IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

WRIT PETITION NO.13638 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Sachin Dhanraj Narjapure and another — Respondents

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13673 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Anup Rambhau Chapale and another — Respondents

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13674 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Swapnil Vijay Ghogardare — Respondent

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13647 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Ravindra Sadashiv Lahane and another — Respondents

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13643 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Sandeep Maruti Desai and another — Respondents

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13646 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Deepak Sunil Patil and others — Respondents

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WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13645 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Sunil Subrao Patil and another — Respondent

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13664 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Vishwanath Hungund and another — Respondents

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13675 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Navalkant Arvind Konda — Respondent

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13648 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Santosh Kumar Bagawe and another — Respondents

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO.13644 OF 2024

Dr.D.Y.Patil Pratisthan and another — Petitioner
versus
Nilesh Ramchandra Pawar and others — Respondents

Mr.Akshay Patil wit Mr.Dhaval Patil, Adv.Sherin Baby, Mr.Ganesh Inamdar i/by K.Ashar & Co. for Petitioner in all petitions.

Mr.Vaibhav Kulkarni with Mr.Prathamesh Deshpande, Ms.Srushti More for Respondent no.1.

Mr.Rajendra Anbhule for Respondent no.2 in all petitions.

CORAM : AARTI SATHE, J.

DATE : 9th October 2026

P.C.

1. This batch of petitions raises a similar issue and impugns order dated 8th June 2024 passed by Grievance Redressal Committee of Savtribai Phule Pune University (`University') on the ground that the Grievance Redressal Committee (`Committee') which passed the impugned orders, did not have valid quorum and also the territorial jurisdiction of the said Committee was called into question. The beneficiaries in each of the petitions are different. However, the Petitioner is common in all these petitions.

2. Learned counsel for the Petitioner has submitted that the issue in the present petitions would stand covered by the decision of Supreme Court in the case of **Soma Cyriac Vs. Chairman, Dr.D.Y.Patil Education Enterprise Charitable Trust and others**[1], wherein on similar facts the Supreme Court had set aside the order of the Committee on the ground that the Committee which has been constituted was not formed as per law and the matter was remanded back for a fresh hearing.

3. Learned counsel for the University has brought to the attention of this Court the amended provisions of Section 79 of the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016 (`the Act') which stipulates appointment of a Ombudsperson who will be selected from a panel of three retired Judges not below the rank of District Judge to decide all types of grievances of teachers and other employees of the University, affiliated and autonomous colleges and recognized institutions other than those

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managed and maintained by Central Government, State Government or a local authority of the University and College Tribunal. The aforesaid amended provision would be in effect from 13th August 2026. The amended provisions of Section 79 of the Act is reproduced below :

> "**79. Ombudsperson :** (1) There shall be an Ombudsperson in each university to deal with and decide all types of grievances of teachers and other employees of the university, affiliated and autonomous colleges and recognized institutions, other than those managed and maintained by the Central Government, State Government or a local authority.
>
> (2) The Ombudsperson shall not deal with and decide the grievances against the State Government including its officials and the grievances which are within the jurisdiction of the University and College Tribunal.
>
> (3) The Vice-Chancellor shall recommend a panel of three retired Judges not below the rank of the District Judge, for being appointed as the Ombudsperson, for the consideration of the State Government.
>
> (4) The State Government shall appoint one of the persons included in the panel of three persons recommended by the Vice-Chancellor to be the Ombudsperson for the university.
>
> (5) The Ombudsperson shall be appointed for a term of three years from the date of assuming office, and shall be eligible for reappointment for one more term:
>
> Provided that, no Ombudsperson shall hold office after attaining the age of seventy years.
>
> (6) The State Government may remove the Ombudsperson from office, on charges of proven misconduct or misbehaviour.
>
> (7) No order of removal of Ombudsperson shall be made except after an inquiry made in this regard by a person not below the rank of a retired judge of the High Court, in which a reasonable opportunity of being heard shall be given to the Ombudsperson.
>
> (8) The Ombudsperson shall be entitled for remuneration and conveyance charges, as may be determined by the university.
>
> (9) The Ombudsperson shall decide grievances as mentioned in subsection (1), after giving reasonable opportunity of being heard to both the parties.
>
> (10) The Ombudsman shall hear, settle and decide grievances as per the law, as far as may be practicable, within three months, from the date of filing of the compliant.
>
> (11) The university shall establish a Cell headed by the officer of the university not below the rank of the Assistant Registrar for providing administrative assistance to the Ombudsperson.".

4. Learned counsel on behalf of the beneficiaries have submitted that the orders passed by the earlier Committee, which are impugned in the present petitions, in fact enures to the benefit of the Petitioner and beneficiaries stand to lose the benefits as awarded by the Committee. He, however, has no objection, considering the amended provisions of Section 79 of the Act, to remand the matter to the Ombudsperson, who would have to hear the grievances of the teachers and other employees and render decision in accordance with law. However, he submits that hearing of the grievances be completed by the Ombudsperson in a time bound manner.

5. Learned counsel for the Petitioner also does not object to the remand considering the amended provisions of Section 79 of the Act. Since the parties are *ad idem* that the present petitions can be disposed of by remanding the grievances in the said petitions for a fresh hearing of Ombudsperson, who will hear the grievances of the teachers and other employees, this Court is of the view that these petitions can be disposed of by remanding the said petitions.

6. It has also been brought to the notice of this Court that the office of Ombudsperson is still vacant in the University and the University is in process of appointing the Ombudsperson. This Court is of the view that the post of the Ombudsperson be filled up immediately, considering that there are several teachers and other employees who are affected on account of non redressal of their grievances. The University shall take immediate steps to fill up the post of Ombudsperson within two months from the date of this order. In view of the aforesaid, following order is passed :

ORDER

(i) All petitions are allowed in terms of prayer clause (a) and the impugned orders dated 8th June 2024 passed by the Grievance Redressal Committee of Savitribai Phule Pune University are quashed and set aside;

(ii) The Savitribai Phule Pune University is directed to appoint an Ombudsperson as per Section 79 of the Act within two months from today;

(iii) These petitions are remanded back to the Ombudsperson, who shall hear the parties and pass a reasoned order on each of the petitions within a period of six months from the date of this order;

(iv) The parties are permitted to file their written submissions before the Ombudsperson prior to the hearing;

(v) All contentions of the parties are expressly kept open;

(vi) It is made clear that this Court has not expressed any opinion on the merits of the matters and the Ombudsperson shall decide the disputes on merits and in accordance with law;

(vii) All writ petitions are disposed of in the above terms. No costs.

(AARTI SATHE, J.)