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

CWP-14019-2025

Date of Decision: 15.05.2025

RAJ KUMAR

..... Petitioner

Versus

STATE OF HARYANA AND OTHERS

..... Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JAGMOHAN BANSAL

Present : Mr. H.S. Thiara, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Ms. Rajni Gupta, Addl. AG, Haryana.

JAGMOHAN BANSAL, J. (Oral)

1. The petitioner through instant petition under Articles 226/227 of the Constitution of India is seeking setting of order dated 08.04.2019 (Annexure P-5) whereby he has been punished with stoppage of two annual increments with future effect. He is also seeking setting aside of order dated 10.09.2019 (Annexure P-7) whereby his plea has been dismissed.

2. The petitioner joined as incharge of 11 KV AP at Panchkula. On 01.01.2018, he received information about an electrical accident. He informed SDO and went to the site. He thereafter filed report of the accident.

3. Despite report of XEN that petitioner is not responsible for the accident, he was awarded punishment of stoppage of two annual increments with future effect on 08.04.2019. Appeal against punishment



order was dismissed on 10.09.2019.

4. The impugned order was passed on 10.09.2019. A period of more than 5 years has passed away. Learned counsel for the petitioner, on the asking of Court reason of delay, submits that it is a case of recurring cause. On merit, he submits that punishment awarded by respondent is disproportionate to alleged offence and does not take into consideration the observation of the XEN.

5. No hard-and-fast rule can be laid down as to when the High Court should refuse to exercise its jurisdiction in favour of a party who moves it after considerable delay and is otherwise guilty of laches. Discretion must be exercised judiciously and reasonably. In the event that the claim made by the applicant is legally sustainable, delay should be condoned. Where illegality is manifest, it cannot be sustained on the sole ground of laches. When substantial justice and technical considerations are pitted against each other, the cause of substantial justice deserves to be preferred. State cannot deprive vested right because of a non-deliberate delay.

6. A two Judge Bench of Supreme Court recently in ***Mrinmoy Maity v. Chhanda Koley and others, 2024 SCC OnLine SC 551*** has held that High Court ought to dismiss petition on the ground of delay and laches where there is no explanation of delay. An applicant who approaches the Court belatedly or in the other words sleeps over his rights for a considerable period ought not to be granted the extraordinary relief by writ Courts. Delay defeats equity. High Court may refuse to invoke its writ jurisdiction if laxity on the part of applicant has allowed



the cause of action to drift away and attempts are made to rekindle the lapsed cause of action. Multiple communications cannot create cause of action. The relevant extracts of the judgment are reproduced as below:

“9. Having heard rival contentions raised and on perusal of the facts obtained in the present case, we are of the considered view that writ petitioner ought to have been non-suited or in other words writ petition ought to have been dismissed on the ground of delay and latches itself. An applicant who approaches the court belatedly or in other words sleeps over his rights for a considerable period of time, wakes up from his deep slumber ought not to be granted the extraordinary relief by the writ courts. This Court time and again has held that delay defeats equity. Delay or latches is one of the factors which should be born in mind by the High Court while exercising discretionary powers under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. In a given case, the High Court may refuse to invoke its extraordinary powers if laxity on the part of the applicant to assert his right has allowed the cause of action to drift away and attempts are made subsequently to rekindle the lapsed cause of action.

10. The discretion to be exercised would be with care and caution. If the delay which has occasioned in approaching the writ court is explained which would appeal to the conscience of the court, in such circumstances it cannot be gainsaid by the contesting party that for all times to come the delay is not to be condoned. There may be myriad circumstances which gives rise to the invoking of the extraordinary jurisdiction and it all depends on facts and circumstances of each case, same cannot be described in a straight jacket formula with mathematical precision. The ultimate discretion to be exercised by the writ court depends upon the facts that it has to travel or the terrain in which the facts have travelled.



11. *For filing of a writ petition, there is no doubt that no fixed period of limitation is prescribed. However, when the extraordinary jurisdiction of the writ court is invoked, it has to be seen as to whether within a reasonable time same has been invoked and even submitting of memorials would not revive the dead cause of action or resurrect the cause of action which has had a natural death. In such circumstances on the ground of delay and latches alone, the appeal ought to be dismissed or the applicant ought to be non-suited. If it is found that the writ petitioner is guilty of delay and latches, the High Court ought to dismiss the petition on that sole ground itself, in as much as the writ courts are not to indulge in permitting such indolent litigant to take advantage of his own wrong. It is true that there cannot be any waiver of fundamental right but while exercising discretionary jurisdiction under Article 226, the High Court will have to necessarily take into consideration the delay and latches on the part of the applicant in approaching a writ court.”*

7. The impugned order was passed on 10.09.2019 and petitioner has approached this Court in 2025. The reason of delay advanced by petitioner is not plausible.

8. In view of aforesaid facts and circumstances, this Court is of the considered opinion that instant petition deserves to be dismissed on the doctrine of delay and laches and accordingly dismissed.

(JAGMOHAN BANSAL)
JUDGE

15.05.2025
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Whether speaking/reasoned	Yes/No
Whether Reportable	Yes/No