CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL
BANGALORE BENCH

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 170/00742/2016

DATED THIS THE 27th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2017

HON'BLE SHRI K.B. SURESH, MEMBER (J)

HON'BLE SHRI P. K. PRADHAN, MEMBER (A)

A.V.Sreeganesh
Age:55 years
S/o. A.P.Veerarangaiah
Working as Asst.Post Master Accounts
At:Tumkur HQ.572101.
Residing at
No.14, Sree Raghava Priya
1st Main, Jayanagar West
Tumkur-572102. … Applicant

(By Advocate Shri P.Kamalesan)

Vs.

1. Union of India
   Represented by Secretary
   Department of Posts
   Dak Bhavan
   New Delhi-110 001.

2. Superintendent of Post
   Tumkur Postal Division
   Tumkur-572101.

3. Post Master General
   S.K.Division
   Bangalore-560001.

4. Chief Post Master General
   Karnataka Circle
   Bangalore-560 001. …Respondents

(By Advocate Shri M.Rajakumar)

ORDER

(PER HON'BLE PRASANNA KUMAR PRADHAN, MEMBER (A))

The applicant has filed the present OA seeking the following relief:

i. Quash the Letter No.B1/MACP/Dlgs dated: 2.6.2016 issued by the Supdt., of Post Offices, Tumkur Division, Tumkur-572101 vide Annexure-A6.

ii. Direct the respondents to consider the applicant's claim for MACP-II after completion of 20 years of service in P.A. Cadre.

2. The applicant joined the respondent department as Postman in February 1991. Thereafter he appeared for Limited Departmental Competitive Examination for the recruitment to the post of Postal Assistant and on being selected, he was appointed as Postal Assistant from 16.1.1995. The Central Government in the Postal Department replaced the TBOP/BCR Scheme by introducing Modified Assured Career Progression(MACP) Scheme w.e.f. 1.9.2008. The applicant was granted 1st MACP w.e.f. 1.9.2008 vide order dated 27.4.2011. Apparently, it was done by taking 13 years of service in the same grade i.e. Postal Assistant(Annexure-A1). However, the applicant has given representation to the respondents with a request to grant him 2nd MACP w.e.f. 1.2.2015 as he completed 20 years of service in the PA cadre on that date. However, the same was rejected by the Supdt. of Post Office, Tumkur Division vide memo dated 2.6.2016(Annexure-A6) saying that he will be entitled for 3rd MACP after completion of 30 years of service or 10 years of service in the grade pay from the date of 2nd promotion whichever is earlier. Aggrieved by the same, the applicant has approached the Tribunal for the relief as mentioned above.

3. The applicant has referred to the judgment of the Jodhpur Bench of the

Tribunal in OA.No.382/2011 wherein the appointment through Limited Departmental Competitive Examination was not considered as promotion for direct recruitment. The said order was upheld by the Hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan and subsequently by Hon'ble Apex Court. The applicant has also referred to the judgments passed by this Tribunal dated 9.10.2015 in OA.No.361/2014 and order dated 5.2.2016 in OA.No.1312/2014 where a similar view was taken and benefits granted. Therefore he prayed for a direction on the respondents to grant 2nd MACP counting his regular service in PA cadre.

4. The respondents have contended in the reply statement that the applicant has already earned promotion from the post of Postman to the post of Postal Assistant and thereafter 1st MACP w.e.f. 1.9.2008. Therefore he is not entitled to 2nd financial upgradation under MACP as claimed by him. They filed review petition against the order of Jodhpur Bench of the Tribunal before Hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan and review petition before the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka against the order passed in OA.No.361/2014. They also referred to an order of this Tribunal in OA.No.1259/2014 wherein the Tribunal held that the selection to the post of Sorting Assistant cannot be considered as promotion.

5. The issue in question in this case is whether the appointment to the post of Postman/Postal Assistant based on a Limited Departmental Competitive Examination shall be considered as promotion or fresh appointment. The matter was considered by the Jodhpur Bench of this Tribunal and it was held that they shall be considered as direct recruitment. This order was upheld by the Hon'ble High Court of

Rajasthan. Similar decision of the Principal Bench was also upheld by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi. This Tribunal in OA.No.361/2014 considered the same issue and held that the appointment of the applicant to the post of Postal Assistant based on the LGO's examination cannot be considered as promotion and the applicant is entitled for 2nd MACP benefit. The Tribunal in its order dated 9.10.2015 in OA.No.361/2014 held vide para-11 to 14 as follows:

> *11. It is an admitted fact that the applicant was initially appointed to Group 'D' post in 1983. Then he was appointed to the cadre of Postman in 1987 and thereafter based on LGO's examination in which he has appeared in 1988, he was appointed as Postal Assistant w.e.f. 23.03.1989. He was given TBOP benefit on completion of 16 years of service in the cadre of Postal Assistant in August 2005. Considering the qualifying service in the cadre of Postal Assistant, he was also granted 2nd financial upgradation under MACP w.e.f. 13.09.2009. But subsequently the respondents held the view that his appointment from Group-D to Postman and Postman to Postal Assistant are to be considered as promotions. Since he also got TBOP benefit, he is not entitled to any further MACP benefits and hence the benefit already granted under MACP was then withdrawn. The issue to be considered here is as to whether the contention of the respondents that the appointment to the post of Postman from Group-D post and subsequent appointment to the Postal Assistant based on the LGO's examination will be considered as promotion or the appointment to the Postal Assistant will be considered as a fresh appointment in the basic cadre. The Ld.Counsel for the applicant has referred to a judgment of the Jodhpur Bench of this Tribunal which was upheld by the Hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan and also another order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in support of his contention. It appears from the record that the judgment passed by the Jodhpur Bench of this Tribunal on 22.05.2012 in OA.No.382/2011 along with OA.No.353/2011 and OA.No.354/2011 are almost of identical nature. In those cases also, the applicants were appointed first as Group-D staff and then as Postman and then as Postal Assistants based on their selection in the LGO's examination. They also got TBOP on completion of 16 years of service in the cadre of Postal Assistant. They were also initially granted 2nd financial upgradation under MACP on completion of 20 years of service as Postal Assistant and which was subsequently sought to be withdrawn on similar grounds that their appointment from Group-D to Postman and from Postman to Postal Assistant should be considered as promotion. The Jodhpur Bench of the Tribunal in its order dated 22.05.2012 in the aforesaid OAs held as follows:*
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> > *17. The meaning of the word "promotion" was considered by the Hon'ble Apex Court in the case of Director General, Rice Research Institute, Cuttack & anr V. Khetra Mohan Das, 1994(5) SLR 728, and it was held as follows:-*
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> > > *"A Promotion is different from fitment by way of rationalization and initial adjustment. Promotion, as is generally understood, means; the appointment of a person of any category or grade of a service or a class of service to a higher category or Grade of such service or class. In C.C.Padmanabhan V. Director of Public Instructions, 1980 (Supp) SCC 668: (AIR 1981 SC 64) this Court observed that "Promotion" as*

understood in ordinary parlance and also as a term frequently used in cases involving service laws means that a person already holding a position would have a promotion if he is appointed to another post which satisfies either of the two conditions namely that the new post is in a higher category of the same service or that the new post carries higher grade in the same service or class."

18. Further, in the case of State of Rajasthan V. Fatehchand Soni, (1996) SCC 562, at p.567: 1995(7) Scale 168: 1995(9) JT 523: 1996 SCC (L&S) 340: 1996 91) SLR 1) the Hon'ble Apex Court findings can be paraphrased and summarized as follows:-

"In the literal sense the word "promote" means "to advise to a higher position, grade or honour". So also "Promotion" means "advancement or preferment in honour, dignity, rank, or grade". (See Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary, International Edn., P.1009) 'Promotion' thus not only covers advancement to higher position or rank but also implies advancement to a higher grade. In service law also the expression 'promotion' has been understood in the wider sense and it has been held that 'promotion can be either to a higher pay scale or to a higher post".

19. In a similar manner, while being Postmen, the three applicants in these three OAs faced the Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE, in short) and qualified to become Postal Assistants. Their joining as Postal Assistants was not in the nature of promotion in their earlier existing service or cadre, but was a career advancement through a process of selection. Therefore, for the purpose of grant of TBOP/BCR financial upgradations earlier, and MACP financial upgradation now, the only dates which are relevant to be taken into account for the purpose of counting the periods of their stagnation is the period spent by the applicants as Postal Assistant. In that sense, the clarification issued by the Pay Commission Cell of the Department of Posts, Ministry of Commissions & IT on 25.04.2011 through file No.4-7/MACPS/2009/-PCC, as cited in para 8 above, is correct. The only problem with that clarification is that it stopped at the point of clarifying that when the GDS first joined in a Group-D post, and was later declared as successful in the Postman examination, the regular service for the purpose of MACP would be deemed to commence from the date of his joining as a Postman in the main cadre on direct recruit basis. But it is obvious that the corollary would follow, and when the Postman appears at the LDCE, and gets selected to a new Cadre as a Postal Assistant alone would be relevant, and his previous career advancements cannot be called to be promotions within the definition of the word 'promotion', as is required for the grant of TBOP/BCR benefit consideration, and for consideration for eligibility for financial upgradation for eligibility for financial upgradation on account of stagnation under the MACP Scheme.

20. It is, therefore, clear that Para-2 of the impugned order in all these three OAs at Annexure A-1 dated 10.08.2011, passed by the Supdt. of Post Offices, Churu Division, Churu was incorrect, and the eligibility of these three applicants for the grant of TBOP/BCR benefits earlier, and MACP benefit thereafter, has to be counted only from the date they were substantively appointed as Postal Assistants. Therefore, the impugned Annexure A-1 dated 10.08.2011 in all the three OAs are set aside, and the grant of MACP benefit correctly granted to the three applicants earlier through the order dated 31.03.2010 is upheld. The applicants shall be accordingly entitled to all the

arrears, with interest at the GPF rate of interest being payable on the arrears of the financial upgradation benefits admissible to the applicants, correctly granted earlier on 31.03.2010.

21. The three OAs are allowed in terms of the above directions, and the two MAs have already been rejected, in paras 11 and 14 above, but there shall be no order as to costs.

12. The Hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan in Civil Writ Petition No.11336/2012 while upholding the order of the Tribunal held as follows:

"Having considered the argument advanced we do not find any merit with the same. Learned counsel appearing on behalf of the appellant on asking again and again failed to point out any provision for promotion to the post of Postman/Sorting Assistant. On the other hand, from perusal of the orders of appointment to the post of Postal Assistant/Sorting Assistant, it is apparent that the respondent original applicants faced an examination, may that be a limited competitive examination, i.e. nothing but direct recruitment. Their joining as Postal Assistant was not at all in the nature of promotion, hence their services for the garant of benefits under modified assured career progression has to be counted only from the date they were appointed as Postal Assistants/Sorting Assistants. The services rendered by them on earlier post prior to their appointment as Postal Assistants/Sorting Assistants are absolutely inconsequential for the purpose of grant of modified assured career progression. At the cost of repetition it shall be appropriate to mention that the petitioners failed to point out any provision for appointment to the post of Postal Assistant/Sorting Assistant by way of promotion and to point out any order of appointment making appointment of the original applicants on the post concerned by way of promotion.

The writ petitions, thus, are having no merit, hence dismissed. The orders passed by the Central Administrative Tribunal, Jodhpur Bench, Jodhpur in respective original applications stand affirmed.

13. Similar matter was also considered by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in W.P.(C) 4131/2014 in the case of Union of India and Ors Vs. Shakeel Ahmad Burney. While upholding the order of the Principal Bench of this Tribunal the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in its order dated 05.08.2014 in the aforesaid W.P. observed as follows:

"There is no magic in the use of the expression "Promotion" or "Direct Recruitment"; whether, in fact, the mode of entry to the service is through direct recruitment or promotion would certainly be dependent on facts of each case and the structure of the Rules. If one analyzes Rule 3, it would be apparent that recruitment is through "a competitive examination which will be open" to both departmental candidates and outside candidates. During the course of submissions, the Union of India has exphasized that syllabus for departmental candidates was prescribed in 1964; even this fact nowhere indicates that a differential treatment is accorded to direct recruits who are drawn from the open market. The absence of any clearly stipulated and defined feeder post for promotion by way of seniority, or any other known method like seniority-cum-merit, selection etc., the mode prescribed in Rule 3 (a) (i.e., departmental candidates also having to qualify in the competitive examination, along with outsiders) in this Court's opinion clinches the matter. To that effect, the CAT's decision that the entry of departmental candidates to the cadre of Postal Assistant is by way of direct recruitment is

unexceptionable. We consequently affirm the findings of the CAT in the impugned order.

14. As already held in the above mentioned orders of co-ordinate Benches of this Tribunal which were also upheld by the Hon'ble High Court, it is clearly apparent that the appointment of the applicant to the post of Postal Assistant based on the LGO's examination cannot be considered as a promotion. Therefore, the applicant would be entitled to the 2nd MACP benefit as was initially granted to him by the respondents since he was already granted one financial benefit under TBOP. Therefore, we hold that the applicant is entitled to the 2nd financial upgradation under MACP as was earlier granted to him by the respondents w.e.f. 13.09.2009 vide memo dated 02.08.2010(Annexure-A5). Therefore, the withdrawal of MACP benefit, by a subsequent order as well as the order dated 20.01.2014 issued by the respondent No.3 at Annexure-A10 rejecting the contention of the applicant are not sustainable and are therefore quashed. The respondents are directed to issue necessary order restoring the benefits of 2nd financial upgradation under MACP which was granted to the applicant w.e.f.13.09.2009 and also immediately refund him the amount already recovered from his pay as excess amount paid. This should be done within a period of two(2) months from the date of receipt of copy of this order.

6. The said order of the Tribunal was also upheld by the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka in WP.No.200807/2016. In its order dated 20.9.2016, the Hon'ble High Court held vide para 6&7 as follows:

6. The contention now advanced by the learned counsel appearing for the petitioners is that appointment of petitioner for the post of Postman and Postal Assistant were not by way of direct recruitment but were by way of promotion. We are unable to appreciate this contention. Indeed as per Annexure-A2 order where under appointment has been made to the cadre of Postman it is clearly mentioned that the appointment formalities like verification of caste and educational qualifications etc. shall be completed as usual before issuance of orders of appointment. There is no mention made with regard to promotion of the respondent to the post of Postman. a reading of Annexure-A2 discloses that it was not a case of promotion but was a case of direct recruitment.

7. In so far as appointment to the post of Postal Assistant, the findings of the Tribunal are very clear inasmuch as the recruitment was made after conducting a limited departmental competitive examination and that there was nothing to show that respondent was promoted from the cadre of Postman to the next cadre of Postal Assistant.

7. It is also brought to our notice by the Ld.Counsel for the applicant during hearing that the Hon'ble High Court of Madras in WP.No.30629/2014 in UOI vs. D.Sivakumar & another upheld the order of the Chennai Bench of

the Tribunal and held that to adjust the appointment to the post of Postal Assistant through a selection process and adjusting the same against the MACP scheme is clearly erroneous. The Hon'ble High Court of Madras in para-9 of the order dt.4.2.2015 observed as follows:

> *9. What the Department had done is to adjust the appointment of the first respondent as the Postal Assistant on 12.11.1977, as the first financial upgradation under Modified Assured Career Progression-I. This is clearly erroneous in view of the fact that the appointment as Postal Assistant was not granted to the first respondent after mere completion of 10 years in the Cadre of Postman. From the Cadre of Postman, to which the first respondent got appointed on 22.9.1973, he participated in a selection to the post of Postal Assistant and got appointed. Therefore, to adjust the said appointment against Modified Assured Career Progression-II, is clearly erroneous. One that error is removed, it will be clear that the first respondent would be entitled to three modified assured career progression for every ten years. Hence, we are of the opinion that the Tribunal was right in directing the Department not to take into account the appointment granted to the post of Postal Assistant and to adjust it against Modified Assured Career Progression-I.*

8. The said order of the Madras High Court was also challenged before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in SLP(C) No.4848/2016 and dismissed. The Review Petition No.1939/2017 filed before the Hon'ble Apex Court was also dismissed by order dated 13.9.2017.

9. From the aforesaid orders passed by different Benches of the Tribunal as well as Hon'ble High Courts and Hon'ble Supreme Court on this particular issue, it is quite clear that the appointment of the applicant to the post of Postal Assistant based on the LGO's examination cannot be considered as promotion. Since the applicant had completed 13 years of service by 1.9.2008, he is entitled to 1st MACP benefit w.e.f. 1.9.2008. However, he will be entitled to 2nd MACP on completion of 20 years of service in the Postal Assistant cadre. Therefore, the stand taken by the respondents vide communication dated 2.6.2016(Annexure-A6) is not justified and the same stands quashed. The respondents are directed to issue necessary orders treating the financial upgradation allowed under MACP w.e.f.

1.9.2008 as 1st MACP and granting 2nd financial upgradation on completion of 20 years of service as Postal Assistant. This shall be done within a period of two(2) months from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. They also release all the consequential benefits within the said period.

10. The OA is accordingly allowed in terms of aforesaid direction. No order as to costs.

(P.K. PRADHAN)
MEMBER(A)

(DR. K.B. SURESH)
MEMBER (J)

/ps/

Annexures referred to by the applicant in the OA.170/00742/2016

Annexure-A1: Copy of Superintendent of Post Offices, Tumkur division letter No.B1/MACP/Dlgs. Dated:27.4.2011
Annexure-A2: Copy of representation of applicant dtd.18.5.2016
Annexure-A3: Copy of Supdt. of Post Offices, Tumkur Division letter No. B1/MACP/Dlgs. Dtd.13.5.2016
Annexure-A4: Copy of representation of applicant dtd.26.5.2016
Annexure-A5: Copy of Gradation list of Postal Assistants, Tumkur Division
Annexure-A6: Copy of Superintendent of Post Offices letter No.B1/MACP/Dlgs dated:2.6.2016
Annexure-A7: Copy of Hon'ble Principal CAT Bench, New Delhi order dated 3.11.2015 in OA.No.3756/2011
Annexure-A8: Copy of Hon'ble CAT, Bangalore order dated 9.10.2015 in OA.No.361/2014
Annexure-A9: Copy of Hon'ble CAT, Bangalore order dated 5.2.2016 in OA.No.1312/2014

Annexure-A10: Copy of Hon'ble Jodhpur High Court order dated 10.8.2015 in CWP.No.11336/2012

Annexures with reply statement:

Annexure-R1: Copy of the order dated 10.12.2013 of CAT, Bengaluru in OA.No.934/2012
Annexure-R2: Copy of the order of CAT, Bengaluru in OA.No.1259/2014

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