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HC allows Punjab govt to promote 2,200 teachers

The Punjab and Haryana high court has allowed the Punjab government to effect promotion orders of 2,200 teachers issued in July 2016.

The high court bench of justice Jaswant Singh, however, said these promotions would be subject to the outcome of petitions pending on the issue before the court. Further, it also directed the state not to issue more promotion orders against vacant posts in state schools.

The order came on the resumed hearing of a bunch of petitions, wherein around 1,000 teachers of Punjab, who were superseded by their juniors, were not promoted as they had acquired their postgraduate degrees through distance education from some universities which had examination centres outside their jurisdiction. The government had not given promotions citing the UGC communications that such degrees were illegal.

On the petition of aggrieved teachers, the high court had stayed the promotions on July 14.

In its reply, the UGC reiterated that such degrees from universities with examination centres outside their jurisdiction were illegal. However, court did not accept the argument and asked the UGC to submit a comprehensive reply again observing that it is for the first time that the public notice of July 19 has surfaced indicating that for the degrees being valid, even the examination centres have to be within the state. "A perusal of the same reveals that it has prospective application," the high court bench said in its order, asking the UGC to submit a comprehensive reply by October 5.

Universities that have awarded such degrees include Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, Annamalai University and Madu Rai Kamraj University, Tamil Nadu. The universities are yet to respond to the notices issued by the high court.