

Executive Committee of Meerut College, Meerut and Others

Vs

Vice-Chancellor, Meerut University, Meerut and Another

Civil Appeal No. 3222 of 1982

(CJI Y.V. Chandrachud, V.D. Tulzapurkar, A. Varadarajan JJ)

31.03.1983

JUDGMENT

CHANDRACHUD, C. J.-

1. This appeal arise out of a judgment dated, May 5, 1982 of a learned single judge of the High Court of Allahabad, dismissing the writ petition filed by the appellants against an order passed by respondent 1, the Vice-Chancellor, Meerut University, Meerut. In an election held on May 10, 1981 to the Executive Committee of the Meerut College, appellant 3, Shri J. D. Singhal, was elected as an Honorary Secretary. That election was set aside by the Vice-Chancellor on the ground that Shri J. D. Singhal's brother, Shri A. P. Singhal, was a lecturer in the Law Department of the College and therefore the former was disqualified from being chosen as a member of the Executive Committee of the College. This disqualification is said to arise out of the provision of Section 39 of the Uttar Pradesh State Universities Act, 10 of 1973, hereinafter referred to as 'the Act'. The High Court dismissed the writ petition mainly on the ground that the writ petitioners had not exhausted their remedies, that is to say, that they had not asked for a reference to the chancellor of the University against the decision of the Vice-Chancellor, under Section 68 of the Act. That point does not survive any longer as the Chancellor has confirmed the decision of the Vice-Chancellor.

2. The Meerut College, which is a post-graduate institution, is affiliated to the Meerut University. In the year 1973, the State Legislature passed the Uttar Pradesh State Universities Act, 10 of 1973, in order to consolidate the various statutes which applied to the different Universities in the State. The Act regulates the affairs of the University and its affiliated and Constituent colleges. It provides, inter alia, for the constitution of Committees of Management. Section 37 of the Act, which deals with the affiliation of colleges, provides by sub-section (4) that the management of an affiliated college will have the power to manage and control the affairs of the college and will be responsible for its maintenance and upkeep. Section 39 of Act, which is directly in point, provides for 'disqualification for membership of management. It reads thus :

39. A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of the Management of an affiliated or associated college (other than a college maintained exclusively by the State Government or by local authority), if he or his relative accepts any remuneration for any work in or for such college or any contract for the supply of goods to or for the execution of any work for such college :

Provided that nothing in this section shall apply to the acceptance of any remuneration by a teacher as such or for any duties performed in connection with an examination conducted duties performed in connection with an examination

conducted by the college or for any duties as Superintendent or Warden of a training unit or of a hall or hostel of the college or as proctor or tutor or for any duties, of a similar nature in relation to the college.

Explanation.-- The term 'relative' shall have the meaning assigned to it in the Explanation to Section 20.

According to the Explanation to Section 20, "relative" means the relations defined in Section 6 of the Companies Act, 1956, and includes the wife's (or husband's) brother, wife's (or husband's) father, wife's (or husband's) sister, brother's daughter. Section 6 of the Companies Act, 1956 provides :

A person shall be deemed to be a relative of another if, and only if,--

(a) they are members of a Hindu undivided family : or

(b) they are husband and wife; or

(c) the one is related to the other in the manner indicated in Schedule I-A

Schedule I-A contains a list of 22 persons amongst whom the brother is mentioned at serial N. 19.

3. The provisions of Section 39 of the Act seem to us quite clear and they do not admit of any doubt. By that section, no person can be chosen as a member of the management of an affiliated or associated college if either he or his relative accepts any remuneration for any work in such college. It is common ground that a brother of appellant 3 has been working as a Lecturer in the Law Department of the Meerut College since July 10, 1972 and has been drawing remuneration in that capacity. Whatever may be the resulting inconvenience to appellant 3, the language of Section 39 leaves no room for doubt that he is disqualified from being chosen as a member of the Management of the Meerut College, because his brother receives remuneration for the work done by him as a lecturer in the Law department of the College.

4. Shri S. N. Kackar, who appears on behalf of the appellants, relies on the proviso to Section 39 and argues that case in which remuneration is accepted by a relative in his capacity as a teacher are exempted from the operation of Section 39 and since, appellant 3's brother accepts remuneration from the College, appellant 3 is not disqualified for being chosen as a member of the Management of the College. This submission is only superficially attractive. By reason of the proviso, the disqualification provided for by Section 39 will not apply "to the acceptance of any remuneration by a teacher as such". What the proviso means is that a teacher shall not be disqualified for being chosen as a member of the Management of the college for the reason that he accepts remuneration from the college in his capacity as a teacher. The object of the proviso is to enable the teachers of a college to become members of the Management of the college. The exception carved out by the proviso cannot apply to cases like the present one in which the person elected to the Executive Committee of the College is not himself a teacher but whose relative is a teacher, not their relatives. In this case, appellant 3's brother will not incur the disqualification merely because he accepts remuneration as a teacher. He is protected by the proviso. The disqualification is incurred by appellant 3 because his brother, who is a teacher, accepts remuneration for the work done by him for the college. Appellant 3 is not protected by the proviso.

5. The proviso, thus interpreted, will give meaning to the provisions of Statute 13.05 of the Meerut University First Statutes, 1977, which were published by a Notification dated April 20, 1977. Those Statutes were framed by the Government of U. P. in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 50 of the Act. Statute 13.05 provides by clause (b) that the constitution of the Management of every college shall provide that "Twenty-five percent of the members of the management are teachers (including the Principal)". The Statutes were framed after the Act was passed and must reasonably be assumed to have been framed in furtherance of the provisions of the Act. The object of the proviso of Section 39 is to exclude teachers as a class from the operation of the provision under which persons, who accept remuneration for the work done for a college, are disqualified from being chosen as members of the Management of the college. Clause (b) of Statute 13.05 effectuates that purpose by providing that 25 percent of the members of the Management of the college shall be teachers. Recent reforms in the sphere of education lay considerable emphasis on the association of teachers with the management of institutions whose success depends largely upon their performance. That is why the proviso to Section 39 gives protection to the teachers and Statute 13.05 makes it obligatory that 25 percent of the members of the Management of a college shall be teachers. Granting protection to relatives of teachers, as canvassed by the appellants, is foreign to the very object of the proviso. Teachers can and ought to be on the management bodies of educational institutions. Their 'relatives' are disqualified from being so chosen or appointed, the reason being that such relatives should not become a handy medium for disturbing favours and patronage to the teachers.

6. We find that by a judgment dated August 26, 1981 given in Civil Miscellaneous Writ No. 11147 of 1980. N. D. Ojha, J. of the Allahabad High Court has taken the same view as we have, of the proviso to Section 39. We affirm that view.

7. We do not also see any substance in the appellants' submission that Section 39 of the Act is prospective in its operation in the sense that if a person was a teacher prior to the date when the Act came into force, his relative will not be disqualified even if he is elected after the coming into force of the Act. While interpreting a statute, we must have regard to the substance of the matter and hypertechnical considerations should be ruled out. Then again, the interpretation should, as far as possible, further the object of the statute. The mere circumstance that Section 39 uses a verb in the present tense, namely, "accepts", will not justify the conclusion that the section will apply to those cases only wherein the remuneration is accepted by the teacher for the first time after the Act came into force. The section, on its terms, must apply even to those cases in which a teacher has been accepting remuneration prior to the date on which the Act came into force, with the result that the relative of such a teacher cannot be chosen as a member of the Management of the College. The judgment dated August 12, 1981 rendered by a Division Bench of the Allahabad High Court in Civil Miscellaneous Writ No. 8647 of 1980 which takes the view that Section 39 is prospective in operation in the sense projected by the learned counsel for the appellants is, with respect, not correct.

8. We are informed by Shri Kacker that a Division Bench of the Allahabad High Court has taken a view of the proviso to Section 39 contrary to that of Ojha, J. Counsel urges that the Vice-Chancellor and chancellor of the University were bound by the ruling of the Division Bench. We are not sure that there is any contrary judgment of the High Court on the interpretation of the proviso. If there is any such judgment, it is not good law.

9. For these reasons we dismiss the appeal. Parties will bear their own costs. We hope that the vacancy caused by the disqualification incurred by appellant 3, Shri J. D. Singhal, will be filled at

an early date in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the Statutes.

</html