

N.KIRUBAKARAN, J.
and
T.V.THAMILSELVI, J.

[Order of the Court was made by N.KIRUBAKARAN, J.,]

These Appeals have been filed against the order of the Learned Single Judge upholding the G.O.Ms.No.179, School Education Department dated 06.09.2013 by which the benefit of counting of service rendered as Secondary Grade Teachers is denied to the Appellants by cancelling the earlier beneficial G.O.Ms.No.216, School Education Department dated 30.12.2011.

2.Mr.R.Neelakandan, learned State Government counsel takes notice on behalf of the respondents.

3.Since the matter relates to Primary School Head Masters, it is appropriate to look into the conditions of the School students who are studying in the Government Schools especially in rural areas. Though up last generation, students mostly studied in Government Schools, nowadays the number of students who are getting admitted in Government Schools is shockingly decreasing and the Private Schools have become more popular due to quality education imparted and very good infrastructures provided. Lack of infrastructures in the Government Schools and poor quality of education being provided to the Government School students are the reasons for less admission of students in Government schools.

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4.It is seen that even though the Government School Teachers are paid handsome salary when compared to Private School Teachers, who get very less salary and work more hours, education being given to Government School students cannot be compared with Private School Students. Infrastructures including labs, libraries and toilets are properly provided in the Private Schools. Due to poor quality of education the Government school students could not get admission in medical colleges, Government was compelled to bring 7.5% special reservation for the Government School students in medical admission.

5.Many cases have come up before this Court, involving Government School teachers, who have not attended Schools for days together, thereby affecting the education of the students. This Court in the common order dated 27.06.2017 made in W.P.Nos.1894 & 1895 of 2015, 26718 of 2016 and 557 of 2017 raised about 20 queries including the introduction of biometric attendance of the teachers to enquire the attendance of the teachers and their continuous presence in the schools during school hours. Thereafter only Government introduced compulsory biometric attendance for teachers. Though there are very many committed teachers, who have to be appreciated and applauded for their sincere devoted teaching are working in Government Schools, the number of erring teachers, who are not committed to the teaching are increasing. Whenever

any action is being taken against the erring teachers, the associations resist such actions.

6. One more important practical problem faced by Government School teachers is that they have to face non-cooperative parents. Whenever students are questioned for not attending classes or not coming to the School regularly, non-cooperative parents make complaints against the teachers leading to departmental proceedings against them. This kind of unwanted behaviour of some of the parents is also responsible for losing of interest by Government School teachers and for deterioration in the standard of education in the Government Schools. It is also stated that there is lack of enthusiasm among the teachers in the rural areas to impart education to the students as many of the teachers are stated to be involved in various other private avocations and concentrate on them. Similarly, the children in rural areas also do not exhibit much interest due to their poor background and lack of parental guidance due to their poverty and literacy.

7. Though Tamil Nadu is the hub of the higher education, the standard of school education especially in the rural areas and Government schools is stated to be substandard. It is stated that a student studying in V standard is unable to write his name. Further, total strength of the Government Elementary Schools having classes upto V standard is said to have gone down shockingly and there are only few students in toto, who are being taught single teacher for all the classes. This

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would go to show that something is wrong very seriously in the school education being provided in Government schools which needs to be addressed urgently. Most of the students from marginalized sections and rural students are studying in Government schools and they should be provided quality education on par with students studying in private schools.

8.The Union Ministry of Education released Performing Grading Index (PGI) report on 6th June 2021, which shows that though Tamil Nadu being among top three States in School Education, has got the lowest score among southern States in learning outcome and quality domain for the academic year 2019-2020. According to ASER 2018 report, one in four Tamil Nadu children in Class VIII were not able to read Class II level text and only 50% students studying in Class VIII were able to do division.

9.It is stated in the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2019 on 'Early Years' of Education that around 26.6% of Class III students in Vellore District cannot read an alphabet, pointing to major learning issues in class rooms whereas at the National level 14.7% of Class III students could not read an alphabet. The poor quality of education imparted as evident from the above report is in respect of northern districts of the State, where the teachers Associations/Unions are stated to be militant associations, which are capable of intimidating the higher authorities. It is known facts that northern districts fare

badly in the pass percentage in examinations.

10.The above reports would only indicate Tamil Nadu stands in the 22nd place in learning outcome and quality, scoring 132 out of 180. Therefore, urgent measures have to be taken to improve the quality of education by providing required infrastructures, appointing qualified teachers at the school level. Moreover, there should be constant vigil on the teachers, so that the education is imparted to the students properly.

11.In view of the above position, this Court hopes that a committee would be constituted with experts and academicians to look into the reasons for poor quality of education in Government Schools and suggest corrective measures or the Government on its own taken any other corrective measures to enhance the quality of school education in Government schools.

12.Even though the Madurai Bench of this Court has given direction before five years to provide toilet facilities and compound wall to all Government Schools, it seems that the said order has not been implemented. Therefore a status report also has to be filed in this regard.

13.Mrs.Nalini Chidambaram, Learned Senior Counsel intervened and would submit that in Karnataka, Government Schools are being adopted by industries which are operating in the surrounding areas and such model is working effectively. Therefore, the Government could take a clue from the said submission

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and ask the industries to adopt one or two Government Schools so that infrastructures and the standard of education would be improved. It is also submitted by Mr.Neelakandan, Learned State Government Counsel appearing for the Respondents that proper steps are being taken to improve the quality of education being provided in the elementary school level.

14.The State Government Counsel has to file a status report with regard to constitution of committee as suggested by this Court or any other measures taken by the Government on its own to look into the factors affecting the school education in Government Schools, especially in rural areas and suggest appropriate measures to improve the quality of the education and the implementation of the order passed by the Madurai Bench of this Court directing provision of toilets in every school and construction of compound walls on the next date of hearing.

Call the matter on 02.08.2021.

[N.K.K.,J.] [T.V.T.S.,J.]

07.06.2021

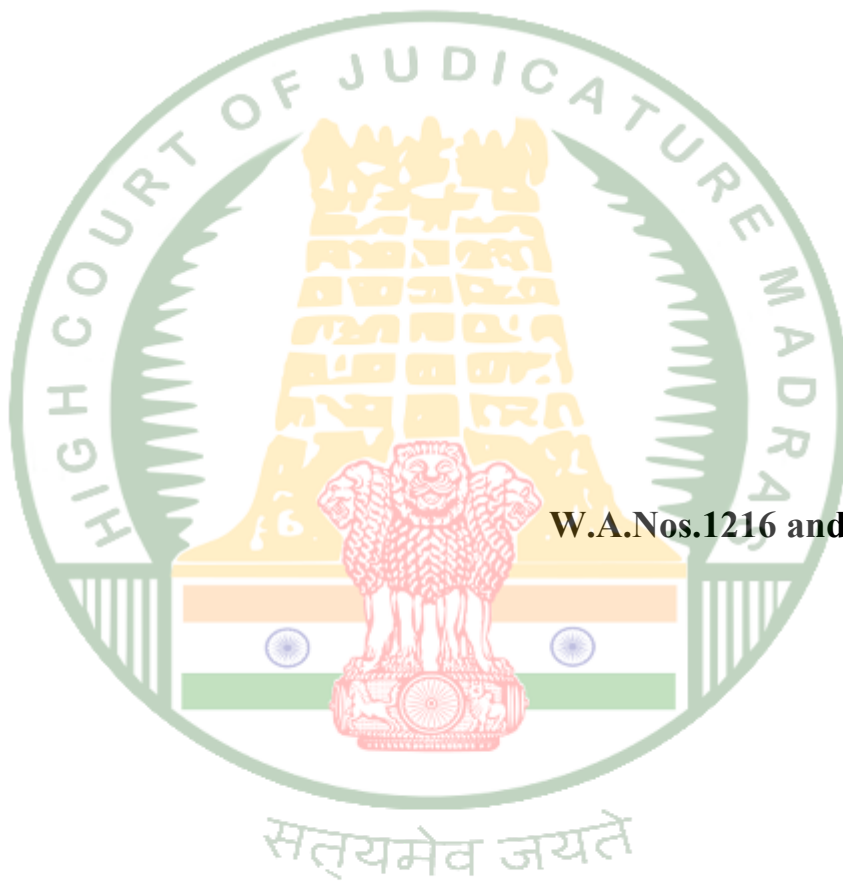
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W.A.Nos.1216 and 1222 of 2021

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Dated : 07.06.2021