



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

236

CWP-15336-2021

Date of decision: 28.01.2025

Manjit Kaur

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and others

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMAN CHAUDHARY

Present : None for the petitioner.

Ms. Shruti, AAG, Punjab.

AMAN CHAUDHARY, J. (Oral)

1. Prayer made in the present petition is for quashing the orders dated 16.07.2021 and 19.07.2021, whereby recovery of an amount of Rs.1,29,200/- has been deducted from the salary of the petitioner.

2. The petitioner, who was working as Staff Nurse since 18.09.1987, was granted benefit of ACP on completion of 14 years of service w.e.f. 01.11.2006 and subsequently without issuing any notice or granting an opportunity of hearing, there being no misrepresentation on her part, recovery has been ordered to be effected on the premise of wrong fixation of pay by calculating it as Rs.20650/- instead of Rs.20430/-. Reliance was placed on self declaration form signed by the petitioner, Annexure R-3, wherein certain questions were answered, which reads thus:-

“The information given by me is correct one. So, the annual placement of 4/9/14 be granted to me. If any additional payment is given to me due to the incorrect information as mentioned above, then I shall be bound to return the additional payment to the Government.”

3. Learned State counsel despite her best efforts has not been able to demonstrate that there was any information mentioned in the said



declaration form has been incorrect but it was on account of fault of mentioning it wrongly as is stated in para 5 of reply by way of affidavit of Senior Medical Officer dated 05.12.2022 that amount was paid and recovery whereof is being sought to be made.

4. This Court vide order dated 12.08.2021 had stayed the recovery recording the submission that the same was being effected without affording any opportunity of hearing and there being no misrepresentation that has been alleged on the part of the petitioner.

5. In **Krishan Kumar Singla vs. State of Punjab and Others**, CWP-11341-2003, decided on 20.09.2010, SLP against which was dismissed on 05.12.2014, wherein it has been provided that recovery of excess amount paid to Class-III and Class-IV employee, may not be made, which learned State counsel has no objection, the relevant paras whereof read thus:

“5. The following needs to be extracted from Budh Ram's case (supra), for consideration of the issue raised in this petition :

"It is in the light of the above pronouncement. no longer open to the authorities granting the benefits, no matter erroneously, to contend that even when the employee concerned was not at fault and was not in any way responsible for the mistake committed by the authorities they are entitled to recover the benefit that has been received by the employee on the basis of any such erroneous grant. We say so primarily because if the employee is not responsible for the erroneous grant of benefit to him/her, it would induce in him the belief that the same was indeed due and payable. Acting on that belief the employee would, as any other person placed in his position arrange his affairs accordingly which he may not have done if he had known that the benefit being granted to him is likely to be withdrawn at any subsequent point of time on what may be then said to be the correct interpretation and application of rules. Having induced that belief in the employee and made him change his position and arrange his affairs in a manner that he would not otherwise have done, it



would be unfair, inequitable and harsh for the Government to direct recovery of the excess amount simply because on a true and correct interpretation of the rules, such a benefit was not due. It does not require much imagination to say that additional monetary benefits going to an employee may not always result in accumulation of his resources and savings. Such a benefit may often be utilized on smaller luxuries of life which the employee and his family may not have been able to afford had the benefit not been extended to him. The employees can well argue that if it was known to them that the additional benefit is only temporary and would be recovered back from them, they would not have committed themselves to any additional expenditure in their daily affairs and would have cut their coat according to their cloth. We have, therefore, no hesitation in holding that in case the employees who are recipient of the benefits extended to them on an erroneous interpretation or application of any rule, regulation, circular and instructions have not in any way contributed to such erroneous interpretation nor have they committed any fraud, misrepresentation, deception to obtain the grant of such benefit, the benefit so extended may be stopped for the future, but the amount already paid to the employees cannot be recovered from them."

6. In view of the above, this petition is allowed in terms of *Budh Ram & Others vs. State of Haryana & Others* (Civil Writ Petition No.2799 of 2008, decided on 22.5.2009) reported as 2009(3) PLR 511. Accordingly, it is directed that respondents would have no right to effect recovery from the petitioner. In the meantime, in the interregnum period if any recovery has been effected, the amount shall be refunded to the petitioner within four months of receipt of a certified copy of this order. The action of the respondents in regard refixation of pay, however, is maintained."

6. A gainful reference can be made to the judgment in **Thomas Daniel vs. State of Kerala**, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 536 wherein by relying on **Sahib Ram vs. State of Haryana**, 1995 Supp (1) SCC 18 and **State of Punjab vs. Rafiq Masih**, (2015) 4 SCC 334, Hon'ble the Supreme Court held that generally, the recovery of amounts paid in excess are impermissible to be affected.



7. In view of the aforesaid, the present petition is disposed of in terms of **Krishan Kumar Singla** (supra).

(AMAN CHAUDHARY)
JUDGE

28.01.2025
Hemant

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes / No
Whether reportable : Yes / No