI**

W.P.No.12854 of 2025
and
WMP.No.14393 of 2025

The Management,
Tamilnadu State Transport Corporation (Kumbakonam) Limited,
Pudukkottai Region, 51/1, Pillai Thanner Pandhal,
Thirumayam Road, Pudukotai – 622 001.

...Petitioner

Vs.

1. K.Thirunavukkarasu
2. The Special Joint Commissioner of Labour,
DMS Campus,
Anna Salai, Chennai.

...Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus to call for the records pertaining to the order dated 10.09.2024 passed by the 2nd respondent in Approval Petition No.108 of 2023 and quash the same, consequently direct the 2nd respondent to approve the order of the petitioner dated 12.07.2023 dismissing the 1st respondent from service.



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For Petitioner : Mr.M.Murali Vinodh

For Respondents : Mr.K.Surendran, APG, for R2

ORDER

This Writ petition has been filed seeking quashment of the order of the 2nd respondent dated 10.09.2024 made in A.P.No.108 of 2023 and to consequently direct the 2nd respondent to approve the order of the petitioner dated 12.07.2023 dismissing the 1st respondent from service.

2. Mr.K.Surendran, learned Additional Government Pleader takes notice on behalf of the 2nd respondent. In view of the consent expressed by the learned counsel on either side, this Writ petition is taken up for final disposal at the admission stage itself.

3. Since no adverse order is being passed against the 1st respondent, notice to the 1st respondent is dispensed with.

4. The case of the petitioner is that the 1st respondent was employed as a Conductor with the petitioner corporation. While so, on 10.05.2023, when



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the 1st respondent was on duty of issuing tickets to a bus without conductor travelling from Aranthangi to Trichy, though he collected Rs.200/- from a group of two passengers, however, he issued tickets worth about only Rs.80/- and had misappropriated a sum of Rs.120/-. Thereby, the petitioner corporation issued a charge memo on 12.05.2023, for which, though the 1st respondent sent a reply on 22.05.2023, as the same was not satisfactory, the petitioner corporation proceeded with domestic enquiry and after conducting enquiry by affording opportunity, as the charges levelled against the 1st respondent were proved, the petitioner corporation passed an order of dismissal against the 1st respondent on 12.07.2023. Thereafter, the petitioner filed an Approval Petition in A.P.No.108 of 2023 before the 2nd respondent, who in turn rejected the said approval petition, vide impugned order dated 10.09.2024. Challenging the same, the petitioner has come up with this writ petition.

5. Learned counsel for the petitioner corporation submitted that, the 2nd respondent had rejected the approval petition on the ground that there was a delay of six days, which is not sustainable, since mere delay of 6 days in filing the approval petition will not vitiate the entire proceedings, While



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so, rejecting the approval petition filed by the petitioner on the ground that, the same was not filed simultaneously before the authority is not sustainable, as the word simultaneous mentioned is not explained either in the Act or in the rules. Hence, the order of the 2nd respondent is liable to be set aside and accordingly, prayed for appropriate orders.

6. Per contra, the learned counsel appearing on behalf of the 2nd respondent submitted that, though the 1st respondent was dismissed from service on 12.07.2023, however, the petitioner corporation had filed the approval petition only on 18.07.2023 with a delay of 6 days, which is an incurable defect as per the decision of the Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court in the case of ***The Management, Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (Salem) Limited Vs. C.Iyandhurai and anr.*** (W.A. No.1555 of 2022) dated 01.08.2022. For better appreciation, the relevant portion of the said order is extracted hereunder:

“The Writ Appeal has been filed against the order passed by the learned Single Judge refusing to interfere with the order passed by the second respondent-Authority in dismissing the appellant-Management's approval petition under Section 33(2)(b) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.



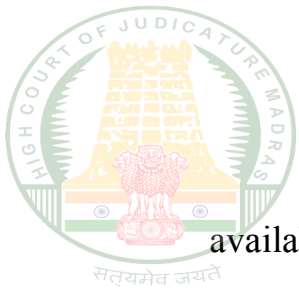
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The rejection of the approval petition was on the ground that there was shortfall in payment of one month salary to the first respondent-employee and there was eight days delay in filing the approval petition. The learned Single Judge, while advertng to Section 33(2)(b) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, read with Rule 64(2) of the Industrial Disputes Rules, 1958, observed that an application seeking approval of dismissal of an employee needs to be served with the order of punishment and simultaneously, approval application has to be filed before the Authority, and otherwise, the approval petition cannot be entertained and hence, the learned Single Judge observed that the second respondent-authority rightly rejected the approval petition. In view of the above, the learned Single Judge, while not interfering with the order passed by the second respondent-authority in dismissing the approval petition, made it clear that the first respondent-employee would be entitled to all monetary benefits due to him and the appellant-Management was expected to extend the same and the period for compliance was also given by the learned Single Judge. Looking into the order passed by the learned Single Judge, we find no ground made out to entertain the Writ Appeal, which is accordingly dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs. Consequently, the miscellaneous petition is closed.”

7. Heard learned counsel on either side and perused the materials



available on record.

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8. The ingredients which should be satisfied by the employer while filing the approval petition have been spelt out in the decision of the Apex Court in ***Lalla Ram Vs. D.C.M. Chemical Works Ltd. and Ors.***, reported in ***AIR 1978 SC 1004***, wherein the Supreme Court held thus :-

"(i) whether a proper domestic enquiry in accordance with the relevant rules/Standing Orders and principles of natural justice has been held;

(ii) whether a prima facie case for dismissal based on legal evidence adduced before the domestic tribunal is made out;

(iii) whether the employer had come to a bona fide conclusion that the employee was guilty and the dismissal did not amount to unfair labour practice and was not intended to victimise the employee;

(iv) whether the employer has paid or offered to pay Wages for one month to the employee; and

(v) whether the employer has simultaneously or within such reasonably short time as to form part of the same transaction applied to the authority before which the main industrial dispute is pending for approval of the action taken by him."



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9. From the materials available on record it is evident that the approval petition was not filed simultaneously when the order of dismissal had come to be passed. It is even the admitted case of the petitioner that there is a delay of six days. It is the consistent view of the courts that there should be proper explanation for the delay and in the absence of the same, even a single day's delay is fatal. Though in *Lalla Ram's* case, it has been held that reasonable delay, even then the reasonableness should be explained. However, in the case on hand, there is no explanation for the delay, much less any explanation, which is reasonable and in such a circumstances, the requirement of Section 33(2)(b) has not been fulfilled and, therefore, the same does not merit acceptance. Appreciating the materials in proper perspective, the Labour Court has rejected the approval petition, which cannot be said to be erroneous. Further, the decision of the Division Bench of this Court in ***C.Iyandhurai*** case (*supra*) is also in line with the decision of this Court.

10. For the reasons aforesaid, this Writ petition stands dismissed. No



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costs. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petition is closed.

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NCC : Yes / No
Speaking Order : Yes / No
Index : Yes / No

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