

W.P.A. 19280 of 2024

**Subarna Barik
Vs.
The State of West Bengal & Ors.**

Mr. Rameshwar Sinha
Sk. Abu Jafor
Sk. Md. Wasim Akram
Ms. Dipanita Laha
Ms. Rupanita Laha
Ms. Debantana Sen

...for the Petitioner

Md. Sarwar Jahan
Ms. Mousumi Mitra
Ms. Tapati Sarkar

...for Respondent No.2

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

Petitioner has come up with the present writ
petition claiming to be treated as Sahayika in Sishu
Shiksha Kendra (for short, 'SSK') instead of para teacher.

It has been submitted by the learned advocate
representing the petitioner that in terms of notification
dated 18th December, 2019 passed by the School
Education Department, Government of West Bengal, she
exercised option to function as para teacher not as
Sahayika. However, petitioner has subsequently found
that for a considerable period of time scheme was not
introduced and ultimately *vide* memorandum dated 29th
August, 2024 issued by the Additional Secretary to the
Government of West Bengal, Department of School
Education, benefit of EPF Scheme is only extended from
1st April, 2024 in the event Sahayikas of SSKs opted for
engagement upto the age of 60 years. It is submitted by

the learned advocate representing the petitioner that such scheme which has been introduced *vide* memorandum dated 29th August, 2024 is found to be not beneficial to her since same has been introduced with effect from 1st April, 2024 and petitioner wants to be treated as Sahayika of SSK without giving effect to the option which she has exercised. In support of such contention reliance is placed on an order dated 16th March, 2023 passed by a coordinate Bench on a writ petition being W.P.A. No.4525 of 2023 (*Bidhan Chandra Naskar & Ors. Vs. The State of West Bengal & Ors.*)

Paschim Banga Rajya Sishu Shiksha Mission (for short, 'PBRSSM') is represented by learned advocates.

It has been submitted specifically on behalf of PBRSSM that the situation which was prevailing prior to issuance of memorandum dated 29th August, 2024 is altered after 29th August, 2024. Therefore, at present petitioner has no other choice but to come under the said memorandum dated 29th August, 2024 based on option she has exercised. In the same breath it has also been submitted on behalf of PBRSSM that since the benefit of EPF is extended to the Sahayikas with effect from 1st April, 2024, it may not be beneficial to those Sahayikas who have less than two years left if they are to retire at the age of 60 years at par with para teachers.

Having considered the respective submissions made on behalf of the parties this Court finds that there

is memorandum dated 29th August, 2024 issued by the Additional Secretary to the Government of West Bengal deciding to extend benefit of EPF to Sahayikas of SSKs with effect from 1st April, 2024 which appears to be not beneficial to the petitioner as a result whereof she is praying before this Court for a direction to be treated as Sahayika not as para teacher by not giving effect to the option which she has exercised. Similar benefit has been extended by a coordinate Bench by passing order dated 16th March, 2023 on a writ petition being W.P.A. No.4525 of 2023 in the case of *Bidhan Chandra Naskar* (supra). Placing reliance on the ratio of *Bidhan Chandra Naskar* (supra) this Court has passed several orders directing the authorities not to treat Samprasaraks/ Sahayikas as para teachers on giving credence to the options which they have exercised. Only difference today is issuance of memorandum dated 29th August, 2024 whereby State authority has decided to extend the benefit of EPF to the petitioner with effect from 1st April, 2024 which is found not to be beneficial so far this petitioner is concerned since with the benefit of EPF, at the fag end of her service tenure, she has to retire at the age of 60 years instead of 65 years. If the petitioner is treated as Sahayika she can function upto the age of 65 years which according to her is more beneficial than to function as para teacher till the age of 60 years accepting the condition as stipulated in the memorandum dated 29th August, 2024.

Since in the writ petitions which have been decided prior to issuance of memorandum dated 29th August, 2024 permitting those petitioners to be treated as Samprasarakas/ Sahayikas without giving credence to the options which they exercised, this Court finds no impediment in extending same benefit to the present petitioner. Mere issuance of memorandum dated 29th August, 2024 should not act as fetter so far present petitioner is concerned to be treated as Sahayika without giving credence to the option which she has exercised.

In view of aforesaid discussions the writ petition stands allowed directing the concerned State authorities including PBRSSM authority to treat the petitioner as Sahayika and the option which she exercised shall be treated as cancelled.

It is also clarified that in future she cannot claim the benefits as para teacher.

Accordingly, the writ petition stands disposed of.

There shall be no order as to costs.

Urgent photostat certified copy of the order, if applied for, be given to the parties, upon usual undertakings.

(Saugata Bhattacharyya, J.)