
(2005) 04 GAU CK 0072
In the Gauhati High Court
Case No : W.A. No. 07 of 2005

Bipul Chandra Dey @ Bipul Bieharidey APPELLANT
Vs
Tripura Jute Mills and Others RESPONDENT

Date of Decision : 08-04-2005

Acts Referred:

Constitution of India, 1950 — Article 162, 226, 309
Evidence Act, 1872 — Section 114, 35

Citation : (2005) 4 GLT 1

Hon'ble Judges : T. Vaiphei, J; R.B. Misra, J

Bench : Division Bench

Advocate : B. Das, D. Chakraborty and S. Das, for the Appellant;

Final Decision : Dismissed

Judgement

R.B. Misra, J.—Heard Mr. B. Das, the learned senior counsel assisted by Miss S. Das and Mr. D. Chakraborty, the learned Counsel appearing on behalf of the Petitioner.

2. This writ appeal has been preferred against the order dated 5.1.2005 passed in W.P.(C) No. 46 of 2000 rejecting the Appellant's claim for correction of his date of birth, consequently acknowledging his date of superannuation as correct. It appears that the Petitioner had joined as Feeder and Receiver of Batching Department in the Tripura Jute Mills Limited in the year 1984 after passing Secondary School Certificate Examination Part-I in April, 1962 from East Pakistan, (now Bangladesh) where in the Admit Card his date of birth was recorded as 11.2.1947, accordingly, same was recorded in the Service Book as 11.2.1947 and in the seniority list of employees as well as in the records of the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner's Office. Even in the Identity Card issued by the Election Commission of India the same date of birth was recorded. According to Appellant, in reference to Rule 79 to 81 of the General Financial Rules applicable to the employees of the State of Tripura, the date of birth once entered in the Service Record but for the typographical or clerical error, cannot

be changed. However, the Respondents had arbitrarily acknowledged the date of birth as 5.1.1942 of the Appellant in place of 11.2.1947 and has passed the order of superannuation by a Memorandum dated 2.12.1999 superannuating the Appellant at 58 years. The Appellant challenged in Writ Petition No. 46 of 2000 the Memorandum dated 2.12.1999 by disputing his date of birth passing superannuation order arbitrarily without affording any opportunity to the Appellant or without enquiry.

3. The Respondents contested the claim by filing counter-affidavit wherein it has been asserted that dispute date of birth of a workman within the meaning of Factories Act, 1948 could have been presented before the Conciliation Officer in reference to the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act. Admit Card was in respect of acknowledging the identity of a candidate and entry in Identity Card issued by the Respondent Jute Mill as well as the date of birth shown in Election Commission cannot be a decisive and conclusive date of birth, *moreso*, when the original "Admit Card" submitted by the Appellant was interpolated, over the date of birth, overwritten and manipulated, for that reason the same was not to be accepted. On the other hand, the other documents like Citizenship Certificate and Migration Certificate were indicating different date of birth if the Appellant. According to Citizenship Certificate, the Appellant was 22 years 10 months and 02 days as on 7.12.1964 and as per Migration Certificate Appellant was aged about 21 years as on 21.5.1963, i.e. both the documents are indicating 5.1.1942 as the date of birth of the Appellant. According to the Respondents" the Appellant could not substantiate his claim on the entry made in the Admit Card which itself a doubtful document by virtue of overwriting and manipulation in it.

4. Taking into view the entire facts and materials, the learned Single Judge in the impugned order dated 5.1.2005 has observed that there is no practice of maintaining service book or service record in Tripura Jute Mills. The date of birth shown in the "Admit Card" is the sole basis of claim of Appellant was over written and manipulated and the name of the Petitioner as well as the date of birth were first written in green ink and then overwritten in blue ink while the name of his father written in green ink was not touched, thus the entries on the Admit Card were in different ink. The date of birth claimed by the Appellant was found to be in contrast with the age as mentioned in the Migration Certificate as well as in the Citizenship Certificate. In the circumstances Appellant's claim was rejected by the learned Single Judge by observing that no material has been brought that the provisions of 79 and 80 of General Finance Rules is applicable for the employees of the State Government or the same was ever adopted by the Tripura Jute Mills. It has been observed by the learned Single Judge as below:

Advancing his argument, learned Counsel for the Petitioner referred to the provisions of GFR 79, and 80, which provide that after the actual date or the assumed date determined under Rule 80 shall be recorded in the History of Service, Service Book, or any other record that may be kept in respect of the Government servant's service under Government and, once recorded, it cannot

be altered, except in the case of a clerical error, without the previous orders of a Department of the Central Government or an Administrator. Ex. facie, GFR 79 and 80 are applicable to the Central Government employees and there is nothing to show that the TJM had adopted these Rules for the purpose of determining the date of birth of its employee.

5. In order to test the legality of the impugned order of the learned Single Judge appealed against, it is necessary to analysis the earlier decisions of different Courts including the Hon''ble Supreme Court as follows:

6. In the case of *Burn Standard Co. Ltd. and Others Vs. Dinabandhu Majumdar and Another*, it was held that the employee of a public sector undertaking whose date of birth was entered in service book and leave record on the basis of the voluntary declaration made by the employee at the time of appointment and authenticated by him was never objected to up to the fag end of service, thereafter he sought for correction of date of birth about two years before his superannuation, when his prayer was refused, he moved the High Court in the writ petition, where relief was granted in his favour, however, the Supreme Court in appeal by special leave has held that ordinary the High Court should not exercise its discretionary in writ jurisdiction and entertain a writ petition filed by an employee of the Government or any instrumentality of State towards the fag end of his service seeking correction of his date of birth entered in his service record or service register with the avowed object of continuing in service beyond the consequential period of retirement.

The Supreme Court has pointed out when an employer of the Government or its instrumentality who remained in service for over decades, with no objection whatsoever raised as to his date of birth accepted by the employer as correct all of a sudden comes forward towards the fag-end of his service career with writ petition before the High Court seeking correction of date of birth in his service record, the very conduct of not raising any objection in the matter by the employee for long should be a sufficient reason for the High Court not to entertain such application on the ground of acquiescence, undue delay and latches.

7. In the case of *State of Orissa and others Vs. Ramanath Patnaik*, the Supreme Court has observed in para 4.

When entry was made in service record and when he was in service, he did not make any attempt to have the service record corrected, therefore, any amount of evidence produced subsequently would be of no avail... The Supreme Court has held that: " an employee cannot be permitted to seek correction of his date of birth after his retirement.

8. In the case of *Hindustan Lever Limited v. S.M. Jadhav and Anr.*, AIR 2001 SC 1665 the Supreme Court, has elaborated its earlier view and held that:

An employee cannot be allowed to raise, at the fag end of the career, dispute

regarding correction of his date of birth.

9. In the case of G.M., Bharat Coking Coal Ltd., West Bengal Vs. Shib Kumar Dushad and Others, the Supreme Court has held that:

No dispute regarding correction of date of birth shall be permitted to be raised after long time his joining service unless it is based on some typographical or arithmetical error and the Court refused to interfere in such matter.

10. In the matter of dispute regarding date of birth, the Government may choose one of the suggested date of birth given by the employee if some preliminary inquiry is made to resolve the controversy of the date of birth and Inquiry Officer holds the preliminary inquiry does not disclose to the person concerned and the decision arrived thereunder was treated to be contrary to the basis of justice and can have no value and shall be treated against the rules of natural justice has to accept the date of birth out of the claims by the employee on the basis of the inquiry report, such inquiry report should be passed on after informing the person concerned and after taking into the evidence in support thereof and after providing opportunity to the persons concerned as held in the State of Orissa Vs. Dr. (Miss) Binapani Dei and Others,

11. In Bhupindra Nath Chatterjee Vs. The State of Bihar and Others, it was held that the date of birth recorded in service record is to govern the date of superannuation of the person from service.

12. In the matter of correction of date of birth, an application for that purpose is to be filed, according to the procedure prescribed within the time under rules or if no rule is prescribed, such application should be made within reasonable time. The Supreme Court has held that no interim order on application for correction of the date of birth should be passed by the Tribunal or the High Court keeping in view only the public service, directing the employee to be continuing in service unless there are cogent and conclusive materials produced by the employee that the date of birth recorded in the service record was not correct. The onus is heavy on the employee to prove the authenticity of the date of birth claimed for, it was therefore, held that the Court or Tribunal shall be slow in granting such interim relief unless the claim is supported by prima facie evidence of unimpeachable character, as observed in Secretary and Commissioner, Home Department and others Vs. R. Kirubakaran,

13. The application for correction of date of birth as recorded in the service book are not permitted to be corrected by inordinate delay as held in Union of India and others Vs. Kantilal Hematram Pandya, The Supreme Court has held that the document which came into existence subsequent to the entrance in service but while getting the date of birth recorded in the said certificate Respondents had not been involved. The Supreme Court considered this issue in Kantilal Hemantram Pandya (supra) and held that court may not place any reliance on a document or certificate of date of birth which had been brought into existence for the benefit of the pending proceedings as the correctness and genuineness of

such a certificate is not free from doubt. In Kantilal Hematram Pandya (supra), the Supreme Court reiterated a similar view observing as under:

He allowed the matter to rest till he neared the age of superannuation. The Respondent slept over his rights to get the date of birth altered for more than thirty years and woke up from his deep slumber on the eve of his retirement only. State claims and belated applications for alteration of the date of birth recorded in the Service Book at the time of initial entry, made after unexplained and inordinate delay, on the eve of retirement need to be scrutinized carefully and interference made sparingly and with circumspection.

The approach has to be cautious and not casual. On facts, the Respondent was not entitled to the relief, which the Tribunal granted to him.

14. In another case when long delay was made in seeking the correction of date of birth and the application having been filed beyond the statutory time limit (three years) it was held by the Supreme Court that competent authority may reject such application and the plea of the employee that the alleged mistake was discovered at about the time when he filed the application for date of birth which was about 40 years of the date of joining the service cannot be accepted as correct. Chief Medical Officer Vs. Khadeer Khadri,

15. In Union of India (UOI) Vs. Ram Suia Sharma, the Supreme Court has again reiterated that the claim for correction of the recorded date of birth made 25 years of joining in the service could not have been entertained by the Central Administrative Tribunal and the Tribunal's direction allowing such a claim as per se illegal and that due to long delay and latches, such a claim should not have been entertained by the Tribunal.

16. In respect of condition precedent for correction of date of birth the Supreme Court held the employee seeking the correction of the date of birth must show that the recorded date of birth was made due to negligence of some other person or that the same was an obvious clerical error and that where the employee fails to do so, such relief for correction of date of birth should not be granted by the Administrative Tribunal. In that case, the extract from the Birth Registrar was produced, subsequently to the recording of date of birth on the basis of the school-leaving certificate. The authority refused to correct the date of birth in the service on the basis of such extract. It is held by Supreme Court that in the absence of any material to show that the entry in the school leaving certificate was incorrect, the authority rightly refused to correct the date of birth, moreso when the extract from the Birth Register even otherwise was found to be doubtful. The Commissioner of Police, Bombay and another Vs. Bhagwan V. Lahane,

17. The Respondent applied for correction of date of birth before the appointing authority on obtaining a decree from civil court in a civil suit filed by the Respondent against the Board/University for correction of his date of birth in the matriculation certificate issued by the Board/University. In that suit Government

was not made a party. The question arose if the Government was bound to correct the date of birth in the service record on the basis of the said decree obtained against the Board/University in which the Government was not a party. The Supreme Court has held that as in the suit the Government was not a party, such decree is not binding upon the Government and the Government is not obliged to correct the date of birth on the basis of the said decree. It is also held that at best it is a piece of evidence and the Government has to look into all kinds of evidence for determination in order to decide whether the date of birth should be correct. It is observed that what is the date of birth is undoubtedly a question of fact and so all kinds of evidence can be looked into for such determination and if the Government on consideration of all these facts refused to correct the date of birth, then the order cannot be interfered with by the Court or Director of Technical Education and another Vs. Smt. K. Sitadevi,

18. The object of the rule or statutory issued under the provision to Article 309 or orders issued by the Government under Article 162 of the Constitution for the correction of date of birth entered in the service record, is that the Government employee, if he has any grievance, in respect of any error or entry in the date of birth, will have an opportunity, at the earliest to have it corrected. Its object also is that the correction of the date of birth beyond a reasonable time should not be encouraged. Permission to reopen accepted date of birth of an employee, specially on the eve of or shortly before the superannuation of the Government employee would be an impetus to produce fabricated records. State of T.N. Vs. T.V. Venugopalan,

19. In reference to the decision of Supreme Court in Burn Standard Co. Ltd. (supra) where entry of date of birth noted in the Admit Card of matriculation Examination could not be relied upon by the employer to correct the date of birth recorded in the service and Leave Register of the employee and authenticated by the employee himself it was the date of birth recorded at the time of joining Service on the basis of the S.S.L.C. register was challenged by the employee 35 years later and his previous application for correction seven years earlier had already been rejected by the authority and at the belated stage, the only evidence was his oral evidence and the horoscope evidence. Therefore, the Supreme Court held that at the belated stage the horoscope evidence or oral statements cannot be believed. Collector of Madras and Another Vs. K. Rajamanickam,

20. The date of birth recorded in periodical medical inspection reports can be relied up when the employee challenged the declared date of birth as mentioned in the notice of superannuation as incorrect as the service records were missing. The Department pleaded before the Court below that the service record was manipulated and that the service register was removed by the employee in connivance with the Office Superintendent. The employee sought to rely upon the periodical medical reports noting date of birth to uphold his contention that the date of birth mentioned in the notice of superannuation was not correct. It

was held that the date of birth recorded in the periodical medical inspection reports are not such reliable piece of evidence to uphold the contention of the employee that the date of birth mentioned in the superannuation notice is incorrect. Sheo Nandan Singh Vs. Union of India (UOI) and Others,

21. In respect of correction of date of birth after retirement-When claimant retired from the service on 31st December 1978 and in 1981 he filed a suit against the rejection of his representation for correct of his date of birth for declaration that his correct date of birth is 1st January 1925 and not 1st January, 1921. The Trial Court dismissed the suit but the First Appellate Court decreed the suit and the Orissa High Court has dismissed the second appeal in limine. The Supreme Court set aside the order of the High Court and allowed the appeal and also the judgment and decree of the First Appellate Court and restored that the Trial Court. It was held that when entry was made in the service record and when he was in service, he did not make any attempt to have the service record corrected any amount of evidence produced subsequently would be of no avail and that the High Court has therefore committed the manifest error in refusing to entertain the second appeal. (State of Orissa and others Vs. Ramanath Patnaik,

22. In (2003) 2 UPLBEC 1602 (Ehtesham Ullah Khan v. Central Administrative Tribunal, Allahabad and Ors.) High Court of Allahabad has held that once the date of birth is recorded in service record, at time of entrance in service, can be changed only by production of strong documentary evidence showing that it was incorrect. Any document coming into existence subsequent to entrance in service in correctness or genuineness of entry therein is said not free from doubt. In the instant case, Petitioner joined service in 1963 and got his date of birth recorded as 17.5.1934, thereafter, he had passed High School Examination in 1965, wherein date of birth was recorded as 17.2.1943. He filed application for change in his date of birth in 1987, i.e., after 19 years of his service on the strength of this High School Certificate, a documentary proof, which by itself was rightly not found reliable, in view of settled law, besides it the fact about its genuineness also became doubtful as parentage of Petitioner was found recorded different than that recorded in service record as such the Tribunal, therefore, rightly held to have rejected application.

23. Similarly as held by Rajasthan High Court in R.S. Mehrotra Vs. Central Govt. Industrial Tribunal and Another, the documents obtained subsequent to the date of joining the service cannot be relief upon for the purpose of correcting the date of birth as it might be very easy for the employee to mention another date in the papers while preparing the other documents, which came into existence subsequently and the Industrial Tribunal should not have accepted the claim of the workman placing reliance on such documents.

24. In Maharashtra State Electricity Board v. Sakharan Sitaram Shinde, 1996 72 FLR 562, the Bombay High Court has taken a similar view observing that the possibilities of fabricating the documents just to support bogus claim of an

employee cannot be ruled out in such circumstances.

25. The Rajasthan High Court in *Nagar Mahapalika, Bareilly v. Labour Court, Bareilly and Anr.* 1995 71 FLR 950, held that the Industrial Tribunal committed an error in placing reliance on the documents prepared by the employee subsequently.

26. In *State of Madhya Pradesh and Ors. v. Mohan Lal Sharma, JT* (2002) 10 SC 207, the Supreme Court held that while examining the issue of correction of date of birth the Court must be very slow in accepting the case of applicant if issue has been agitated at a much belated stage and it must examine the pros and cons involved, in the case even if not raised by the parties. In the said case, the application for correcting the date of birth was rejected observing, that if it was allowed the applicant had joined the service, when he was below 18 years of age, and therefore, accepting such application would amount to sanctifying the illegal entrance in service.

27. There is a presumption that official acts are regularly performed though such a presumption can be rebutted by adducing evidence. (*Vide Jhaman Lal Vs. The State of Rajasthan and Others, ; Somasundarshan Goud Vs. The District Collector, Hyderabad and Another, ; Ganga Ram Vs. Smt. Phulwati, ; Ramakant Bindal Vs. State of U.P. and Another, ; Gopal Narain Vs. State of Uttar Pradesh and Another, ; Maharaja Pratap Singh Bahadur Vs. Thakur Manmohan Deo and Others, ; Ajit Singh Vs. State of Punjab and Another, ; State of Punjab Vs. Satya Pal Dang and Others and Baldev Parkash and Others, ; Sone Lal and Others Vs. The State of U.P., ; Municipal Board, Saharanpur Vs. Imperial Tobacco of India Ltd. and Another Etc., ; K. Bhaskaran Vs. Sankaran Vaidhyan Balan and Another, ; Sone Lal and Others Vs. The State of U.P., ; Kiran Gupta and Others Vs. State of U.P. and Others Etc., ; Superintendent, Narcotics Central Bureau Vs. R. Paulsamy, and the State Government of NCT of Delhi v. Sunil Anr.* (2000) 1 SCC 652 .

28. In *Narayan Govind Gavate and Others Vs. State of Maharashtra and Others*, the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that presumption provided in Illustration (e) of Section 114 of the Evidence Act is based on well-known maxim of law "*Omnia praesumuntur rite esse acta*" (i.e., all acts are presumed to have been rightly and regularly done). The Court further held that this presumption is, however, one of the fact. It is an optional presumption and can be displaced by the circumstances, indicating that the power lodged in an authority or official has not been exercised in accordance with law.

For rebutting the long standing entry regarding the date of birth of an employee in his service record is a difficult task for the reason that the case of applicant has to be considered in view of the provisions of Section 35 and 114 of the Evidence Act.

29. In *Harpal Singh and Another Vs. State of Himachal Pradesh, Brij Mohan Singh Vs. Priya Brat Narain Sinha and Others, and Ram Prasad Sharma Vs. The*

State of Bihar, it has been held by the Supreme Court that unless it is proved that the entries had been recorded in exercise of the official duties by a Government servant, the same cannot be held to be admissible u/s 35 of the Evidence Act. In case, it is proved that it got recorded by an illiterate Chowkidar or by someone else, or entries had been made without proper checking, the same requires corroboration and cannot be assumed to be correct.

30. In Mohd. Ikram Hussain Vs. State of U.P. and Others, it was held that the age of the girl mentioned in the School Registrar at the time of admission was a good evidence u/s 35 of the Evidence Act. School Register was found to be admissible on the ground that these entries were made ante litem mortem.

31. In Updesh Kumar and Others Vs. Prithvi Singh and Others, the School Admission Registrar was held to be made admissible u/s 35 of the Evidence Act. Even the age mentioned in Matriculation Certificate by the Education Board was held to be done in accordance with law as required u/s 114, Illustration (e) of the Evidence Act.

32. School should be a Government one only then it can be held that date of birth had been recorded by a public servant in exercise of his official duty. No such presumption would be there in respect of Admission Registrar of the private school. Entries therein shall require corroboration. (Vide Ram Murti Vs. State of Haryana, ; Brij Mohan Singh (supra).

33. In Ram Deo Chauhan @ Raj Nath Vs. State of Assam, the Supreme Court, while examining the issue regarding admissibility of School Admission Register u/s 35 of the Evidence Act, held that as it was not clear as under what provision of law, the school Registrar was maintained, the entries made in such a Registrar cannot be taken as a proof of age of the person concerned for any purpose.

34. Date of Birth, the Secondary School Certificate is not to be taken to be correct unless corroborated by parents who got the same entries made. (Vide Birad Mal Singhvi Vs. Anand Purohit, and Anop Singh Ratnu and Others Vs. Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University, Ajmer,

35. It is settled proposition of law that a party has to plead the case and produce/adduced sufficient evidence to substantiate his submissions made in the petition and in case the pleadings are not complete, the Court is under no obligation to entertain the pleas. (Vide Bharat Singh and Others Vs. State of Haryana and Others, ; M/s. Larsen and Toubro Ltd. Vs. State of Gujarat and Others, ; National Buildings Construction Corporation Vs. S. Raghunathan and Others, ; M/s. Atul Castings Ltd. Vs. Bawa Gurvachan Singh, the Supreme Court observed as under:

The findings, in the absence of necessary pleadings and supporting evidence cannot be sustained in law.

36. Similar view has been reiterated in Vithal N. Shetti and Anr. v. Prakash N. Rudrakar and Ors. (2003) 1 SCC 18.

37. In 2003 AIR SCW 3775 : (2003) 2 UPLBEC-1780 (State of U.P. and Ors. v. Smt. Gulaichi) the Supreme Court has held in paras 8 and 9 as below:

8. Normally, in public service, with entering into the service, even the date of exit, which is said as date of superannuation or retirement, is also fixed. That is why the date of birth is recorded in the relevant register or service book, relating to the individual concerned. This is the prevalent in all services, because every service has fixed the age of retirement, it is necessary to maintain the date of birth in the service records. But, of late a trend can be noticed, that many public servants, on the eve of their retirement raise a dispute about their records, by either invoking the jurisdiction of the High Court under Article 226 of the Constitution of India or by filing applications before the concerned Administrative Tribunals, on even filing suits for adjudication as to whether the dates of birth recorded were correct or not.

9. Most of the States have framed statutory rules or in absence thereof issued administrative instructions as to how a claim made by a public servant in respect of correction of his date of birth in the service record is to be dealt with and what procedure is to be followed. In many such rules a period had been prescribed within which if any public servant makes any grievance in respect of error in the recording of his date of birth, the application for that purpose can be entertained. The sole object of such rules being that any such claim regarding correction, of the date of birth should not be made or entertained after decades, especially on the eve of superannuation of such public servant. In the case of State of Assam and Another Vs. Daksha Prasad Deka and Others, this Court said that the date of the compulsory retirement "must in our judgment be determined on the basis of the service record and not on what the Respondent claimed to be his date of birth unless the service record is first corrected consistently with the appropriate procedure." In the case of Government of Andhra Pradesh and Another Vs. M. Hayagreev Sarma, the A.P. Public Employment (Recording and Alteration of Date of Birth) Rules, 1984 were considered. The public servant concerned had claimed correction of his date of birth with reference to the births and deaths register maintained under the Births, Death and Marriages Registration Act, 1886. The Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunal corrected the date of birth as claimed by the Petitioner before the Tribunal, in view of the entry in the births and deaths register ignoring the rules framed by the State Government referred to above. It was inter alia observed by this Court.

The object underlying Rule 4 is to avoid repeated applications by the government employee for the correction of his date of birth and with that end in view it provides that a government servant whose date of birth may have been recorded in the service register in accordance with the rules applicable to him and if that entry had become final under the rules prior to the commencement of 1984 Rules, he will not be entitled for alteration of his date of birth.

38. In Executive Engineer, Bhadrak (R and B) Division, Orissa and Others Vs. Rangadhar Mallik, Rule 65 of the Orissa General Finance Rules, was examined

which provides that representation made for correction of date of birth near about the time of superannuation shall not be entertained. The Respondent in that case was appointed on November 16, 1968. On September 9, 1986, for the first time, he made a representation for changing his date of birth in his service register. The Tribunal issued a direction as sought for by the Respondent. This Court set aside the Order of the Tribunal saying that the claim of the Respondent that his date of birth was November 27, 1938 instead of November 27, 1928 should not have been accepted on basis of the documents produced in support of the said claim, because the date of birth was recorded as per document produced by the said Respondent at the time of his appointment and he had also put his signature in the service roll accepting his date of birth as November 27, 1928. The said Respondent did not take any step nor made any representation for correcting his date of birth till September 9, 1986.

39. In case of Union of India Vs. Harnam Singh, the position in law was again reiterated and it was observed:

A Government servant who has declared his age at the initial stage of the employment is, of course, not precluded from making a request later on for correcting his age. It is open to a civil servant to claim correction of his date of birth, if he is in possession of irrefutable proof relating to his date of birth as different from the one earlier recorded and even if there is no period of limitation prescribed for seeking correction of date of birth, the Government servant must do so without any unreasonable delay.

An application for correction of the date of birth should not be dealt with by the Courts, Tribunal or the High Court keeping in view only the public servant concerned. It need not be pointed out that any such direction for correction of the date of birth of the public servant concerned has a chain reaction, inasmuch as others waiting for years, below him for their respective promotions are affected in this process. Some are likely to suffer irreparable injury, inasmuch as, because of the correction of the date of birth, the officer concerned, continues in office, in some cases for years, within which time many officers who are below him in seniority waiting for their promotion, may lose the promotion for ever. Cases are not unknown when a person accepts appointment keeping in view the date of retirement of his immediate senior. This is certainly an important and relevant aspect, which cannot be lost sight of by the Court or the Tribunal while examining the grievance of a public servant in respect of correction of his date of birth. As such, unless a clear case on the basis of materials which can be held to be conclusive in nature, is made out by the Respondent and that too within a reasonable time as provided in the rules governing the service, the Court or the Tribunal should not issue a direction or make a declaration on the basis of materials which make such claim only plausible. Before any such direction is issued or declaration made, the Court or the Tribunal must be fully satisfied that there has been real injustice to the person concerned and his claim for correction of date of birth has been made in accordance with the procedure prescribed, and

within the time fixed by any rule or order. If no rule or order has been framed or made, prescribing the period within which such application has to be filed, then such application must be within at least a reasonable time. The applicant has to produce the evidence in support of such claim, which may amount to irrefutable proof relating to his date of birth. Whenever any such question arises, the onus is on the applicant, to prove about the wrong recording of his date of birth, in his service book. In many cases it is a part of the strategy on the part of such public servants to approach the Court or the Tribunal on the eve of their retirement, questioning the correctness of the entries in respect of their date of birth in the service books. By this process, it has come to the notice of this Court that in many cases, even if ultimately their applications are dismissed, by virtue of interim order, they continue for months, after the date of superannuation. The Courts or the Tribunal must, therefore, be slow in granting an interim relief or continuation in service, Unless prima facie evidence of unimpeachable character is produced because if the public servant succeeds, he can always be compensated, but if he fails, he would have enjoyed undeserved benefit of extended service and thereby caused injustice to this immediate junior.

40. In general, a disputed question of fact is not investigated in a proceeding under Article 226, particularly where an alternative remedy is available, e.g., the merits of rival claims to property or a disputed question of title; *State of Rajasthan Vs. Bhawani Singh and others*, The High Court may interfere with a finding of fact, if it is shown that the finding is not supported by any evidence, or that the finding is "perverse" or based upon a view of facts which could never be reasonably entertained in the light of decision in *Arjun v. Jamnadas* (1990) 1 SCJ 59, paragraph 15.

41. A finding based on no evidence constitutes an error of law, but an error in appreciation of evidence or in drawing inferences is not, except where it is perverse, that is to say, such a conclusion as no person properly instructed in law could have reached, or it is based on evidence which is legally inadmissible in view of the decision of *TVL. Ramco Cement Distribution Co. Pvt. Ltd., Tamil Nadu Vs. State of Tamil Nadu*,

42. If the conclusion of facts is supported by evidence on record, no interference is called for even though the court considers that another view is possible; *Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Vs. K.S. Gandhi and Others*, paragraph 10.

43. We have heard learned Counsel for the parties. The Appellant is claiming his date of birth as mentioned in Admit Card and consequently in the seniority list, in the records of the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner as well as in the Identity Card issued by the Election Commission. However, the controversy and dispute of date of birth has become the disputed question of facts and question of interpolation, manipulation, overwriting, and forgery made in the date of birth indicated in "Admit Card" only cannot be adjudicated upon in the writ jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution. Disputed question of facts could be

resolved and adjudicated upon after appreciation of evidences and analysis of documentary evidences and records, may be necessary in corroboration of other attending materials. As such the disputed or controversial questions of facts of date of birth cannot be resolved in exercise of writ jurisdiction. If Appellant was aggrieved of the interpolation or overwriting or any manipulation in the date of birth and was disputing the same for that purpose he was to file a suit before the civil court, if so advised, supported by original documents relating to his date of birth on the basis of Family Register, Doctor's Certificate, Birth Certificate, Horoscope and witnesses including independent witnesses and evidences including relevant members of the family, relatives in support of specific date of birth, the relevant trial court might have got examined the claimant by undergoing ossification bone test thereafter on the materials and evidences and after framing issues the dispute of date of birth could have been resolved. In the facts and circumstances, the controversy of overwriting, manipulation and interpolation made in the Admit Card in respect of date of birth cannot be resolved by making an enquiry even as the real affected party is the appellate in whose matter the said alteration, interpolation, overwriting was made. Therefore, it was Appellant who could have approached the proper forum for declaration and proving his correct date of birth.

44. In view of the above observations, the learned Single Judge has passed a reasoned and legal order and there is no scope of any interference. The writ appeal is dismissed.