

16.12.2024
Court No. 03
Item No.06
(Suvendu)

*CALCUTTA HIGH COURT
IN THE CIRCUIT BENCH AT JALPAIGURI*

W.P.A. 2575 of 2024

Basanti Das

-vs-

The State of West Bengal & Ors.

Mr. Nabankur Paul
Ms. Sutapa Sen Paul
Mr. Bodhisatya Ghosh

....for the petitioner

Mr. Momenur Rahman
Mr. Kumar Shantanu

....for the State.

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 petitioner 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 Sahayika 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 the petitioner 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 petitioner 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 **WPA 4525 of 2023 (Bidhan Chandra Naskar & Ors. Vs. The State of West Bengal & Ors.)**

State-respondents are represented by learned advocates.

It was submitted specifically on behalf of Paschim Banga Rajya Sishu Shiksha Mission in other identical matters 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 petitioner has exercised. It was also submitted on behalf of PBRSSM that since the benefit of EPF is extended to the Sahayika 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 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 Sahayika of SSKs with effect from 1st April, 2024 which appears to be not beneficial to the petitioner as a result whereof petitioner 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 petitioner has exercised. Similar benefit has been extended by a coordinate Bench by passing order dated 16th March, 2023 on a writ petition being **WPA 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 orders directing the authorities not to treat Sahayika 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 petitioner is concerned since with the benefit of EPF at the fag end of petitioner's service tenure petitioner has to retire at the age of 60 years instead of 65 years. If the petitioner is treated as Sahayika petitioner can function upto the age of 65 years which according to the petitioner 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 Sahayika 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 petitioner has exercised.

In view of aforesaid discussions the writ petition stands allowed directing the concerned respondent authorities to treat the petitioner as Sahayika and the option which petitioner has exercised shall be treated as cancelled.

It is also clarified that in future petitioner 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.)