

16 01.08.2023
 jb.
 Jdt.

**IN THE HIGH COURT AT CALCUTTA
Circuit Bench at Jalpaiguri
Constitutional Writ Jurisdiction**

**WPA No. 1579 of 2023
Sulekha Ganguly
Versus
State of West Bengal & Ors.**

Mr. Debajit Kundu
...for the Petitioner

Mr. Bikramaditya Ghosh
Mr. Pretom Das
...for the State

Affidavit of service filed on behalf of the
petitioner is taken on record.

Heard learned counsels for the parties.

The petitioner was an Assistant Teacher of
Palwhele High School (H.S.) and superannuated on
31st December, 2022. The pay scale of the
petitioner was revised from time to time in terms of
the relevant Government Orders/Rules and there
was no dispute with regard to pay fixation of the
petitioner during her service. Upon retirement of the
petitioner pension papers of the petitioner were
withheld on the ground that the petitioner has
drawn excess amount due to wrong fixation of her
pay scale during her service. The petitioner was
compelled to refund the overdrawn amount to the

tune of Rs. 81,850/- as a condition precedent for disbursement of her retiral dues.

It appears from the record that such overdrawn amount was credited to the petitioner on account of wrong pay fixation for which the petitioner cannot be held responsible.

Learned counsel for the petitioner places reliance on the authorities in the case of ***Shyam Babu Verma vs. Union of India*** reported in **(1994) 2 SCC 521**, ***Union of India and Others vs. Tarsem Singh*** reported in **(2008) 8 SCC 648** and ***State of Punjab & Ors. vs. Rafiq Masih (White Washer) & Ors.*** reported in **(2015) 4 SCC 334** in support of his contention. Paragraph 18 of the authority in ***Rafiq Masih (supra)*** is reproduced below for the purpose of better understanding of the issue.

“18. It is not possible to postulate all situations of hardship which would govern employees on the issue of recovery, where payments have mistakenly been made by the employer, in excess of their entitlement. Be that as it may, based on the decisions referred to hereinabove, we may, as a ready reference, summarise the following few situations, wherein recoveries by the employers, would be impermissible in law:

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

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

(iii) Recovery from the 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 employee, would be iniquitous or harsh or arbitrary to such an extent, as would far outweigh the equitable balance of the employer's right to recover."

In view of the above, this Court is inclined to hold that since the petitioner was made to refund the overdrawn amount by the authority despite having no fault on her part, the petitioner is entitled to the relief as prayed for.

Upon consideration of the submission made on behalf of the parties, the writ petition is disposed of directing the 2nd and 4th respondents to release the said amount of Rs.81,850/- along with interest

thereon at the rate of 8% per annum in favour of the petitioner from 2nd January, 2023 till the date of payment. The entire amount be refunded within one month from the date of communication of this order.

There shall be however, no order as to costs.

Since no affidavit has been invited, allegations contained in the writ petition shall be deemed not to have been admitted.

Urgent certified website copy of the order, if applied for, be given to the parties on compliance of requisite formalities.

(Suvra Ghosh, J)