

FINAL ORDER

26-8-1987

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL
MADRAS BENCH

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 160/87 TO 164/1987

K. K. Sukumaran ... Applicant in OA 160/87

C. K. Vijayan ... Applicant in OA 161/87

M. P. Madhusoodanan ... Applicant in OA 162/87

K. A. Asokan ... Applicant in OA 163/87

T. P. Krishnan ... Applicant in OA 164/87

vs.

1. The Secretary, Department of Postal Services, New Delhi.
2. Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Ernakulam Division, Chairman of Postal Canteens, Postal Complex Building, Ernakulam, Cochin-11. Respondents in all the cases
3. Secretary of Postal Canteens, Postal Complex Building, Ernakulam, Cochin-11.

For Applicants: Mr. K. K. Balakrishnan
(in all cases) Advocate

For Respondents 1 & 2 Mr. K. Karthikeya Padicker, Addl. Central Govt. Standing Counsel. in OA 161/87

For Respondent 3 Mr. C. Verghese Kuriakose
(in all the cases) Advocate

For Respondents 1 & 2 Mr. K. Karthikeya Padicker, Addl. Central Govt. Standing Counsel. in all the cases.

For Respondent 3 Mr. C. Verghese Kuriakose
(in all cases)

CORAM:

Hon'ble Shri C. Venkataraman, Administrative Member

And

Hon'ble Shri G. Sreedharan Nair, Judicial Member

O R D E R

(Pronounced by Hon'ble Shri C. Venkataraman,
Administrative Member)

These applications have been filed by five
employees in the Postal Canteen, Postal Complex
Building, Ernakulam. They have been aggrieved
by a communication dated the 20th January, 1986
addressed by the Secretary, Postal Canteen, to the
the Divisional Employment Officer, Cochin,
requesting the latter to nominate candidates
for selection of staff for various posts viz.,

Halwai, Tea Maker/Coffee Maker, Bearer,
Wash Boy/Dish Cleaner. The applicants have
prayed that the department should be restrained
from terminating their services in the Postal
Canteen and further to regularise their services.

These applicants have been working in the
Postal Canteen, Ernakulam continuously from

dates ranging between 15-7-1985 to 19-6-1986.

Though they have been working as casual

employees since they were appointed, they

had been interviewed and selected prior to

their appointment by the officers of the

Postal Department Canteen. All their names

are registered with the Employment Exchange

Ernakulam. They have further stated that

the canteen is a departmental canteen and it

has been registered with the Directorate of

Canteens in the Department of Personnel and

Administrative Reforms. The 2nd respondent

is the Chairman of the departmental canteen.

They have pointed out that the employees

of the departmental canteens have been declared

as holders of civil posts in

connection with the affairs of the Union with

effect from 1st October, 1976 as per

Government of India Notification

No.5(2)/23/77 Welfare Canteen dated 11-12-1979.

Conditions of service and recruitment rules for these employees with effect from 1-10-1979 are those as framed by the President under proviso to Article 309 of the Constitution. On the ground that the applicants are employees of the departmental canteen and thus holders of civil posts, they have prayed that after their having been selected and continued in their respective posts for over one and a half years, their services should not now be terminated and instead their services should be regularised.

In a Counter Affidavit filed on behalf of the first two respondents, it has been stated that the learned officers of the Central Government opine that these applications are not maintainable because the applicants are not civil servants appointed to any civil service of the Union or to any civil post under the Central Government.

The status of the canteen itself is that of a cooperative canteen run by the postal employees and the applicants are only casual employees therein. No written appointment orders had been issued to these casual employees and that they were appointed by the Secretary of the canteen.

Besides, the Counter Affidavit points out that the requisition made by the Secretary, Postal Canteen, Ernakulam, to the Employment Exchange is not an order passed against any of the applicants. An application for registration of the canteen as a cooperative body had been submitted to the Registrar of Cooperative Societies on 26th July, 1986 and the same is pending registration. The averment of the applicants that the canteen is a departmental canteen has specifically been refuted and even the existence of a letter addressed to the Director of Canteens for the purpose of registration

stated to have been sent on 18-12-1983 by the

Senior Superintendent of Post Offices has been

specifically refuted.

The 3rd respondent in these applications is

the Secretary of Postal Canteen. He has filed a

reply to the application stating that the canteen

in which the applicants are working on casual

basis is a departmental canteen set up at Government

cost and that it is centrally registered with the

Director of Canteens. A copy of the bye-laws

for the canteen has also been enclosed along with

his reply.

The learned counsel for the applicants

contended before us that the canteen is not a

cooperative canteen and produced in support of that

plea a letter addressed to him on 20th January, 1987

by the Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies,

Kanayannur, intimating him to that effect. He

further pointed out that in response to an

application sent on 18th December, 1982 by the

Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Ernakulam

Division, the canteen had been registered by the Director of Canteens in the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms on 24th January, 1983 and a number viz., C-53A

had been allotted to it. He would accordingly

stress that the canteen enjoys the status of

a departmentally managed and the employees have

the status of those holding civil posts under

the Union of India. As the casual employees

have been functioning for varying periods

ranging between 15-7-85 and 19-6-86 till date

continuously, they have a right to continue

on a regular basis in the said departmental

canteen. Accordingly, he prayed that the

application be allowed.

The learned counsel for the first two

respondents strongly refuted the contention

that the canteen enjoys the status of a

departmental canteen. According to him, this

canteen, from the very beginning was thought of

only as a cooperative canteen. Though it has not

yet been registered by the Registrar of

Cooperative Societies, steps had already been

taken as early as in July, 1986 seeking such

registration as a cooperative canteen and the

formality of registration under the Cooperative

Societies Act is expected to be completed in the

near future. The appointing authority of

Cooperative canteens is ex-officio Chairman and

in that capacity he had directed the Secretary

of the canteen to take steps for filling up the

posts by calling for names from the employment

exchange. As the casual employees in this canteen

are not holders of civil posts under the Union of

India, he prayed that the application be dismissed.

In this case on the basic question about the status of the canteen itself, there is no agreement between the two sides. The applicants have attached a copy of a letter dated 18th December, 1982 sent by the Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Ernakulam Division to the Director of Canteens in the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms in Ex.P-4 wherein registration of the canteen was sought duly indicating its status as 'departmental canteen' from 15-12-1982. In reply to that in Ex.P-6 the Department of Personnel had allotted Registration number viz. C-53A to the canteen. It was also stipulated in that letter that the registration is required to be renewed every financial year. Though respondents 1 and 2 have denied the existence of the letter dated 18-12-1982 since no such file indexed "H/canteen/82-83" is available with them, we notice from the records

made available to us that such a letter must in fact have been issued. This is evident from the fact that in letter No. B-19011/4/80m the

P & T Directorate, New Delhi, has invited reference

to the said letter dated 18-12-1982 addressed to

the Director of Canteens in the Department of

Personnel. Thereafter, a decision has been

communicated to the Senior Superintendent of

Post Offices, Ernakulam Division that no useful

purpose would be served by registering the P & T

departmental canteen with the Department of

Personnel. The P&T Directorate had also

communicated this decision to the Department of

Personnel and Administrative Reforms. This would

mean that though registration with the Director

of Canteens was sought and obtained by the 2nd

respondent, immediately thereafter, the P&T

Direktorate had communicated their decision that

no such registration was needed. In this

connection we find it significant to note that we are not able to see in the files made available to us any subsequent request for renewal of the registration with the Director of Canteens. We also notice that the Postmaster General, Kerala Circle, had intimated the Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Ernakulam on 21-6-1983 that the canteen could be registered under the Cooperative Societies Act. We notice from the files that this matter was further examined and ultimately on 29th July, 1986, a request was made to the Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Cochin, to register the canteen as a cooperative canteen. The letter makes it clear that it was decided "at a meeting of the employees of the complex to form a Postal Canteen Cooperative Society" and for that purpose " a managing committee consisting of 8 members has been constituted". It was expressed therein that they were desirous of forming a

cooperative society and have it registered conforming to the rules and regulations of the Cooperative Department. Registration of the canteen under the Cooperative Societies Act has still however not been completed.

Thus, as far as we are able to see in this case, soon after the idea of a canteen crystallised in December, 1982, a letter was hurriedly sent to the Director of Canteens seeking its registration as a departmental canteen. The canteen was registered by him on 24th January, 1983 with a stipulation that there must be annual renewal of the registration. P&T headquarters, however, did not favour such a registration with the Director of Canteens. Annual renewal of the registration consequently does not seem to have been obtained. While so, the employees had met and decided to form a Postal Canteen Cooperative Society and to have it registered under the Cooperative Societies Act. Necessary letter was addressed to

the Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies

and registration is still to be completed. It

would thus be seen from the above that the canteen,

as it stands now, does not enjoy the status either

of a departmental canteen or of a cooperative

society canteen.

Even if the canteen enjoys the status of a

departmental canteen, according to schedule B

of Departmental Canteen Employees (Recruitment

and Conditions of Service) Rules, 1980, vacancies

of posts like Wash Boy, Halwai etc. can be filled

only by circulating simultaneously to the local

employment exchange, and other offices and establishments

of Central Government where departmental canteens

are functioning. Therefore, in this case

regular appointments to the posts can be made

only after following the abovementioned procedure

The letter dated 20-1-1986 sent by the Secretary,

Postal Canteen is merely a requisition for

nomination of suitable candidates for selection

to various posts like Halwai, Wash Boy, Dish Cleaner etc. in the scale 196-232. The

applicants cannot have a right to be

regularly appointed to those posts in a

departmental canteen even without considering

other names sponsored by the employment

exchange.

If the canteen is to be regarded as

a cooperative society canteen, then the

applicants cannot come to this Tribunal

seeking any relief.

Accordingly, in whatever way it is

viewed, the applicants' case fails. These

applications are therefore dismissed.

C. Venkataran

G. Sreedharan Nair

(C. VENKATARAMAN)
Administrative Member

(G. SREEDHARAN NAIR)
Judicial Member

Index : Yes/No

for the additional hearing on 10th January 1981.

MF