

REPORTABLE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

CIVIL APPEAL NO. 3540 OF 2008
(Arising out of SLP (C) No.12124 of 2006)

State of Uttaranchal & Anr.

... Appellant

Versus

Madan Mohan Joshi & Ors.

... Respondents

J U D G M E N T

S.B. Sinha, J.

1. Leave granted.
2. Inter se seniority amongst the teachers of Kumaon University is in question in this appeal which arises out of a judgment and order dated 21.3.2006 passed by a Division Bench of the High Court of Uttaranchal at Nainital in Writ Petition No.71 of 2004).

Before adverting to the aforementioned question, we may notice the factual matrix involved in the matter.

3. First Respondent was appointed on an ad hoc basis as a Lecturer in Government P.G. College, Almora by the State of Uttar Pradesh through Vice-Chancellor, Kumaon University on or about 22.9.1975. The said College was declared as the Campus College of the University. All Lecturers including the first respondent were continued and treated on deputation with the University; the cut off date wherefor was fixed 16.8.1977. The State of Uttar Pradesh framed U.P. Regularization Rules, 1979, the relevant provisions whereof reads as under :

4.(i) Any person who

- (i) was directly appointed on ad hoc basis before 1.1.1977 and is continuing in service.
- (ii) Possessed requisite qualification prescribed for regular appointment at the time of such ad hoc appointment, and

(iii) Has completed or, as the case may be, after he has completed three years continuous service.

Shall be considered for regular appointment in permanent or temporary vacancy as may be available on regular appointment is made in such vacancy in accordance with the relevant service rules or orders.”

4. Pursuant to and in furtherance of the said Rules, services of 355 ad hoc Lecturers were regularized. However, the cases of nine Lecturers including the first respondent, who had been working on deputation, were left out. It is contended that one Savita (Mohan) Dhondiyal who had also been appointed as an ad hoc Lecturer on 17.4.1975 and, thus, being junior to the first respondent was regularized.

5. Representations were made by the respondents and others. The Directorate of Higher Education, Uttar Pradesh asked the Vice-Chancellor of the University to forward the list of the said Lecturers pursuant where to, services of nine Lecturers including the respondent were regularized by an order dated 11.7.1980, stating :

“The appointing authority in exercise of powers conferred by Rule 5 of the Regularisation of Ad hoc Employees on the posts within the jurisdiction of the U.P. Public Service Commission Rules, 1979 issued by the Department of Personnel vide its Notification No.19/8/75[1] dated 14th May, 1979, and in view of the recommendations made by the Selection Committee constituted for regularization of the ad hoc lecturers working in various Government Colleges under the Directorate of Education prior to 1st January, 1977 in the pay scale of 700-1600, hereby regularizes appointments of the lecturers with effect from the date of issuance of this order and they are being given temporarily regular

appointments on the posts of Lecturers w.e.f. 11th July, 1980.

However, the seniority of these lecturers shall be according to their Serial number given in the enclosed Annexure and they will be junior to those lecturers who have been regularized and appointed prior to the date of regular appointment of these lecturers.”

6. Aggrieved by the said order, they made a representation.
7. By an order dated 9.6.1988, the services of the respondent were appointed with effect from 1.7.1983, it was stated :

“Following officers of the Government Colleges working as Lecturers in Botany Science in the pay scale of 2200-4000 are hereby appointed on probation period of two years on the same dates with effect from the dates mentioned against their names and their earlier services would be counted towards this probation period and they are hereby regularized on the said post and in the same pay scale. However, their seniority would be determined later on.

Sr. No.	Name and designation of Officer who has been regularized.	Date of regularized	Details of regularized
1-20	XX	XX	XX

21. Shri Madan Mohan Joshi, Lecturer in Botany Science 1.7.1983 Regularised on the post w.e.f 1.7.1983

Vide G.O.
No.2058/15
84-11-12-46/81
Dt. 1.8.1984”

8. The State of Uttarakhand then known as State of Uttaranchal has been carved out from the State of Uttar Pradesh. In the seniority list, the first respondent was placed at serial number 137 whereas Mrs. Savita (Mohan) Dhondyal was placed at serial No.102. Objections were filed to the said seniority list wherefor recommendations were made by the Directorate of Higher Education in the following terms :

“Dr. Joshi was appointed on ad hoc basis and pursuant to his appointment he joined Almora College on 22nd September, 1975. Later on his services were approved by the Director of Education (Higher Education), Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad on 27th March, 1976 with effect from the date of his joining the post. His name in the seniority list would have been mentioned at Sr. No.102 after the name of Smt. Deveshwari Bisht on the basis of his order of first appointment. But it would have been possible if his name would have been considered in the order of regularization dated 22nd May, 1980. It appears that his name was not included in the said order dated 22nd May, 1980 although Shri Joshi was fully eligible for being considered in the said order dated 22nd May, 1980 according to the Regularisation Rules of 1979. Therefore, if the Government so wishes, his order of regularization dated 11th July, 1980 should be amended to the above effect.”

9. A writ petition was filed by the first respondent before the High Court of Uttarakhand at Nainital which by reason of the impugned judgment has been allowed.

10. Mr. Gopal Subramaniam, learned Additional Solicitor General appearing on behalf of the State, would submit that the High Court committed a serious error insofar as it failed to take into consideration that the State Uttarakhand, having framed the Uttarakhand Higher Education (Group A) Service Rules, was bound by the provisions thereof and in that view of the matter, the High Court committed a serious error insofar as it failed to take into consideration the effect of the statutory rules governing the field in their proper perspectives.

11. Mr. Garg, learned counsel appearing on behalf of the respondent, on the other hand, would contend that as the instant case is governed by the Rules which were applicable prior to coming into force of 2003 Rules, the High Court has not committed any illegality or the impugned judgment is unassailable.

12. It was contended that in the writ petition it was not necessary for the first respondent even to implead the said Savita (Mohan) Dhondyal

and others as party respondents, as no relief had been claimed against them. Reliance has been placed on A. Janardhana v. Union of India & Ors. [(1983) 3 SCC 601].

13. Services of the first respondent as also several others including Savita (Mohan) Dhondyal, as noticed herein before were regularized in terms of the provisions of the U.P. Regularisation Rules.

Indisputably, services of those whose names appear above the first respondent, services of those were regularized w.e.f 22.5.1980 whereas that of the first respondent was regularized from 11.7.1980. The order dated 11.7.1980 categorically stated :

“Under Rule 4(3) of Uttar Pradesh Regularisation of Ad hoc Appointment within the purview of Public Service Commission Rules 1979 framed vide notification No.19/8/75 (1) dated 14-5-1979 by the Personnel Department, on the recommendation of the Selection Committee constituted for regularization of Lecturers appointed on ad hoc basis in the pay scale of Rs.700-1600 prior to 1-1-1977 in the U.P. Government Inter Colleges under the Directorate of Higher Education and in exercise of powers under Rule 5 of the aforesaid Rules the competent authority is pleased to regularize ad hoc appointment of Lecturers mentioned in the Schedule-1 w.e.f. the date of issuance of this order and they are given regular temporary appointment on the post of Lecturer w.e.f. 11.7.1980.

The seniority of these Lecturers will be as per the serial given in the schedule and they will be junior to the regularly selected Lecturers who have been appointed prior to the regular appointment of these Lecturers.”

The said direction has not been set aside by the High Court. Validity thereof may be in question in the writ petition.

14. The question as to which Rule would govern the inter se seniority amongst the parties has not been determined. Rule was framed by the State of Uttaranchal in 2003 in terms of the proviso appended to Article 309 of the Constitution of India.

Rule 3(k) defines ‘substantive appointment’ to mean an appointment, not being an ad hoc appointment, on a post in the cadre of the Service made after selection in accordance with the rules and if there are no rules in accordance with the procedure prescribed for the time being by executive instruction issued by the Government.

15. Rule 20 of the said Rules lays down the mode of determining seniority in the following terms :

“20. Seniority :

(1) Except as hereinafter provided, the seniority of persons in any category of posts

shall be determined from the date of the order of substantive appointment and if two or more persons are appointed together by the order in that case it will mean the date of issue of order :

Provided that –

- (a) if the appointment order specified a particular back date with effect from which a person is appointed, substantively, that date will be deemed to be the date of order of substantive appointment and in other cases it will mean the date of issue of the order;
- (b) if more than one order of appointment are issued in respect of any one selection, the seniority shall be as mentioned in the combined order of appointment issued under sub-rule (2) of rule 17.

(2) The seniority inter se of persons appointed directly on the result of any one selection shall be the same as determined by the Commission :

Provided that a candidate recruited directly may lose his seniority if he fails to join without valid reasons when the post is offered to him. The decision of the Appointing Authority as to the validity of reasons shall be final.

(3) The seniority inter-se of persons appointed by promotion shall be the same as it was in the cadre from which they were promoted.”

The said Rule also contains a power of relaxation being Rule 25 which is to the following effect :

“25. Relaxation of the Conditions of service :

Where the State Government is satisfied that the operation of any rule regulating the conditions of Service of a person appointed to the Service causes undue hardship in any particular case, it may notwithstanding any thing contained in the rules applicable to the case, by order dispense with or relax the requirements of that rule to such extent and subject to such conditions, as it may consider necessary, for dealing with the case in a just and equitable manner :

Provided that where a rule has been framed in consultation with the Commission that body shall be consulted before the requirements of the rule are dispensed with or relaxed.”

16. The question as to whether the said Rules will have retrospective effect or in any event will govern the cases of the parties, thus, was required to be determined by the High Court.

17. The High Court, in its impugned judgment, proceeded on the basis as to what would constitute a substantive appointment. The decisions of this Court, whereupon strong reliance has been placed by the High Court in arriving at its conclusion may not be of much significance but what is significant is that in the writ petition even Savita (Mohan) Dhondyal and others who lose their seniority in the event writ petition was to be allowed, were not impleaded as parties. They, in our opinion, should

have been impleaded as parties in the writ application. Savita (Mohan) Dhondyal and others, if the writ petition is allowed, would suffer civil consequences. Inter se seniority may not be a fundamental right, but is a civil right. [See State of UP & Anr. v. Dinkar Sinha [2007 (7) SCALE 8]. The respective rights of seniority of the parties, thus, required determination in their presence.

18. A Three Judge Bench of Court in Prabodh Verma & Ors. v. State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors. [AIR 1985 SC 167], stated the law as under :

“A High Court ought not to decide a writ petition under Article 226 of the Constitution without the persons who would be vitally affected by its judgment being before it as respondents or at least by some of them being before it as respondents in a representative capacity if their number is too large, and, therefore, the Allahabad High Court ought not to have proceeded to hear and dispose of the Sangh’s writ petition without insisting upon the reserve pool teachers being made respondents to that writ petition, or at least some of them being made respondents in a representative capacity, and had the petitioners refused to do so, ought to have dismissed that petition for non-joinder of necessary parties.”

19. Reliance placed on A. Janardhana (supra) by Mr. Garg, in our opinion, is misplaced. Therein, no relief was claimed against any

individual. The only relief which was claimed therein was against the Union of India. The question which was raised therein was a question of interpretation. It was in the aforementioned situation, this Court held that all the employees were not required to be impleaded as a party. In that case, the case of direct recruits has not gone unrepresented. It was stated:

“In this case, appellant does not claim seniority over any particular individual in the background of any particular fact controverted by that person against whom the claim is made. The contention is that criteria adopted by the Union Government in drawing up the impugned seniority list are invalid and illegal and the relief is claimed against the Union Government restraining it from upsetting or quashing the already drawn up valid list and for quashing the impugned seniority list. Thus, the relief is claimed against the Union Government and not against any particular individual. In this background, we consider it unnecessary to have all direct recruits to be impleaded as respondent.”

20. For the reasons aforementioned, we are of the opinion that the interest of justice would be subserved if the impugned judgment is set aside and the matter is remitted to the High Court for consideration of the matter afresh. In the writ petition, the first respondent may file an appropriate application for impleading Savita (Mohan) Dhondyal and

others as parties and/or some teachers in their representative capacity. The High Court is requested to allow the said application for impleadment and determine the matter in accordance with law as expeditiously as possible, preferably within the period of 8 weeks of the communication of this Order.

21. The appeal is disposed of accordingly.

.....J.
[S.B. Sinha]

.....J.
[Lokeshwar Singh Panta]

New Delhi
May 13, 2008