

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

U.P. State Road Transport Corporation

Vs.

Man Singh

C.A.No.4107 of 2006

(S.B.Sinha and Dalveer Bhandari JJ.)

13.09.2006

JUDGMENT

S.B. SINHA, J.

Delay condoned.

Leave granted.

The appellant before us is a Corporation constituted under the Road Transport Corporation Act. The respondent was appointed w.e.f. 20.4.1974 on temporary basis. His services were terminated on 23.07.1975. He is said to have been paid one month's salary in lieu of notice. Some allegations had also been made that he committed misconduct.

He raised an industrial dispute on or about 14.9.1986 which was referred to for adjudication to the Presiding Officer, Labour Court, U.P., Agra. The industrial dispute referred by the appropriate Government for its adjudication by the Labour Court reads as under:

"That the act of the employer in terminating the service of their workman Man Singh s/o Sher Singh, post Conductor, vide order dated 23.03.1975 is proper and/or legal. If not then to what relief/compensation is the concerned workman entitled for and with what further details."

On a finding that in retrenching the respondent the appellant failed to comply with the mandatory requirements of Section 25F of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, the Labour Court although set aside the order of termination of the services of the respondent but granted back- wages only from 1986. The High Court in the writ petition filed by the appellant refused to interfere therewith.

The Labour Court indisputably had the jurisdiction to pass an award directing reinstatement of the respondent in terms of Section 11A of the Industrial Dispute Act. While exercising the said power, however, the Labour Court should have taken into consideration all relevant factors. The respondent does not dispute that he got employment only for about a year during the period 24.4.1974 to 23.7.1975. There is nothing on record to show that he was employed in accordance with the recruitment rules framed by the Appellant Corporation. No material has also been brought on record

to show that the vacancy was a regular one or in filling up of the said vacancy the constitutional requirements as envisaged under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India were complied with.

The respondent admittedly raised a dispute in 1986, i.e. after a period of about 12 years. It may be true that in an appropriate case, as has been done by the Labour Court, delay in raising the dispute would have resulted in rejection of his claim for back-wages for the period during which the workman remains absent as has been held by this Court in *Gurmal Singh vs. Principal, Government College of Education and Ors.*, [2000 (9) SCC 496]. But the discretionary relief, in our opinion, must be granted upon taking into consideration all attending circumstances. The appellant is a statutory Corporation. Keeping in view the fact that the respondent was appointed on a temporary basis, it was unlikely that he remained unemployed for such a long time. In any event, it would be wholly unjust at this distance of time i.e. after a period of more than 30 years, to direct reinstatement of the respondent in service. Unfortunately, the Labour Court or the High Court did not consider these aspects of the matter.

Keeping in view the peculiar facts and circumstances of this case, we are of the opinion that in stead and place of the direction for reinstatement of the respondent together with back-wages from 1986, interest of justice would be subserved if the appellant is directed to pay a sum of Rs.50,000/- to him. Similar orders, we may place on record, have been passed by this Court in *State of Rajasthan & Anr. vs. Ghyan Chand*, (C.A.No.3214/2006), *State of M.P. & Ors. vs. Arjunlal Rajak* [2006 (2) SCALE 610], *Nagar Mahapalika (now Municipal Corporation) vs. State of U.P. & Ors.* [2006 (5) SCALE 145] and *Haryana State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd. vs. Mamni*, [2006 (5) SCALE 164].

We direct the appellant to pay the aforementioned amount to the respondent within a period of eight weeks from today, failing which, the same shall carry interest at the rate of 6 per cent per annum till the date of actual payment. This appeal is allowed to the extent mentioned hereinbefore. The parties shall pay and bear their own costs.