

# SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

State of Punjab

Vs.

Gurdeep Kumar Uppal

(D.P. Mohapatra and Doraiswamy Raju JJ.)

20.02.2001

## ORDER

1. Leave granted in Special Leave Petition Nos. 1561 of 1998 and 5626 of 1999.
2. Heard Mr. Anoop Chaudhary, learned senior counsel for the appellants and Mr. A.S. Sohal, learned counsel for respondents.
3. The respondents are doctors serving under the Government of Punjab.
4. The main question that arises for consideration in these appeals is whether the period of ad hoc services rendered by the respondents is to be included for calculating the period of 8 or 18 years of service for giving higher scale of pay under the proficiency step up scheme. This question was considered by a three Judges Bench of this Court in the State of Haryana v. Haryana Veterinary and AHTS Association wherein this Court took the view that for calculating 8/18 years service required for giving higher scale of pay and for determination of seniority only regular service rendered by the employee is to be counted and not ad hoc service.
5. Learned counsel for the respondents strenuously contended that the respondents who are doctors serving under the State of Punjab are governed by a set of Rules and circulars different from those which were considered in the decided case and therefore the ratio in that case will not be applicable in these cases. We have carefully considered the said contention. We have also considered the circular letter No. 4-15-81 1PP/16047 dated 14th December, 1981. On a plain reading of the circular it is clear that the instructions contained therein were based on the decision of the Punjab and Haryana High Court taking the view that ad hoc service should to be taken into account for the purpose. This circular in our view can no longer form the basis of the contention in view of the recent decision by this Court in State of Haryana v. Haryana Veterinary and AHTS Association (supra). Undisputedly the respondent at the time of their appointment were governed by the Punjab Civil Medical Services Class II (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 1943. In Clause (5) of Rule 7 of the said Rules it is provided that the seniority of the members, in each branch shall be determined by the dates of their confirmation in service. Further, in the orders appointing the respondents on ad hoc basis, it was specifically stated that they will be governed by the aforementioned

Rules. It was further stated in paragraph III of the appointment letter that the appointees seniority will be determined only by merit in which he or she is placed by Punjab Public Service Commission. Thus it is clear that only regular service is to be counted towards seniority.

6. We do not feel it necessary to delve further into merits of the case in view of the decision of this Court in *State of Haryana v. Haryana Veterinary AHTS Association* (supra). We are satisfied that the ratio in that case applies to the cases in hand. The resultant position that emerges is that the judgment/orders passed by the High Court holding that ad hoc service is to be included in calculating the period of service for giving the higher scale of pay are unsustainable and has to be vacated. Accordingly, the appeals are allowed and the judgments/orders of the High Court under challenge are set aside.

7. However, we make it clear that if any of the respondents has drawn any amount on the basis of the higher scale of pay under the proficiency step up scheme granted to him by including the period of his ad hoc service then the State Government shall not recover the amount already drawn by the employee though for fixation of the cadre seniority the position as laid down in this order will given. No costs.