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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ W.P.(C) 14002/2022 and CM APPL. 42841/2022, CM APPL. 26899/2024

SATYAWAR PANDEY & ORS.

.....Petitioners

Through: Mrs. Prachi Mishra, Mr. Chaitanya,
Mr. Abhishek Panwar, Advs.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS.

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Sandeep Kumar Mahapatra, Adv,
CGSC; Ms. Mrinmayee Sahu, Adv,
Mr. Tribhuvan, Adv, Mr. Abhimanyu
and Ms. Anushka Sarraf, Adv.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PURUSHAINDRA KUMAR KAURAV

ORDER

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08.04.2026

1. The petition is for directions to the respondents to continue engaging the petitioners for services rendered under the erstwhile National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, setting aside the notification dated 14.03.2022 issued by the respondents, whereby, the NCLP Scheme has been subsumed under the *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) of the Ministry of Education.
2. The petitioners were engaged under the NCLP Scheme, which was last extended up to 31.03.2020. The petitioners' grievance is that, pursuant to the impugned action, the services of the petitioners would not be retained under the subsumed programme.
3. Ms. Prachi Mishra, learned counsel appearing for the petitioners, submits that the petitioners have continuously been rendering services under



the NCLP Scheme for more than twenty-five years and possess the requisite skills and experience to implement the mandate of the NCLP Scheme even under the SSA Programme.

4. She further submits that in other cases, wherein similar schemes/programmes were subsumed/discontinued, the workers have not been deprived of their livelihood, and have been absorbed under other appropriate schemes. According to her, the NCLP Guidelines, 2016, provide for a mechanism to be adopted upon closure of training centres under the NCLP Scheme, and the same would indicate the policy intent to retain the services of the workers. They have developed the necessary expertise in a particular field, and so long as the nature of the services to be rendered under the new scheme is not altered, the petitioners' skills and experience would be of considerable use. It is, therefore, submitted that the petitioners can be considered to be deployed under the new scheme, and the same would be in the larger public interest

5. Mr. Sandeep Kumar Mahapatra, learned counsel for the respondent, however, opposes the said submissions and contends that the respondents have taken an unequivocal position that the services of the petitioners are no longer required. The petitioners were deployed only under the earlier scheme which was temporary scheme, and the petitioners' services were voluntary in nature.

6. Be that as it may, the concerned department may consider whether the object for which the new scheme has been enacted will be achieved while continuing the petitioners' deployment in any manner.

7. The petitioners are, therefore, granted liberty to file a comprehensive representation before the Ministry of Labour and Employment, taking all



pleas which have been raised in the instant writ petition and/or bringing on record any decision passed by any of the Courts in similar cases, within three weeks from today.

8. If such a representation is made, let the same be decided within four months from the date of its receipt.
9. Petition stands disposed of.
10. All rights and contentions are left open.
11. If the petitioners' grievance is not fully mitigated, they shall be at liberty to take appropriate recourse in accordance with law.

PURUSHAINDR KUMAR KAURAV, J

APRIL 8, 2026/P