

Dr Prit Singh vs S.K. Mangal And Ors. on 2 September, 1992

Equivalent citations: [1992(65)FLR778], JT1992(5)SC381, 1992(2)SCALE473, 1993SUPP(1)SCC714, [1992]SUPP1SCR337, 1992(3)SLJ57(SC), 1992(2)UJ597(SC), (1992)2UPLBEC1425, AIRONLINE 1992 SC 251

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Bench: M.N. Venkatachaliah, P.B. Sawant, N.P. Singh

JUDGMENT

N.P. Singh, J.

1. Special leave granted.
2. The appeal has been filed for setting aside the judgment of the High Court, quashing the appointment of the appellant as Principal of Chhotu Ram College of Education, Rohtak (hereinafter referred to as 'the said College').
3. An advertisement was issued on 30th June, 1986 inviting applications for the post of Principal of the said College. After interview of the applicants the appellant was selected for the said post and he was appointed as the Principal by the Managing Committee of the College in question on 22nd July, 1986. As per the University regulations any such appointment was required to be approved by the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor declined to approve the said appointment of the appellant on the ground that he did not fulfil the requisite qualifications for the post, and the decision of the Vice-Chancellor was duly communicated to the Managing Committee of the College by a letter dated 24th August, 1987. However, later the Vice-Chancellor approved the appointment of the appellant by his order dated 13th November, 1987 with effect from 16th October, 1987.
4. The validity of the appointment of the appellant was questioned in the connected Writ Application on the ground that on the date of appointment the appellant did not possess the requisite qualifications. It was pointed out that as the appellant did not possess the requisite qualifications, Vice-Chancellor did not approve his appointment but later he approved the appointment only with effect from 16th October, 1987 when the qualifications prescribed for Principal were amended on 15th October, 1987. It was suggested that this change was introduced with malafide intention in order to facilitate the appointment of the appellant.

5. However before this Court, on behalf of the appellant, a stand was taken that he possessed the requisite qualifications prescribed for the post of Principal, on the date he was appointed by the Managing Committee, and the Vice-Chancellor should have approved his appointment with effect from the date of his appointment as the Principal, by the Managing Committee of the College.

6. In order to appreciate the controversy it will be proper to quote the requisite qualifications prescribed for the Principal of a recognised College of Education, which existed and which were replaced on 15th October, 1987.

Before Amendment After Amendment a) A consistently good a) A good academic academic record with record with at least first or high second first or high second class (55% marks/grade B class (B in seven in the seven point scale) point scale) at Master's Master's Degree in any Degree in Education and subject and also a not necessarily also at degree in education of Master's Degree in the an Indian University or relevant subject equivalent degree of (relaxable if a candidate foreign University has to his credit (relaxable research work of very if a candidate has to his high standard or credit research work University approved of very high standard) and teacher before 27.1.1976). b) An M.Phil degree or b) No change. a recognised degree beyond the Master's level or published work indicating the capacity of a candidate for independent research work. Provided that if a candidate possessing the qualifications as at (b) is not available or not considered suitable, the college on the recommendation of the Selection Committee may appoint a person possessing the qualification as at (a).

7. The academic records of writ petitioner-respondent No. 1 and the appellant are as follows:-

Respondent No. 1 Appellant Matric 62% 43.8% (219/500) B.A. 42% 48.6% (243/500) B.Ed. 53% Second Division Less than 55% M.A. 58% 47.1% (377/800) M.Ed. 67% 60% (360/600) For the post of Principal in a recognised College of Education, three qualifications were prescribed (i) A consistently good academic record; (ii) with first or high second class (55% marks/grade B in the seven point scale) Master's Degree in any subject and (iii) a Degree in Education of an Indian University or equivalent degree of foreign University.

8. The basic fault which has been found by the High Court in respect of the appellant is that in the Master of Arts Examination the appellant had secured only 47.1 % marks, whereas according to the qualifications prescribed the candidate was required to secure either first or high second class (55%) marks at the Master's Degree Examination.

9. According to the learned Counsel appearing for the appellant, "Master's Degree" shall include even Master's Degree in Education (M.Ed.) and as the appellant had secured 60% marks at the examination for Master of Education (M.Ed.), it will be deemed that he was holding Master's Degree in Education, having secured more than 55% of marks. In this connection, our attention was drawn to the Degree of Master of Education awarded to the appellant from the Kurukshetra University certifying that the appellant had obtained "Degree of Master of Education".

10. As a first impression this argument is attractive especially because the qualifications aforesaid simply speak "Master's Degree"; they do not say Master of Arts Degree. It is well known that after B.A. Examination a person has to pursue studies for two years for obtaining Master's Degree in Arts (M.A.) whereas after passing B.A. Examination any person interested in professional side of the education, may become B.Ed, after completing the course for one year. Similarly for M.Ed. (Master of Education Degree) the course is of one year only. In this background the question which has to be answered is as to whether when the aforesaid qualification required for the post of Principal is "Master's Degree", whether it shall include Master of Education Degree also.

11. It need not be pointed out that the Degree of Master of Arts is an academic qualification, whereas Degree of Master of Education is a professional qualification. According to us, when the qualifications required "a consistently good academic record with first or high second class (55% marks/grade B in the seven point scale) Master's Degree in any subject"; (emphasis added) it shall mean an academic qualification like Master of Arts. The said requirement was prescribed with "a consistently good academic record". That Master's Degree shall mean Degree of Master of Arts in any subject is apparent also from the fact that apart from that degree the candidate was required to possess also "Degree in Education" which will mean B.Ed, or M.Ed. Normally if the expression 'Master's Degree' was to include even the Master's Degree in Education (M.Ed.) there was no necessity of prescribing the third requirement of a "Degree in Education".

12. If the claim of the appellant that "Master's Degree" shall include a Degree of Master of Education, is accepted, it will lead to an anomalous position. A person having secured third division in M.A. who cannot be considered by any University even for the post of Lecturer, will become qualified for being appointed as a Principal of any College, if later he secures a high second class marks in M.Ed. Examination by completing a course of one year. It need not be pointed out that the sole object of prescribing qualification that the candidate must have a consistently good academic record with first or high second class Master's Degree for appointment to the post of a Principal, is to select a most suitable person in order to maintain excellence and standard of teaching in the institution apart from administration. In the present case there is no dispute that in the Master of Arts Examination, the appellant secured only 47.1 % marks which is not even the second division. We were informed that in the concerned University, second division is 50% and above. The appellant had not secured even second class marks in his Master of Arts Examination whereas the requirement was first or high second class (55%). The irresistible conclusion is that on the relevant date the appellant did not possess the requisite qualifications.

13. We fail to understand as to how the Vice-Chancellor who himself was of the opinion that the appellant did not possess the requisite qualifications for the post of Principal and who had refused to approve the said appointment, later approved the same appointment on 13th November, 1987 with effect from 16th October, 1987. It has rightly been submitted on behalf of the respondents that the Vice-Chancellor approved the appointment after 15th October, 1987 when the amendment was made in the prescribed qualifications for the post of Principal of a recognised College of Education. If he was not eligible for appointment in terms of the prescribed qualifications on the date he was appointed by the Managing Committee subject to the approval of the Vice-Chancellor, then later he cannot become eligible after the qualifications for the post were amended. As such we are in

agreement with the view expressed by the High Court, that on the date of the appointment the appellant did not possess the requisite qualifications and as such his appointment had to be quashed.

14. We are informed that on basis of the new qualifications prescribed, applications have been invited and the appellant has also applied for the said post. All steps should be taken expeditiously and without any further delay to complete the process of selection and appointment for the post of the Principal of the said College in accordance with law.

15. With the aforesaid directions this appeal is dismissed. But in the circumstances of the case there will be no order as to costs.