

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR
WRIT PETITION (S) NO. 6080 OF 2017

Smt. Ratna Bai, W/o Late Surendra Singh Goutam, R/o Village & Post Pahurbel,
 Block Bakawand, District Bastar (C.G.) **... Petitioner**

versus

1. State of Chhattisgarh, through- the Secretary, Education Department, Mahanadi Bhawan, Mantralaya, Naya Raipur, District Raipur (C.G.)
2. Collector, Jagdalpur, District Bastar (C.G.)
3. Accountant General, O/o Accountant General, Chhattisgarh, Raipur (C.G.)
4. District Treasury Officer, Jagdalpur, District Bastar (C.G.)
5. Block Education Officer, Block Bakawand, District Bakawand (C.G.)

... Respondents

For Petitioner	:	Mr. Harish Khuntia, Advocate.
For Respondents 1, 2 4 & 5:		Mr. Shashank Thakur, Govt. Advocate.
For Respondent 3	:	Mr. Ashwani Shukla, Advocate.

Hon'ble Shri Justice P. Sam Koshy
Order on Board

27/06/2018

1. Challenge in the present writ petition is to the order dated 7.7.2017, Annexure P-1, whereby the Respondents have issued a notice of recovery to the Petitioner to the tune of Rs.77,120/- on the ground that the GPF account of the Petitioner subsequently on scrutiny was found to be with negative balance of the said amount.
2. Learned Counsel for the Petitioner submits that the impugned order is not sustainable on the ground that firstly the recovery order could have not have been issued against the Petitioner as the Petitioner was not the employee who was working under the Respondents. Secondly, the recovery notice could not have been issued so far as a dead employee is concerned as the husband of the Petitioner was the actual employee with the Respondents who died on 14.11.2003. Lastly, it was contended by the Petitioner that the order of recovery also is not sustainable as the same has been issued after more than 14 years from the date of death of the deceased employee or the date on which the amount fell due to the Petitioner.
3. Learned Counsel appearing for the respective Respondents opposing the petition submitted that it is a case where it has been found that the GPF account of the deceased employee had a negative balance and therefore the Petitioner has been paid an amount of Rs.77,120/- in excess to what she was otherwise entitled for and thus the notice of recovery cannot be said to be bad in law.

4. Having heard the contentions put forth on either side and on perusal of record, admittedly the employee in the instant case was the husband of the Petitioner, namely, Late Surendra Singh Goutam. He was working as Headmaster with the Respondents till his death on 14.11.2003. He died while in service. After the death of the deceased employee, the Petitioner who is the legally wedded wife of the deceased employee has been paid all the death cum retiral dues including pensionary benefits. The impugned order now has been passed after more than 14 years from the date of death of the employee.

5. Given the aforesaid facts and circumstances, what culls out is that the Petitioner is not responsible for the alleged excess payment if any paid to her. Moreover, there is a huge delay on the part of the Respondents in determining the alleged excess payment which now has been ordered to be recovered after more than 14 years from the date of death of the employee. Given this factual matrix, this Court is of the opinion that the impugned order of recovery thus is one which would be impermissible under law keeping in view the ratio of law laid by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of **State of Punjab and others etc. Vs. Rafiq Masih (White Washer) etc., 2014 (8) SCC 883.**

6. The writ petition thus stands allowed and disposed of accordingly and the impugned order stands set aside/quashed.

Sd/-
(P. Sam Koshy)
Judge