

BEFORE THE KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA SERVICE TRIBUNAL PESHAWAR,
AT CAMP COURT SWAT

Service Appeal No. 1045/2019

BEFORE: MRS. RASHIDA BANO ... MEMBER (J)
MR. MUHAMMAD AKBAR KHAN... MEMBER(E)

Jehanzeb Ex-Constable No. 473, District Buner. ... (Appellant)

VERSUS

1. Inspector General of Police, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
2. The Regional Police Officer,, Malakand, at Saidu Sharif, Swat.
3. District Police Officer Buner.

.... (Respondents)

Uzma Syed
Advocate

--- For appellant

Mr. Muhammad Jan
District Attorney

--- For respondents

Date of Institution.....22.07.2019
Date of Hearing05.06.2024
Date of Decision05.06.2024

JUDGMENT

RASHIDA BANO, MEMBER (J): The service appeal in hand has been instituted under Section-4 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Service Tribunal Act, 1974 with the following prayer:-

“That on acceptance of appeal, order dated 25.06.2019 and 06.12.2008 may be set aside and appellant may be reinstated in service with all consequential/back benefits. Any other remedy which this Tribunal deems fit and appropriate that may also be awarded in favour of the appellant.

2. Through this single judgment we intend to disposed of instant service appeal as well as connected service appeal No. 1046/2019 titled



“Shafiq Khan Vs. Police Department” as in both the appeals common questions of law and facts are involved.

3. Precise facts giving rise to filing of the instant appeal are that the appellants were enlisted as Constable in Police Department on 26.07.2007. Departmental action were taken against the appellants on the allegations of absence of lawful duty with effect from 25.08.2008 (on different dates mentioned in their respective appeal). On conclusion of the inquiry, the appellant was discharged from service from the date of his absence i.e 25.08.2008 (on different dates mentioned in their respective appeal) vide impugned order dated 06.12.2008. The appellants filed departmental appeal on 17.06.2019, which was rejected being meritless and badly time barred vide order dated 25.06.2019, The appellants now approached this Tribunal through filing of instant service appeal on 22.07.2019 for redressal of his grievances.

4. Respondents were put on notice who submitted their reply on the appeal. We heard the learned counsel for the appellant as well as learned District Attorney for the respondents and perused the case file with connected documents in detail.

5. Learned counsel for the appellants has argued that the absence of the appellant was not willful rather the same was due to militancy in the Swat Valley. He next argued that the appellants were discharged from service from the date of his absence with retrospective effect, therefore, the impugned orders being void ab-initio is liable to be set-aside. He further argued that as the impugned order was passed with retrospective effect, therefore, no limitation would run against the impugned order.



He next contended that the appellants were discharged from service without observing codal formalities enumerated in the rules. He further contended that similarly placed officials of Police Department, who were removed/dismissed/discharged from service, were reinstated by the department as well as by this Tribunal, therefore, the appellants are also entitled for similar treatment. In the last, he requested that the impugned orders may be set-aside and the appellants may be reinstated in service with all back benefits.


6. On the other hand, learned District Attorney for the respondents has contended that the appellants were posted for emergency duty at District Swat but they showed extreme cowardice and intentionally/deliberately absented himself from duty till the date of his discharge from service, therefore, they were rightly discharged from service. He next contended that appellants were issued charge sheet alongwith statement of allegations and was also conducted inquiry in the matter but the appellants failed to turn up for duty. He further contended that the appellants failed to appear before the inquiry officer despite being summoned. He also contended that the departmental appeal as well as service appeal of the appellants are badly time barred, therefore, the appeal in hand is liable to be dismissed on this score alone.

7. Perusal of record reveals that appellants were enlisted in respondent-department on 26.07.2007. That law and order situation arose in Swat Valley due to militancy. Almost all the employees of all the departments left their stations of duty, especially of the Police



Department. Appellants are also amongst them who absented themselves from their duty place without obtaining any prior approval by submitting any leave application. Respondent department proceeded against the appellants by issuing charge sheet and statement of allegations but appellants did not join the inquiry proceedings and were discharged from service vide order dated 06.12.2008 from the date of their absence.

8. The first legal question is to decide that whether appellants are similarly placed person with those who were reinstated into service by department and this Tribunal or otherwise? In our humble view the nature of absence from duty of every Police Official is different from each other with respect to period of willful absence from duty from their respective place of duty, where they were deputed and nature of duty assigned. Cases of those who remained willfully absent for few days will have to be looked differently from the one who remained absent for the years. Therefore, each and every case will have to be seen on its own merit. Learned counsel for the appellant argued that impugned orders were issued with retrospective effect and are void orders. Secondly, whether impugned order passed by the competent authority vide which the appellant has been discharged from service with retrospective effect is void ab-initio and no limitation would run against the same. In our humble view this argument of the learned counsel for the appellant is misconceived. Though punishment could not be awarded with retrospective effect, however where a civil servant has been proceeded against departmentally on the ground of his absence from duty, then punishment could be awarded to him




retrospectively from the date of his absence from duty and the same is an exception to the general rule that punishment could not be imposed with retrospective effect. Worthy, apex court in its judgment reported as 2022 PLC (C.S.) 1177 has observed as below:-

“8. We find that the impugned judgment has totally ignored the record and facts of this case. The department has also been totally negligent in pursuing this matter and has allowed the Respondent to remain absent from duty for so long. On the issue of retrospective effect, we find that admittedly, the respondent has been absent from duty w.e.f. 01.09.2003, hence no illegality is made out by considering his dismissal from there as he has not worked with the department since the given date. (Emphasis provided).”

9. Moreover, even void orders are required to be challenged within period of limitation provided by law. Supreme Court of Pakistan in its judgment reported as 2023 SCMR 866 has held as below:-

“6. Adverting to the arguments of learned ASC for the petitioner that there is no limitation against a void order, we find that in the first place, the learned ASC has not been able to demonstrate before us how the order of dismissal was a void order. In addition, this Court has repeatedly held that limitation would run even against a void order and an aggrieved party must approach the competent forum for redressal of his grievance within the period of limitation provided by law. This principle has consistently been upheld, affirmed and reaffirmed by this Court and is now a settled law on the subject. Reference in this regard may be made to Parvez Musharraf v. Nadeem Ahmed (Advocate) (PLD 2014 SC 585) where a 14 member Bench of this Court approved the said Rule. Reference in this regard may also be made to Muhammad Sharif v. MCB Bank Limited (2021 SCMR 1158) and Wajdad v. Provincial Government (2020 SCMR 2046). (Emphasis supplied).”




10. Appellant filed departmental appeal on 17.06.2019, which under the law required to have been filed within 30 days, with delay of almost 11 years and 5 days, which is hopelessly barred by time. Departmental appeal was dismissed on the ground of limitation. August Supreme Court of Pakistan in its judgment reported as 2011 SCMR 08 has held that question of limitation cannot be considered a technicality simpliciter as it has bearing on merit of the case.

11. It is well settled that law favours the diligent and not the indolent. The appellant remained indolent and did not agitate the matter before the departmental authority and the Service Tribunal within the period prescribed under the relevant law. This Tribunal can enter into merits of the case only when the appeal is within time. Supreme Court of Pakistan in its judgment reported as 1987 SCMR 92 has held that when an appeal is required to be dismissed on the ground of limitation, its merits need not to be discussed.

12. Consequently, it is held that the departmental appeal of the appellant was barred by time, therefore, instant service appeal as well as connected service appeals are dismissed being not competent. Parties are left to bear their own costs. File be consigned to the record room.

13. *Pronounced in open court at Camp Court, Swat and given under our hands and seal of the Tribunal this 05th day of June, 2024.*


(MUHAMMAD AKBAR KHAN)
Member (E)
Camp Court, Swat


(RASHIDA BANO)
Member(J)
Camp Court, Swat


ORDER


05.06.2024 1. Learned counsel for the appellant present. Mr. Muhammad

Jan learned District Attorney for the respondents present.

2. Vide our detailed judgment of today placed on file, it is held that as the departmental appeal of the appellant was barred by time, therefore, the instant service appeal stands dismissed being not competent. Parties are left to bear their own costs. File be consigned to the record room.

3. *Pronounced in open court at Camp Court, Swat and given under our hands and seal of the Tribunal this 05th day of June, 2024.*


(MUHAMMAD AKBAR KHAN)
Member (E)
Camp Court, Swat


(RASHIDA BANO)
Member (J)
Camp Court, Swat