

(2007) 06 MAD CK 0038
In the Madras High Court
Case No : Writ Petition No. 22400 of 2004

K. Jayakodi

APPELLANT

Vs

The Chief General Manager, Telecom, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, The Divisional Engineer (M), Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and The Sub Divisional Engineer (Phones), Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited

RESPONDENT

Date of Decision : 11-06-2007

Acts Referred:

Citation : (2007) 4 CTC 475

Hon'ble Judges : V. Dhanapalan, J

Bench : Single Bench

Advocate : N. Chandra Raj, for the Appellant; K. Kannan, SCGSC, for the Respondent

Final Decision : Dismissed

Judgement

V. Dhanapalan, J.—Petitioner was appointed as Mazdoor on 06.03.1982. He was promoted as Lineman on 18.10.1984 and was later

made as Store Lineman with effect from 1993. While functioning as Store Lineman, he was served with a Memo on 29.02.1996 by the Sub-

Divisional Officer, Telecom, asking for his explanation for the shortage of items in stores. By reply dated 05.03.1996, the petitioner denied the

contents of the memo. On 06.03.1996, he was placed under suspension. On 15.07.1996, a Charge Memo was served on him, regarding

misappropriation of stores. An Inquiry Officer was appointed to inquire into the charges and, by a report, dated 14.03.2002, the Inquiry Officer

found all the three charges levelled against the petitioner, as proved.

2. Based on the report of the Inquiry Officer, the disciplinary authority, namely,

third respondent herein imposed an order of dismissal from service on 23.04.2002, which was confirmed in appeal by the second respondent on 21.06.2002. Thereafter, in the revision petition, dated 15.07.2002, preferred by the petitioner to the first respondent, the order of dismissal was modified into one of compulsory retirement, vide order dated 02.04.2004.

3. Aggrieved over the said orders of respondents 1 to 3, the petitioner has filed this Writ Petition.

4. Respondents filed a counter, stating, that while functioning as Store Lineman from 15.07.1993 to 06.03.1996, the petitioner misappropriated

the stores of SDOT, Arni, worth Rs. 5,43,674/-, by removing them without proper sanction. He also misappropriated the stores by not bringing

the same worth Rs. 1,58,118/- issued by SDOT, Vellore, to SDOT, Arni, in addition to making false entries in the stores issue slips, issued by the

SDOT, Arni, worth Rs. 70,528/-, and since the charges levelled against the petitioner are proved, the petitioner was dismissed from service initially

and, thereafter, made to retire compulsorily and, therefore, this Writ Petition is liable to be dismissed.

5. Learned Counsel for the petitioner would contend that though the petitioner had sought for certain documents to substantiate his claim, they

were not afforded to the petitioner and mere production of certain documents does not amount to proof and the same has to be proved by

witnesses, which is not done in this case. The learned Counsel would further contend that though the petitioner requested the Inquiry Officer to

permit him to examine the three additional witnesses, the same was rejected and he was not given a reasonable opportunity, which is violative of

the principles of natural justice, and he was made a scapegoat to save the skin of his superiors, and, therefore, the orders impugned are liable to be

quashed.

6. Conversely, learned Counsel for the respondents would contend that the contention of the petitioner that he sought for certain documents to

substantiate his claim is not true, as he has not asked for any documents in his reply, dated 16.08.1996, to the charge sheet; in the hearing held on

06.06.2001, the petitioner neither objected to the introduction of the documents, when they were produced by the Presenting Officer, nor raised

any objection to the genuineness of the same and hence they have been admitted as State Exhibits; the defence witnesses, requisitioned by the petitioner, were allowed by the Inquiry Officer and examined during the enquiry held on 07.06.2001 and the demand for allowing three more defence witnesses was made only after the closure of the case of the prosecution side and hence it was turned down by the Inquiry Officer, for which the reasons are also given in the daily order; the petitioner was given due opportunity to defend himself; there is no violation of principles of natural justice; the orders passed by the respondents are in accordance with law and, therefore, there is no scope for quashing the same.

7. It is further vehemently contended by the learned Counsel for the respondents that at the time of passing the impugned orders by the disciplinary authority, the appellate authority and the revisional authority, the petitioner was under the control of the Department of Telecom, that too even before the exercise of option to be absorbed with BSNL; the remedy for the petitioner is only before the Central Administrative Tribunal and, therefore, this Writ Petition is not maintainable.

8. I have heard the learned Counsel for the parties and also given my thoughtful consideration to the rival contentions.

9. No doubt BSNL is a Corporation. Therefore, Writ Petition can be entertained by this Court. But, in this case, the impugned proceedings up to the stage of revision reached finality, when the petitioner was an employee of the Telecom Department. Therefore, this Court is left with no other option except to direct the petitioner to approach the Central Administrative Tribunal, which is the competent forum, to agitate his grievance.

10. In such view of the matter, I am not inclined to traverse on any of the merits and demerits of the case, as this Court is not the appropriate forum to decide the issue in this Writ Petition. Instead, I direct the petitioner to approach the Central Administrative Tribunal, for adjudication of the matter. The period in which this Writ Petition is pending is to be excluded for the filing of the Original Application before the Tribunal.

11. With the above direction, this Writ Petition is dismissed. No costs.