



WEB COPY



W.P.No.8995 of 2024

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 28.03.2024

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE **G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN**

W.P.No.8995 of 2024
and W.M.P.No.10021 of 2024

1. G.Thiruneelakandan
2. A.Aruchamy

...Petitioners

-Vs -

1. The Government of Tamilnadu,
Rep. by its Principal Secretary,
Environment and Forest (FR-2) Department,
Fort St. George, Chennai – 600 009.
2. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
Panagal Maligai, Jeenis Road,
Saidapet, Chennai – 015.
Now at Velachery Main Road, Guindy,
Chennai – 600 032.
3. The District Forest Officer,
Villupuram.
4. The Accountant General of TamilNadu
Teynampet, Chennai – 600 018.

... Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the records which culminated in issuing the Government letter in Letter No.9988/FR.2(II)/2016-3 dated 16.03.2017, on the file of the first respondent and quash the same insofar as denial of monetary benefits is



W.P.No.8995 of 2024

concerned and directing the first respondent to pay monetary benefits from date of joining as forest watcher from 01.07.2004 and 21.09.2012 till 16.03.2017 as per Tamilnadu Fundamental Rule 27(17).

For Petitioners : Mr.S.Mani

For Respondents : Mr.R.Neelakandan
Additional Advocate General
Assisted by Mr.S.Rajesh
Government Advocate

ORDER

This writ petition has been filed challenging the order passed by the first respondent dated 16.03.2017, thereby rejected the request made by the petitioners seeking monetary benefits from the date of their joining as Forest Watcher.

2. The petitioners and others had employed in the forest department as Plot Watcher/Forest Guard. Prior to regularization of their service, they were engaged on daily wage basis. Thereafter, they were brought into regular time scale of pay of Forest Watcher, which is a cadre post. Therefore, they approached this Court and as directed by this Court the petitioners' service were regularized as Forest Watcher on 01.07.2004 & 21.09.2012 respectively.

3. The specific case of the petitioners is that they had joined in



W.P.No.8995 of 2024

the forest department on 01.12.1981 & 01.04.1983 respectively, on daily wages. The petitioners and their juniors were included in the State wide seniority list drawn by the department by taking note of their date of joining in service on daily basis for bringing them into regular scale of pay of Forest Watcher. However, the seniority list was not maintained properly and the services of their juniors have been regularized on 24.01.1995. Therefore, the petitioners and others submitted representation and it was not considered as such, they were constrained to approach this Court in W.P.No.4293 of 2014 and the same was allowed by this Court and directed to regularize their services on par with juniors.

4. As directed by this Court, the government issued order in Letter No.9988/FR.2(II)/2016-3 dated 16.03.2017, thereby regularized the petitioners and others services notionally from 24.01.1995, however granted monetary benefits from the date of issue of the order. It is contrary to the fundamental rules and they are entitled to get monetary benefits with effect from the date of joining as Forest Watcher as per F.R. 27(17) of the Tamil Nadu Fundamental Rules. It is relevant to extract the F.R. 27(17) of the Tamil Nadu Fundamental Rules, as follows:-

"In case, where a government servant has been



WEB COPY



W.P.No.8995 of 2024

overlooked for promotion/appointment to the next higher post but subsequently promoted/appointed to that higher post after restoration of his original seniority on appeal, his pay shall be fixed on the date of assumption of charge in the higher post on par with the pay of his junior provided he has not drawn the same rate of pay as junior in the lower post from time to time. If he has not drawn the same rate of pay as his junior in the lower post, his pay shall be fixed, on the date assumption of charge, at the stage at which he would have drawn pay on that date had he been promoted/appointed to the higher post along with his junior. In cases where seniority has been restored on or after 19th September 1981, arrears of pay and allowance consequent of pay shall be admissible with effect from the date of assumption of charge in the higher post in cases where seniority has been restored prior to 19th September 1981 arrears shall be admissible only with effect from the above date."

5. The learned Additional Advocate General appearing for the respondents submitted that, the Rule 27(17) of the Tamil Nadu Fundamental Rules, is not applicable to the case of the petitioners. The petitioners are not entitled for monetary benefits from the date of their notional regularization in the cadre of Forest Watcher. The petitioners'



W.P.No.8995 of 2024

date of regularization will be counted for the purpose of pension calculation and other benefits only. Admittedly, the petitioners had not been discharged their duty as Forest Watcher from the date on which they notionally regularized as Forest Watcher. Only from the date of their joining as Forest Watcher, they discharged their duty as Forest Watcher. Therefore, F.R.27(17) cannot be pressed into service in this case.

6. Heard, the learned counsel appearing on either side and perused the materials placed before this Court.

7. On perusal of records revealed that the petitioners are seeking monetary benefits only from the date of their joining as Forest Watcher, as per F.R.27(17) of the Tamil Nadu Fundamental Rules and G.O(2D).No.124, Environment, Climate Change and Forests (F.R2(ii)) Department dated 17.08.2022. In fact, the seniority has already been fixed and the petitioners' services wer duly regularized on par with their juniors. Therefore, they are entitled for monetary benefits from the date of their joining as Forest Watcher.

8. In view of the above, the impugned order cannot be



W.P.No.8995 of 2024

sustained and it is liable to be quashed. Accordingly, the Government

Letter No.9988/FR.2(II)/2016-3 dated 16.03.2017, on the file of the first respondent, is hereby quashed. The petitioners are entitled for monetary benefits only from the date of their joining as Forest Watcher. The respondents are directed to pay monetary benefits to the petitioners from the date of their joining as Forest Watcher viz., insofar as the first petitioner is concerned from 01.07.2004 and second petitioner is concerned from 21.09.2012 till 16.03.2017, within a period of twelve weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this Order.



W.P.No.8995 of 2024

9. With the above directions, the Writ Petition stands allowed.

Consequently, connected miscellaneous petition is closed. There shall be no order as to costs.

28.03.2024
(3/4)

Index : Yes/No

Speaking/Non Speaking order

Neutral Citation : Yes/No

rts

To

1. The Principal Secretary,
Government of Tamilnadu,
Environment and Forest (FR-2) Department,
Fort St. George, Chennai – 600 009.
2. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
Velachery Main Road, Guindy,
Chennai – 600 032.
3. The District Forest Officer,
Villupuram.
4. The Accountant General of TamilNadu
Teynampet, Chennai – 600 018.



WEB COPY



W.P.No.8995 of 2024

G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN. J,

rts

W.P.No.8995 of 2024
and W.M.P.No.10021 of 2024

28.03.2024
(3/4)