

(Through Video Conference)

WPA 1914 of 2021

**Prabhat Chandra Bera
Versus
The State of West Bengal & ors.**

Mr. Tamaltaru Panda ... for the petitioner.

Affidavit-of-service filed in Court today be kept with the record.

The material facts of the case are matters of record and hence I have not called for affidavits.

The petitioner was a teacher of a primary school and retired from service on March 30, 2002. The first pension payment order was issued on January 30, 2003. Under the ROPA Rules, 2009 there was revision of the pensionary and gratuity amount payable to the petitioner. The revised pension payment order was issued on November 20, 2012 and the arrear pension was disbursed on October 13, 2013 in terms of ROPA, 2009. The petitioner claims interest on delayed payment of revised pension.

I have heard learned counsel for the petitioner and I have considered the orders passed by this Court in similar facts. It is settled law that a retired employee is entitled to some amount of interest on delayed payment of pension.

Although the point of delay or limitation has not been urged on behalf of the State since none appeared on its behalf, I deem it appropriate to address that issue briefly. The Limitation Act in terms does not apply to writ petitions. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of **Union of India Versus Tarmen Singh** reported in **(2008) 8 SCC 648** has observed that if the issue relates to payment or refixation of pay or pension, relief may be granted in spite of delay as it does not affect the rights of third parties. It is settled law that the right of a retired employee to get his retiral dues on the date of attaining superannuation is a valuable right which accrues in his favour on the date of his attaining superannuation. Further, pension is no more considered to be a bounty to be handed out by the State at its whim. An employee has a right to receive pension upon retirement. If payment of such pension is delayed, the retired employee is surely entitled to get some interest for such delayed payment.

The Rule that the High Court may not enquire into belated and stale claim is not a Rule of Law, but one of practice based on sound and proper exercise of discretion. The principle on which the relief to a party is denied on the ground of laches or delay is that the right which have accrued to others by reason of delay in approaching the Court should not be allowed to be disturbed. In the present case, it was the bounden

duty of the State to disburse the revised pension amount on the due date. If it has failed to do so and has released such amount after unexplained delay, it is obliged to pay interest to the retired employee. This is compensatory in nature. Pension and gratuity are aimed at maintaining the life of a retired employee and his/her dependents, these are welfare provisions and even if there is delay on the part of a retired employee to approach the Court claiming interest on delayed payment of pension, the delay per se should not be the ground for rejection of the writ petition. No third party interest will be affected by a direction on the State to compensate the retired employee for delayed payment of pension by paying interest at a reasonable rate.

In view of the aforesaid, I direct the Director of Pension, Provident Fund and Group Insurance, Government of West Bengal as also the concerned Treasury Officer to pay interest to the writ petitioner at the rate of nine per cent per annum on the arrear revised pension calculated on and from June 01, 2009 till actual date of payment.

Such payment is to be made within eight weeks from the date of communication of the certified copy of this order to the concerned authorities.

Since no affidavit-in-opposition has been invited, the allegations contained in the writ petition are deemed not to be admitted.

WPA 1914 of 2021 is, accordingly, disposed of.

There will be no order as to costs.

Urgent certified copy of this order, if applied for, be made available to the parties upon compliance of the requisite formalities.

(Arijit Banerjee, J.)