

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 24.07.2020

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE S.VAIDYANATHAN

W.P.No.9621 of 2020

and

W.M.P.No.11751 of 2020

A.Praveen Kumar

... Petitioner

vs.

1. The Chairman,
Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board,
Old COP Office Campus,
Pantheon Road, Egmore,
Chennai-600 008.
 2. The Member Secretary,
Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board,
Old COP Office Campus,
Pantheon Road, Egmore,
Chennai-600 008.
 3. The Superintendent of Police,
District Police Office,
Villupuram, Villupuram District.
 4. The Inspector of Police,
Villupuram West Police Station,
Villupuram, Villupuram District.
 5. The Inspector of Police,
Kaanai Police Station,
Kaanai, Villupuram District.
- ... Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for the issuance of a writ of Certiorarified Mamdamus, calling for the records relating to the impugned rejection order of non selection for the post of Grade-II Police Constable in C.No.A2/10200/2019 dated 23.03.2020 on the file of the 3rd respondent and quash the same and direct the 1st respondent to appoint the petitioner as Grade-II Police Constable and send him for training.

For Petitioner : Mr.A.Prakash
For R1 & R2 : Mrs.Narmadha Sampath
Addl. Advocate General
For Mr.V.Kadhirvelu
For R3 to R5 : Mr.P.S.Siva Shanmuga Sundaram
Spl. Govt. Pleader

ORDER

Petitioner has come up with this Writ Petition, challenging the order passed by the 3rd respondent in C.No.A2/10200/2019 dated 23.03.2020, by which the candidature of the petitioner for the recruitment of Grade II Police Constable for the year 2019 was not considered for appointment. The Petitioner also sought for a direction to the 1st respondent to appoint him as Grade-II Police Constable and send him for training.

2. According to the petitioner, he was falsely implicated by the 5th respondent as A1 in respect of Crime No.170 of 2016 for offences under Sections 294(b), 323, 324 and 506(ii) IPC, which culminated into a Charge Sheet in C.C.No.32 of 2017 on the file of the learned Judicial Magistrate No.1, Villupuram. It is the case of the petitioner that though the complainant came forward with an application for compromise, the same was not accepted by the Magistrate on the ground that offences are non compoundable. Subsequently, the petitioner, after acquittal from the aforesaid case, applied for the post of Grade II Constable and in the application, the petitioner omitted to mention about C.C.No.32 of 2017 that ended in acquittal. During Police verification, the petitioner disclosed the factum of criminal case and

handed over a copy of the acquittal order. It is the further case of the petitioner that to the shock and surprise, the 3rd respondent passed the impugned order, refusing to consider the petitioner for appointment to the post of Grade II Police Constable.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that the 3rd respondent relied on Rule 14(2) in Sub-Rule (b)(iv) and Explanation (1) & (2) of the Special Rules for Tamil Nadu Special Police Subordinate Service Rules, 1978 and the said provision is not at all applicable to the case of the petitioner, as the petitioner was not acquitted from the criminal charges on technical grounds and it was an honorable acquittal. Hence, he prayed for quashment of the impugned order.

4. Per contra, learned Additional Advocate General, appearing for R3 to R5 vehemently contended that the petitioner cannot, as a matter of right, seek for appointment, especially when he had failed to disclose about the criminal case, though it was revealed at the time of Police verification. It was further contended that though the petitioner was acquitted of the said criminal case, it was not an honorable acquittal, as stated by the learned counsel for the petitioner and he was acquitted based on the benefit of doubt. That being the case, it is left to the discretion of the authorities to decide in the matter of recruitment of a person and there should not be any compulsion for appointment.

5. Learned Additional Advocate General, in support her contention, placed reliance on the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of State of Madhya Pradesh and Others vs. Abhijit Singh Pawar, reported in 2018 (18) SCC 733, wherein it was held as under:

"15. In the present case, as on the date when the respondent had applied, a criminal case was pending against him. Compromise was entered into only after an affidavit disclosing such pendency was filed. On the issue of compounding of offences and the effect of acquittal under [Section 320\(8\)](#) of Cr.P.C., the law declared by this Court in Mehar Singh (supra), specially in paragraphs 34 and 35 completely concludes the issue. Even after the disclosure is made by a candidate, the employer would be well within his rights to consider the antecedents and the suitability of the candidate. While so considering, the employer can certainly take into account the job profile for which the selection is undertaken, the severity of the charges levelled against the candidate and whether the acquittal in question was an honourable acquittal or was merely on the ground of benefit of doubt or as a result of composition.

16. The reliance placed by Mr. Dave, learned Amicus Curiae on the decision of this Court in Mohammed Imran (supra) is not quite correct and said decision cannot be of any assistance to the respondent. In para 5 of said decision, this Court had found that the only allegation against the appellant therein was that he was travelling in an auto-rickshaw which was following the auto-rickshaw in which the prime accused, who was charged under [Section 376](#) IPC, was travelling with the prosecutrix in question and that all the accused were acquitted as the prosecutrix did not support the allegation. The decision in Mohammed Imran (supra) thus turned on individual facts and cannot in any way be said to have departed from the line of decisions rendered by this Court in Mehar Singh (supra), Parvez Khan (supra) and Pradeep Kumar (supra).

17. We must observe at this stage that there is nothing on record to suggest that the decision taken by the concerned authorities in rejecting the candidature of the respondent was in any way actuated by mala fides or suffered on any other count. The decision on the question of suitability of the respondent, in our considered view, was absolutely correct and did not call for any interference. We, therefore, allow this appeal, set aside the decisions rendered by the Single Judge as well as by the Division

Bench and dismiss Writ Petition No.9412 of 2013 preferred by the respondent. No costs..."

6. Heard the learned counsel for the parties and perused the material documents available on record, including the judgment cited by the respondents.

7. A close attentiveness of the background of the present case unravels that though the petitioner had divulged his association with a criminal case during Police verification, at the time of submission of application, it was not brought to the attention of the Board. It was strenuously argued that the complainant himself had filed an application before the Trial Court for compromise and it was the Trial Court, which had rejected the said application and allowed the criminal case to proceed further. This Court is not inclined to go into that aspect, as it was not known as to what basis there was an attempt for compromise between the parties.

8. Admittedly, the petitioner had involved in a criminal case, which was booked under serious offences of IPC and therefore, he cannot casually ask for a suitable appointment in the Police Department, which is otherwise known as a Disciplined Force. Even though the petitioner stated that he was acquitted honorably, a reading of the judgment of the learned Judicial Magistrate No.I, Villupuram is very clear that he was released on the ground of benefit of doubt and therefore, Rule 14(2) in Sub-Rule (b)(iv) and Explanation (1) & (2) of the Special Rules for Tamil Nadu Special Police Subordinate Service Rules,

1978, will come into operative against the petitioner, as rightly stated in the impugned order. A Hon'ble Full Bench of this Court in the case of Manikandan and others vs. The Chairman, Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board, Chennai, reported in 2008 (2) CTC 97, had considered the scope of Rule 14(b) of Tamil Nadu Special Police Subordinate Service Rules, 1978 in the light of Explanation 1 to Clause (iv) of Rule 14(b) and held that a person acquitted on benefit of doubt or discharged in a criminal case, can still be considered as disqualified for selection to the Police service and the failure of a person to disclose in the application form, either of his involvement in a criminal case or pendency of a criminal case against him would entitle the appointing authority to reject his application on the ground of concealment of material facts, irrespective of ultimate outcome of the criminal case.

9. In the recent times, Police Department is already under severe criticism and if the person like the petitioner is selected as Police Constable without reference to his character, antecedents, criminal case, etc., there is every possibility of one more incident like that of Sathankulam, Tuticorin District, wherein an Inspector and his team were alleged to be a root cause for the custodial death of a father and son during lock down.

10. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case referred to supra clearly held that despite disclosure of antecedents by a candidate, it is well within the ambit of the employer to consider the same as well as the suitability of the

candidate. It was also made clear in the judgment that the employer has every right to take into account the severity of charges, nature of acquittal, etc., to suit the job profile, for which the selection is undertaken.

11. Observing the scenario of the present case from the above perspective, coupled with the judgment of the Apex Court, I find much force in the contention of the respondents and the petitioner cannot demand appointment in a disciplined force rightfully. It is for the authority concerned to decide whether the petitioner can fit into the post or not and in the considered opinion of this Court, the decision of the 3rd respondent not to recruit the petitioner as Grade II Police Constable, which is impugned in this writ petition, does not warrant any interference by this Court.

12. In the result, the Writ Petition fails and the same is dismissed as devoid of merits, as the petitioner is not entitled to any relief. No costs. Consequently, connected Miscellaneous Petition is closed.

24.07.2020

Index: Yes/No

Internet: Yes / No

Speaking Order: Yes/No
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S.VAIDYANATHAN,J.
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