



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

204

CWP-21282-2023
Date of decision: August 07, 2026

AVTAR SINGH

...Petitioner

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB AND OTHERS

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA

Present: Mr. L.S. Sekhon, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Satjot Singh Chahal, Assistant Advocate General, Punjab.

TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA, J. (ORAL)

The petition has been filed seeking a writ of *certiorari* quashing the orders dated 21.08.2023 and 22.08.2023, Annexures P-4 and P-5 respectively, whereby the petitioner's applications seeking financial assistance under the Financial Assistance Scheme for Journalists notified on 11.07.2019, Annexure P-1, have been rejected.

2. Learned State counsel points out that under the Scheme financial assistance can be claimed only by accredited journalists having good moral character and no criminal proceedings pending against them. The petitioner's accreditation stands cancelled vide order dated 02.07.2024. It was initially granted to him on account of suppression of material facts as he concealed from the Department that he had been convicted of criminal offences. These facts have been detailed in the affidavit of the Joint Director,

Information and Public Relations Department, dated 25.11.2024, which are as follows:

"Conclusion:-

- a. According to the situation recorded in para- 9, due to Mr. Avtar Singh Chhajali not fulfilling the conditions of accreditation, at that time he was being given recognition for three months. No card was issued during this period. In the year 2004, due to a typing error by the then dealing assistant, Accreditation cards were issued instead of Recognition Cards. So the cards issued to Mr. Avtar Singh Chhajali from the year 1997 to the year 2004 were actually not accreditation cards.
- A. According to the situation recorded in para-6 and 11, Mr. Avtar Singh Chhajali's reply submitted and as per the office record, at the time of the request given for obtaining accreditation, two cases were pending against him and he had been convicted in one case. He had also served 4 months in jail. However, the applicant did not inform the department about these cases at that time. According to the provisions made in Clauses No. 6 and 12 of the "Punjab Press Correspondents Accreditation/Recognition Rules, 1982, he could not be given accreditation or recognition due to the punishment. The allegation by Mr. Baldev Singh Januha son of Gajjan Singh, Januha Niwas, Gali No. 6, Preet Nagar, Haredi Road Sangrur, Punjab against Mr. Avtar Singh Chhajali for not informing the public relations department about his conviction, concealing the facts as a government accredited journalist regarding obtaining government facilities for a long time has been found to be true. According to the complaint, creating property in the name of his family members, making votes in two places

of the family, his wife being an anganwadi worker and running a government grain depot by changing the name, does not fall in the area of rights of Information and Public Relations Department, Punjab.”

8. That the petitioner kept long time concealed the facts about cases registered against him in different Police Stations and conviction orders by Hon’ble Courts in those cases and availed Government facilities as Accredited Journalist for which he was otherwise not entitled as per Clauses 6 and 12 of “Punjab Press Correspondents Accreditation/Recognition Rules, 1982” and also as per below detailed clause 4(xvi) of “The Punjab Media Accreditation Rule 2009”:-

“4 (xvi) “Media person/Press representatives must have a good moral character and should not be convicted by any court of law.”

9. That as mentioned in above paras, the petitioner has concealed the facts of his conviction of imprisonment in different legal matters. In this regard eligibility conditions have been fixed under Clause 4 of “Financial Assistance Scheme for Journalists”. The petitioner is not entitled for the benefit in the light of below mentioned clause 4(e) of above Financial Assistance Scheme for Journalists”:-

“4(e) Not have any criminal proceedings pending against him.”

It is also pertinent to mention here that Accreditation of petitioner is cancelled vide order dated 02.07.2024, and he is no longer accredited with Department of Information and Public Relations, Punjab.

3. The facts contained in the affidavit have not been disputed by the petitioner by filing a counter-affidavit. Accordingly, no exception can be taken to the decision of the respondents rejecting the petitioner’s claim for financial assistance.
4. In view thereof, the petition stands dismissed.

August 07, 2026
Jaspreet Kaur

(TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA)
JUDGE

✓
Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No
Whether reportable : Yes/No