

A.P. Power Generating Employees Union, Vijayawada Thermal Power Station and Others Vs A.P. Power Generation Corporation Ltd. and Another

Court: Andhra Pradesh High Court

Date of Decision: March 7, 2008

Citation: (2008) 4 ALD 687

Hon'ble Judges: L. Narasimha Reddy, J

Bench: Single Bench

Advocate: Chandraiah Sunkara, for the Appellant; K. Chidambaram, SC for Respondent Nos. 1 and 2, for the Respondent

Final Decision: Dismissed

Judgement

@JUDGMENTTAG-ORDER

L. Narasimha Reddy, J.

The 1st petitioner is an employees Union and the petitioners 2 to 12 are the members of 1st petitioner and

employees of A.P. Power Generating Corporation Ltd., the 1st respondent. They worked as contract labour, under a Labour Contractor, who

was awarded the same contract by the then A.P. Electricity Board. In terms of various orders passed by the Government of A.P. and the then

Board, the petitioners were absorbed as Mazdoors, in the year 1996. Subsequently, they were appointed by transfer, as Lower Division Clerks, in

the year 2001.

2. Petitioners made a representation to the respondents, stating that at the initial stage itself, i.e. in the year 1996, they were entitled to be absorbed

or appointed as Lower Division Clerks, since they possessed the requisite qualifications, and that their appointment as LDCs, made in the year

2001, be treated with retrospective effect from 6.12.1996. Through proceedings, dated 22.4.2006, the 2nd respondent rejected the

representation of the petitioners, by stating certain reasons. Petitioners assail the said proceedings, and seek a declaration to the effect that they are

entitled to be treated as LDCs, with effect from 6.12.1996. According to them, the contract labourers, that were working as on the date of

abolition of 33 categories in the Board, vide orders in G.O. Ms. No. 41, dated 23.9.1996, are entitled to be appointed against the posts, viz;

Mazdoor, JPA, Lineman, etc., depending upon the qualifications held by them.

3. Sri Chandraiah Sunkara, learned Counsel for the petitioners, submits that the Board issued B.P. Ms. No. 326, dated 14.3.1998, creating posts

of different categories, for the purpose of appointing the contract labour in the abolished categories, and it was clearly provided that the

appointments shall be made on the basis of the qualifications held by the incumbents, than on the nature of the duties discharged by them, as

contract labour. He contends that the view taken by the 2nd respondent, through the impugned proceedings, is contrary to the very scheme of

regularization of contract labour, and the law laid down by the Courts, in this regard.

4. Sri K. Chidambaram, learned Standing Counsel for the respondents, on the other hand, submits that the writ petition is not maintainable, on the

ground of laches, estoppel, acquiescence, and non-existence of cause of action. He contends that regularization of contract labour was

undertaken, against the vacancies earmarked therefor, and unless it is established that any person, who was inferior in rank, experience,

qualifications, etc., to the petitioners, was appointed as LDC, the petitioners cannot have any genuine grievance. He contends that both, when they

were absorbed as contract labour in the year 1996, and appointed by transfer as LDCs in the year 2001, the petitioners did not raise any

objection, and thereby, they are estopped from claiming the present relief.

5. The Board used to have its own skilled staff, who are ready to discharge multifarious functions. Either as an economy measure, or on account of

restrictions imposed by the Government, some of the works were being executed, by engaging contract labour, supplied by the labour contractors.

No difficulty as such had arisen, as regards the assignment of contracts for major works. Over a period, even small works, such as for laying

distribution lines upto a small distance, involving expenditure of few thousands, were also entrusted to contractors.

6. The turning point had come, when the Government of A.P. in the Labour Employment Training and Factories Department, issued G.O. Ms. No.

41, dated 23.9.1996, abolishing 33 categories of posts in the Board. This was followed by orders from the Government, in the Energy Department

as well as the Board, providing for absorption of contract labour. It almost became a windfall to labour contractors, contract labour; if not for

some in the Board itself. The experience shows that about 10 to 12 persons said to have been engaged by a labour contractor, who was entrusted

with the work of the value of about Rs. 20,000/- and of duration of one week, came to be absorbed in one capacity, or the other. Appointment of

employees, on the basis, of selection, or through the regular channel of recruitment, for thousands of posts virtually ceased, ever since then.

Interpretations on the G.Os., went on changing, with the views of the incumbents, and the uncertainty has also resulted in the judgments and orders

from the Court, in some cases lacking unanimity.

7. The petitioners are said to have been engaged as contract labour. Upto 1998, the absorption used to be, against 50% of the vacancies

earmarked for direct recruitment, in certain categories. On 14.3.1998, the Board issued B.P. Ms. No. 326, dated 14.3.1998, creating 490 posts

of JPA and 2,983 posts of Mazdoors, in various Power Generating Stations. Clause (5) thereof, provided that candidates possessing SSC/SSLC,

ITI, or higher qualifications, or Vocational Course in Electrical Trade at Intermediate level, are eligible to be absorbed as JPAs, and others as

Mazdoors. Petitioners were absorbed as Mazdoors, with effect from 6.12.1996. Subsequently, they were appointed as LDCs, in the year 2001,

on transfer. Basically, the clauses contained in the orders issued subsequent to their initial appointment, do not apply to the petitioners.

8. Further, mere possession of qualifications prescribed for a post, by itself, cannot be a basis for appointment of the individual, against that post. It

would depend upon the fulfilment of other eligibility criteria and availability of vacancies. The petitioners are not able to demonstrate that there were

any vacancies of JPAs, or of Junior Assistants, in the year 1996, against which they could have been absorbed, or that they fulfilled the

qualifications, for that post. Another aspect of the matter is that B.P. Ms. No. 326, dated 14.3.1998, did not create any post of LDC. At any rate,

the petitioners did not feel any grievance, either when they were absorbed as Mazdoors, or when they were appointed as LDCs on transfer.

9. Learned Counsel for the petitioner places reliance upon a Memo, dated 22.3.2005, wherein the Managing Director of the 1st respondent,

directed that a Mazdoor, who held ITI qualification, must be appointed as JPA notionally, with effect from the date of appointment of Mazdoor.

Neither any provision of law, nor any clause in any G.O. was mentioned, in support of such a decision.

10. It was not even indicated that there existed a clear vacancy of JPA, when the incumbent was absorbed as Mazdoor and that he fulfilled other

qualifications. The order is as laconic as it could be. It is but natural that the orders passed in this manner, would create the basis for initiation of

litigation by others. At any rate, the circumstances, under which the memo came to be issued, are not before this Court and no principle can be

discerned from it.

11. Viewed from any angle, this Court does not find any basis to grant the relief claimed by the petitioners. The writ petition is, accordingly,

dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs.