

4. It is not disputed that the petitioners are similarly situated as the petitioners in Writ Petition No.5367 of 2016 and 695 of 2016, referred to above and are from the same Department.

5. The petitioners have retired from service and claimed the refund of the amount recovered from them on account of wrong fixation. The petitioners rely on the judgment in the case of **State of Punjab and others vs. Rafiq Masih (White Washer), etc.** reported in 2015(4) SCC 334. The Apex Court in the said judgment laid down the following parameters:-

(i) Recovery from employees belonging to Class-III and Class-IV service (or Group C and Group D service).

(ii) Recovery from retired employees, or employees who are due to be retire within one year, of the order of recovery.

(iii) Recovery from employees, when the excess payment has been made for a period in excess of five years, before the order of recovery is issued.

(iv) Recovery in cases where an employee has wrongfully been required to discharge duties of a higher post, and has been paid accordingly, even though he should have rightfully been required to work against an inferior post.

(v) In any other case, where the Court arrives at the conclusion, that recovery if made from the employees, would be iniquitous or harsh or arbitrary to such an extent, as would far outweigh the equitable balance of the employers right to recovery.

6. The petitioners were working on Class-III posts on the date of retirement. It would cause hardship to the petitioners if the said amount is

recovered. All the parameters detailed in the judgment of the Apex Court in the case of **State of Punjab and others vs. Rafiq Masih (White Washer), etc.** (supra) are attracted in the present matter.

7. In light of the above, the impugned order of recovery is quashed and set aside. In case the respondents have recovered the amount from the petitioners, the same shall be refunded to the petitioners expeditiously and preferably within four months.

8. The Writ Petition is accordingly disposed of. No costs.

(M. G. SEWLIKAR)
JUDGE

(S. V. GANGAPURWALA)
JUDGE