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WA No. 1176 of 2



IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 03-06-2026

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR JUSTICE S. M. SUBRAMANIAM

AND

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE N.SENTHILKUMAR

WA No. 1176 of 2023

and

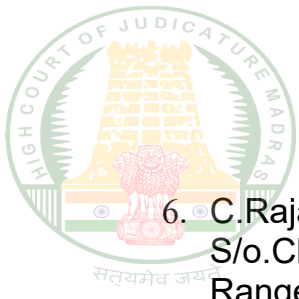
CMP No. 11970 of 2023

1. Government Of Tamilnadu
Rep by its Secretary, Environment and Forest
Department, Fort St.George, Chennai 600 009.
2. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest
Office at Panagal Maaligai, Saidapet, Chennai
600 015 now at Forest Head Quarters, Guindy
- Velachery Main Road, Near Kannigapuram
Check Post, Guindy, Chennai-600 032

..Appellant(s)

Vs

1. S.Saravanan
S/o.Sengodan, Forest Guard, Mettur Forest
Range, Salem Division and Circle.
2. C.Manickam
S/o.Chinnathambi, Forest Guard, Mettur
Forest Range, Salem Division and Circle
3. C.Balakrishnan
S/o.Chokkalingam, Forest Guard, Mettur
Forest Range, Salem Division and Circle
4. N.Ramasami
S/o.Narasan, Forest Guard, Mettur Forest
Range, Salem Division and Circle
5. R.Rajamanickam
S/o.Ramasamy, Forest Guard, Mettur Forest
Range, Salem Division and Circle



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6. C.Rajagopal
S/o.Chinnasamy, Forest Guard, Mettur Forest
Range, Salem Division and Circle
7. A.Manickam
S/o.Andiappan, Forest Guard, Vazhapadi
Forest Range, Attur Forest Division, Salem
Circle
8. A.Anaiyappan
S/o.Ayyanperumal, Forest Guard, Ariyalur
Forest Range and Division, Tiruchirapalli Circle
9. M.Subramanian
S/o.Manickam, Forest Guard, Pudupalayam
Forest Range, Thiruvannamalai South
Division, Vellore Circle
10. P.Sundaram
S/o.Ponnusamy, Forest Guard, Mettur Forest
Range, Salem Division and Circle

..Respondent(s)

WA No. 1176 of 2023

Writ Appeal filed under Clause 15 of Letters Patent to set aside order dated 20.07.2021 made in WP No.2853 of 2015 and allow this writ appeal and thus render justice.

WA No. 1176 of 2023

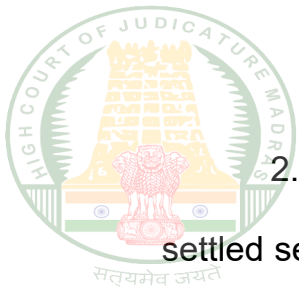
For Appellant(s): Dr.R.Gouri, Government Counsel

For Respondent(s): Ms.T.Dharani

Judgment

(Judgment of the Court was delivered by S.M.Subramaniam J.)

The present intra-Court appeal has been instituted challenging the writ order dated 20.07.2021 passed in W.P.No.2853 of 2015.



2. State preferred the present Writ Appeal mainly on the ground that settled seniority and promotion made in pursuance to the order of the Division Bench of this Court as confirmed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court is unsettled in the writ order impugned and in the event of implementing the said order, the same would result in causing prejudice to the employees whose seniority and promotions were settled in view of the orders of the Court.

3. The respondents were appointed as Plot Watcher on daily wage basis. Some daily wage Plot Watchers were regularised in the time scale of pay. A batch of daily wage employees have approached the Court and the Courts have directed to regularise their services in a sanctioned post. Since the posts available were inadequate, by creating supernumerary post, the Plot Watchers were accommodated in the regular establishment. The services of these Plot Watchers were regularised and they were subsequently promoted to the post of Forest Watchers and thereafter retired from service. The respondents also attained the age of superannuation and retired from service.

4. The learned counsel for the respondents would mainly contend that the similarly placed employees filed W.P.No.40881 of 2016 seeking a relief to direct the Forest Department to include their names in the panel for promotion to the post of Forester for the year 2011-2012 on par with their juniors without insisting for completion of Vaigai Dam Training. The Writ Petition was disposed of by the learned Single Judge by order dated 22.11.2016.



Accordingly, the official respondents were directed to include the names of petitioners in the panel for the year 2011-2012 and promote them as Foresters from the date on which their juniors were promoted, on notional basis. A direction was issued mainly on the ground that the employees are not undergoing Vaigai Dam Training and due to administrative reasons they were not sent for training.

5. A batch of Writ Petitions were subsequently filed by these daily wage Plot Watchers, who were regularised subsequently in a permanent post and the Division Bench of this Court has passed a common order on 17.04.2018. The issue relating to fixation of interse seniority between direct recruit and promotees were also adjudicated by the Division Bench of this Court. The Writ Appeals were disposed of on 17.04.2018 by issuing the following directions:

23. Accordingly, this Court issues the following directions:

(i) The appellants as well as the private respondents before this Court shall submit a detailed representation within a period of one month from the date of receipt of a copy of this judgment and appear before the Committee either in person or through their respective counsel, to explain their seniority position, so as to enable the Committee to draft the fresh seniority list of the Forest Guards fit for promotion to the post of Foresters.

(ii) The Committee shall consider the representation of the parties and prepare the seniority list of the Forest Guards fit for promotion to the post of Foresters, on merits and in accordance with the relevant rules and Government orders and applying the rota-quota rule and pass orders, within a period of six months from the date of receipt of a copy of this judgment.

(iii) The Committee shall determine the seniority of the Forest Guards from the date of appointment in the



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case of direct recruits and from the date of regularization, in the case of promotees. While doing so, the Committee shall follow the principles of natural justice, good conscience and equity.

(iv) With regard to the issue relating to regularisation of the Forest Watchers, the Committee shall act in accordance with the directions issued in G.O.Ms.No.95, Environment and Forests (FR-2) Department, dated 07.08.2009.

(v) The Committee shall not count the service rendered by the promotees, on account of ad hoc promotion, while determining the seniority.

6. Against the common order one Special Leave Petition was filed, which is pending. Meanwhile, the Forest Department implemented the directions issued by the Division Bench and issued Government Order in G.O. (Ms.)No.83, Environment and Forests (FR.2-I) Department dated 26.08.2019. The Government passed the following orders

9. Based on the orders of Hon'ble High Court, Madras, dated 17.04.2018 in W.A.Nos.811, 812, 877 of 2011 and WA[MD]No.1151 of 2017, after careful examination of the Committee report, the Government accepted the proposal of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and issued the following orders:

(a) The Report of the Committee and the Inter-se seniority list of Forest Guard submitted by the Committee are accepted, subject to the outcome of the orders of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Special Leave Petitions (c) No.19254/2018 and 29396/2018; and the provisional seniority of 25 persons fixed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests in his proceedings No.AB2/33871/2005, dated 05.08.2009 is cancelled.



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(b) Permission is accorded to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests to fix the revised seniority fixed by the Committee for 25 Forest Guards.

(c) Permission is accorded to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests to revert 55 temporarily promoted Foresters as Forest Guards and to fix the seniority of 55 temporarily promoted Foresters above their immediate juniors, if their junior in the post of Forest Guard were already promoted as Forester and also to place such persons above their immediate junior in the respective panels.

(d) Permission is accorded to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests to fix the seniority of retired persons with their immediate juniors in the respective panels and to fix their pay as per proviso 1 to ruling 17 under FR.27.

7. The directions issued by the Division Bench as implemented by the Government in G.O.(Ms.)No.83 dated 26.08.2019 was extended to all similarly placed Plot Watchers, who were brought under the regular establishment by creating supernumerary posts. It is brought to the notice of this Court that almost all the Plot Watchers were retired from service. Their benefits were fixed based on notional promotion granted, as directed by the Division Bench of this Court and they were allowed to retire in the promotional post i.e., Forest Guard and their terminal and promotional benefits were also settled as applicable to the post of Forest Guard.



8. The respondents herein have filed the writ petition to include their names in the panel drawn for promotion to the post of Forester for the year 2010-2011, give promotion to the petitioners to the post of Forester on par with their juniors without insisting for completion of Vaigai dam Training within a specified period with all consequential service and monetary benefits.

9. The learned Single Judge passed an order on 20.07.2021 directing the official respondents to include the name of the respondents herein in the panel for promotion for the post of Forests for the year 2010-2011 and consider their promotion from the date of promotion of their respective immediate juniors with three months. Hence, the State has chosen to file the present intra-Court appeal.

10. The learned counsel for the respondents would mainly contend that the respondents were not aware of the subsequent order of the Division Bench dated 17.04.2018 as well as the Government Order passed in G.O.(Ms.) No.83 implementing the orders of the Division Bench.

11. Such an argument advanced deserves no merit consideration, since the respondents themselves have not initiated any action during



the relevant point of time, when the learned Single Judge disposed of the Writ Petition in W.P.No.40881 of 2016 dated 22.11.2016. The Division Bench has passed final orders on 17.04.2018 and the Committee appointed by the Division Bench undertook the process of verifying the service records of those Plot Watchers regularized in the sanctioned post and re-fixed their seniority in compliance with the directions issued by the Division Bench and the Government issued orders in G.O.Ms.No.83 dated 26.08.2019.

12. Pertinently, the respondents have already attained the age of superannuation. As per revised seniority all the terminal and pensionary benefits are settled in their favour. Therefore, implementing the writ order dated 22.11.2016 in W.P.No.40881 of 2016 would not arise at all. The subsequent Division Bench order since been implemented by the Government and pursuant to the said order, inter-se seniority between the direct recruit and regularly absorbed temporary Forest Guards were settled, this Court is of the considered view that the writ order deserves to be interfered with.

13. At this juncture, the learned counsel for the respondents would submit that the monetary benefits as per the Government Order issued in G.O.Ms.No.83 as applicable has not been settled. However, the



learned Government Counsel opposed by stating that the benefits due to the respondents had already been settled. It is made clear that if the benefits are not settled, then the Authorities are bound to settle in accordance with the Government Order in G.O.Ms.No.83, Environment and Forests (FR.2-I) Department, dated 26.08.2019.

14. Accordingly, the impugned writ order is set aside and the Writ Appeal is allowed. No costs. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petition stands closed.

(S.M.S.,J.) (N.S.,J.)

03-06-2026

Index: Yes/No
Speaking/Non-speaking order
Neutral Citation: Yes/No

VSI

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