

# **The Hindu**

## **Supreme Court reverses order on 83 sacked TN officers**

As many as 83 Group-I services officers, whose selection and appointment in various posts were cancelled for having allegedly indulged in irregularities in the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC), will retain their jobs with the Supreme Court on Thursday reversing its own order in the case.

The officers, who had written the TNPSC Group I examination during 2000-2001, were among the 91 candidates who were selected and appointed as Deputy Collectors, Deputy Superintendents of Police, Commercial Tax Officers and Divisional Fire Officers. However, later it came to light that while taking the test, they had used sketch pens, pencil, two colour inks and made irrelevant markings in their answer scripts.

Suspecting these to be a form of malpractice to help the examiners trace the answer papers of particular candidates, their selection was challenged in the Madras High Court. A single judge had, however, ruled in their favour.

Subsequently on an appeal, a division bench of the Madras High Court had quashed their selection holding that illegally appointed candidates cannot claim any equity.

“We are constrained and compelled to set aside the selections only because they have indulged in malpractices and grossly violated the instructions.

“On this ground itself, their answer sheets should have been thrown out of consideration by the TNPSC,” the court had held.

The officers moved the Supreme Court challenging the High Court’s verdict.

However, in June 2014, a bench of the apex court headed by Justice Anil R Dave had upheld the judgment and set aside the selection of the candidates.

However, on Thursday, passing orders on a batch of review petitions from the candidates and the TNPSC, a bench of the Supreme Court, also headed by Justice Dave, reversed its verdict on the ground that the High

Court had not given sufficient notice to the candidates to represent their case.

“Be that as it may, at this stage, when the candidates who were appointed and who have been working as State Officers for more than 10 years or so and when the examiners, who have rechecked the answer books, have expressed little different views and in view of the fact that the selected candidates did not get any opportunity to represent their cases before the High Court as very little time was given to them to appear before the High Court, it would be just and proper to review the judgment,” the bench said.