

Supreme Court of India

State Bank Of India & Anr vs S.B.I Employees Union & Anr on 15 September, 1987

Equivalent citations: 1987 AIR 2203, 1988 SCR (1) 153

Author: E Venkataramiah

Bench: Venkataramiah, E.S. (J)

PETITIONER:

STATE BANK OF INDIA & ANR.

Vs.

RESPONDENT:

S.B.I EMPLOYEES UNION & ANR.

DATE OF JUDGMENT 15/09/1987

BENCH:

VENKATARAMIAH, E.S. (J)

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VENKATARAMIAH, E.S. (J)

SINGH, K.N. (J)

CITATION:

1987 AIR 2203 1988 SCR (1) 153

1987 SCC (4) 370 JT 1987 (3) 579

1987 SCALE (2) 575

ACT:

Constitution of India, 1950: Article 134A-Certificate for leave to appeal-Issuance of-Conditions to be satisfied-Whether Single judge empowered to issue such Certificate on ground that Division Bench issued Certificate in similar case.

HEADNOTE:

The employees of the State Bank of India filed a writ petition in the High Court, questioning the right of the management to fix the hours of work and of recess and its right to stagger the period of recess, and for other consequential reliefs.

A Single Judge of the High Court allowed the petition, following earlier decisions by the Division Bench of the same High Court, and also granted a certificate of fitness under Article 134A of the Constitution to file an appeal in the Supreme Court, following an earlier order of a Division Bench granting such a certificate in respect of one of those earlier decisions.

Revoking the certificate, this Court,

HELD: The certificate contemplated under Article 134A of the Constitution can only be a certificate which is

referred to in cl. (1) of Article 132 or in cl. (1) of Article 133 or in sub-clause (c) of cl. (1) of Article 134 of the Constitution. Article 134A does not constitute an independent provision under which a certificate can be issued. It is ancilliary to Articles 132(1), 133(1) and 134(1)(c). [155E]

The High Court can issue a certificate only when it is satisfied that the conditions in Article 132 or Article 133 or Article 134, as the case may be, are satisfied. [156F]

The instant case does not fall either under Article 132(1) or under sub-clause(c) of Article 134(1) as it neither involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution nor is it a crimi-

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nal proceeding. It can only fall, if at all, under Article 133(1) and, therefore, the certificate could not have been issued by reason of cl.(3) of Article 133 of the Constitution. [155E-F]

The fact that in a similar case a certificate had been issued by a Division Bench of the High Court did not empower the Single Judge to issue the certificate under Article 133(1) in a case decided by him. The restriction placed by cl. (3) of Article 133 could not be got over by relying upon the order of the Division Bench. [156G-H]

The petition of appeal to be treated as Special Leave Petition under Article 136 of the Constitution and posted for preliminary hearing. [157A]

JUDGMENT:

CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION: Civil Miscellaneous Petition No. 19065 of 1987.

IN Civil Appeal No. 1713 of 1987.

From the Judgment and order dated 11.6.1987 in Writ Petition No. 389 of 1981 F. D. Damania, Atul Tewari and Ms. Bina Gupta for the petitioners .

The following order of the Court was delivered:

O R D E R The certificate on the basis of which this appeal is filed is issued by a learned Single Judge of the High Court of Bombay under Article 134A of the Constitution in respect of an order passed by him in a Writ Petition in which the employees of the State Bank of India had questioned the right of the management to fix the hours of work and the hours of recess and its right to stagger the period of recess and had prayed for other consequential reliefs. The learned Single Judge allowed the petition following certain earlier decisions of the High Court rendered by the Division Benches. He however proceeded to grant a certificate of fitness to file an appeal against his decision before this Court following an earlier order of a Division Bench granting such a certificate in respect of one of

those earlier decisions. He issued the certificate under Article 134A of the Constitution without referring to A the Article under which the appeal could be filed. Article 134A of the Constitution reads thus:

"134A. Every High Court, passing or making a judgment, decree, final order, or sentence, referred to in clause (1) of article 132 or clause (1) of article 133, or clause (1) of article 134,-

(a) may, if it deems fit so to do, on its own motion; and

(b) shall, if an oral application is made. by or on behalf of the party aggrieved, immediately after the passing or making of such judgment, decree, final order or sentence, determine, as soon as may be after such passing or making, the question whether a certificate of the nature referred to in clause (1) of article 132, or clause (1) of article 133 or, as the case may be, sub-clause (c) of clause (1) of article 134, may be given in respect of that case."

The certificate contemplated under Article 134A of the Constitution can only be a certificate which is referred to in clause (1) of Article 132 or in clause (1) of Article 133 or in sub-clause (c) of clause (1) of Article 134 of the Constitution. This is quite obvious from the language of Article 134A of the Constitution. This case does not fall, either under Article 132(1) or under sub-clause (c) of Article 134(1) as it neither involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution nor it is a criminal proceeding. It can only fall. if at all, under Article 133(1) of the Constitution. Article 133 of the Constitution reads thus:

"133. (1) An appeal shall lie to the Supreme Court from any judgment, decree or final order in a civil proceeding of a High Court in the territory of India if the High Court certifies under Article 134A-

(a) that the case involves a substantial question of law of general importance; and

(b) that in the opinion of the High Court the said question needs to be decided by the Supreme Court.

(2) Notwithstanding anything in article 132, any party appealing to the Supreme Court under clause (1) may urge as one of the grounds in such appeal that a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of this Constitution has been wrongly decided.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in this article, no appeal shall, unless Parliament by law otherwise provides, lie to the Supreme Court from the judgment, decree or final order of one Judge of a High Court."

Clause (3) of Article 133 says that notwithstanding anything in that Article no appeal shall unless Parliament by law otherwise provides lie to the Supreme Court from the judgment, decree or final order of one Judge of the High Court. Before the introduction of Article 134A of the Constitution by the Forty-fourth Amendment of L) the Constitution there was no express provision in Articles 132, 133 and 134 of the Constitution regarding the time and manner in which an application for a certificate under any of those articles could be made before the High Court. There was also a doubt as to the power of the High Court to issue a certificate suo motu under any of those articles. Article 134A was enacted to make good the said deficiencies. Article 134A does not constitute an independent provision under which a certificate can be issued. It is ancillary to Article 132(1), Article 133(1) and Article 134(1)(c) of the Constitution. That is the reason for the use of words "if the High Court certifies under article 134A" in Article 132(1) and Article 133(1) and for the use of words "certifies under article 134A" in Article 134(1)(c). The High Court can issue a certificate only when it is satisfied that the conditions in Article 132 or Article 133 or Article 134 of the Constitution as the case may be are satisfied. In the instant case such a certificate could not have been issued by reason of clause (3) of Article 133 of the Constitution by the learned Single Judge.

The fact that in a similar case a certificate had been issued by a Division Bench of the High Court consisting of two Judges in a case decided by the Division Bench did not empower the Single Judge to issue the certificate under Article 133(1) of the Constitution in a case decided by him. The restriction placed by clause (3) of Article 133 of the Constitution could not be got over by relying upon the order of the Division Bench.

We, therefore, revoke the certificate This petition of appeal A may, however, be treated as a Special Leave Petition under Article 136 of the Constitution and posted for preliminary hearing.

N P V