

Union of India and Others

Vs

C. N. Ponnappan

Civil Appeals No. 1221 of 1987 with Nos. 529 of 1989 and 2320 of 1995

(S. C. Agarwal, G. B. Pattanaik JJ)

05.12.1995

ORDER

1. These three appeals raise a common question for consideration. The question is whether an employee who is transferred from one unit to other on compassionate grounds, and, as a result, is placed at the bottom of the seniority list can have his service in the earlier unit from where he has been transferred counted as experience for the purpose of promotion in the unit where he is transferred. There was a difference of opinion amongst the Benches of the Central Administrative Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as 'the Tribunal') on this question. In C. N. Ponnappan v. Union of India, which has given rise to Civil Appeal No. 1221 of 1987, the Madras Bench of the Tribunal has taken the view that though on transfer on compassionate grounds the employee loses his seniority and is placed at the bottom of the seniority list at the transferred place but for the purpose of promotion his earlier service in the unit from where he was transferred is not wiped out and the said service has to be treated as experience for the purpose of his eligibility for such promotion and if he is found eligible then the matter of promotion has to be considered on the basis of seniority at the transferred place. The Bangalore Bench of the Tribunal in S. Abdul Khayum v. Union of India (Applications Nos. 1282, 1283 and 1284 of 2986) decided on 30-9-1986 has, however, not agreed with the said view of the Madras Bench of the Tribunal in Ponnappan case and has held that an employee who is transferred on compassionate grounds and is placed at the bottom of the seniority list at the place where he is transferred cannot have his earlier service at the place from where he was transferred counted as experience for the purpose of eligibility for promotion. Since the Bangalore Bench and the Madras Bench were coordinate Benches of the Tribunal, it was expected that the Bangalore Bench, when it felt inclined to take a view different from that taken by the Madras Bench, should have referred the question for consideration by a larger Bench. Anyway, the matter has been considered by a Full Bench of the Tribunal in Transferred Application No. 65 of 1987 wherein the Full Bench has agreed with the view of the Madras Bench in Ponnappan case and has held that a person who is transferred on compassionate grounds only loses his seniority but he does not lose the benefit of the past service in the previous unit for the purpose of his promotion.

2. Civil Appeal No. 1221 of 1987 has been filed against the Madras Bench of the Tribunal in Ponnappan case. Civil Appeal No. 529 of 1989 has been filed against the judgment of the Madras Bench of the Tribunal dated 15-3-1988 in Civil Appeal No. 118 of 1987 filed by N. Kumarason. Civil Appeal No. 2320 of 1995 has been filed against the judgment of the Madras Bench of the Tribunal dated 5-10-1987 in Transferred Application No. 65 of 1987 filed by K. A. Balasubramaniam. Civil Appeals Nos. 1221 of 1987 and 2320 of 1995 relate to promotion from the post of Lower Division Clerk to Upper Division Clerk and Civil Appeal No. 529 of 1989 relates to promotion from the post of Stenographer Grade III to Stenographer Grade II.

3. We have considered the appeals in the light of provisions contained in the relevant rules. For promotion of a Lower Division Clerk to the post of Upper Division Clerk, which is in issue in Civil Appeals Nos. 1221 of 1987 and 2320 of 1995, the relevant rules required "eight years' regular service in the grade". Similarly, for promotion from the post of Stenographer Grade III to Stenographer Grade II, which is in issue in Civil Appeal No. 529 of 1989, "five years of regular service in the post of Stenographer Grade III" was required.

4. The service rendered by an employee at the place from where he was transferred on compassionate grounds is regular service. It is no different from the service rendered at the place where he is transferred. Both the periods are taken into account for the purpose of leave and retrial benefits. The fact that as a result of transfer he is placed at the bottom of the seniority list at the place of transfer does not wipe out his service at the place from where he was transferred. The said service, being regular service in the grade, has to be taken into account as part of his experience for the purpose of eligibility for promotion and it cannot be ignored only on the ground that it was not rendered at the place where he has been transferred. In our opinion, the Tribunal has rightly held that the service held at the place from where the employee has been transferred has to be counted as experience for the purpose of eligibility for promotion at the place where he has been transferred.

5. It has been pointed out that subsequent to the judgment of the Tribunal in Ponnappan case, the relevant rules governing promotion from Lower Division Clerk to Upper Division Clerk have been amended by notification dated 30-6-1986 and now the requirement is "with eight years' regular service in the grade in the unit/office/establishment/laboratory/centre/unit, etc. in which they are considered for promotion".

6. Since we are in agreement with the view of the Tribunal on the interpretation of the rules as they stood at the relevant time, the appeals fail and are accordingly dismissed. No costs.