



CWP-9303-2026

-1-

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

115

CWP-9303-2026

Date of Decision :27.03.2026

Union of India and others

...Petitioners

Versus

**Lt. Col. Amruta Vakkula Jyothir Lakshmi
and another**

...Respondents

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DEEPAK MANCHANDA**

Present: Ms. Shalini Atri, Sr. Panel Counsel for petitioners-UOI.

* * *

Harsimran Singh Sethi, J. (Oral)

1. In the present petition, the challenge is to the impugned order dated 11.04.2023 (Annexure P-3) passed by respondent No.2-Armed Forces Tribunal, Regional Bench, Chandigarh, (hereinafter referred to as 'the Tribunal') by which, the benefit of disability pension has been allowed in favour of respondent No.1 that too by rounding off of the disability element of disability pension @ 50%, which was initially assessed at less than 20% (15-19%) for life w.e.f. 20.03.2018.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioners submits that the respondent No.1 joined the service on 05.09.1989 and was invalidated out from service on 19.03.2017 in low medical category i.e. P2(P) due to the disease 'Pleuro Pulmonary Tuberculosis' and the said disability was assessed less than 20% (15-19%) by the Medical Board and the same was assessed as attributable to military service and therefore, as the disability was not assessed upto 20%, which is a condition precedent for the grant of disability pension, the Tribunal exceeded its jurisdiction while granting the said relief to respondent No.1.

3. We have heard learned counsel for the petitioners and have gone



CWP-9303-2026

-2-

through the record with her able assistance.

4. It is a conceded fact that the disability of 'Pleuro Pulmonary Tuberculosis' which was suffered by respondent No.1 while being in service, has already been held to be attributable to the military service by the Medical Board. As per the settled principle of law settled in **Civil Appeal No.5605 of 2010 decided on 25.06.2014 titled Sukhvinder Singh vs. Union of India and others**, the disability suffered by any army personnel even if the same is assessed at less than 20% but the same leads to such circumstances where personnel concerned cannot discharge the duties assigned to him/her and has to be relieved from duty, such a disability is to be treated minimum of 20% so as to grant the benefit of disability pension to such a personnel concerned and said disability of 20% has rightly been rounded off to 50% keeping in view the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in **Union of India and others vs. Ram Avtar, 2014 SCC Online SC 1761**.

5. For better adjudication of matter at hand, certain facts need to be taken into consideration that first the Medical Board assessed the disability suffered by respondent No.1 @ 15%-19% and as attributable to military service, but the claim of respondent No.1 was rejected on the ground that same is below the minimum threshold of 20% after which, another Medical Board was constituted and same assessed the disability suffered by respondent No.1 @ 15%-19% after which another claim raised by respondent No.1 for grant of disability pension got rejected on same ground.

6. On being asked whether, with the disability from which respondent No.1 suffered and on the basis of which she got discharged from service, the personnel concerned could have continued in service effectively performing her duties without any hindrance, learned counsel for the petitioners has not been able to rebut the said aspect that while suffering with the said disability, the officer could not have continued in service. Once, the officer concerned could not



CWP-9303-2026

-3-

continue in service due to the aforementioned disability, the only option available was that either she should be invalidated out of service or the officer should get relieved from service. Once, the reason for being relieved from service is the disability incurred during the service period which disability has been assessed as attributable to military service, the claim of the petitioner that the benefit of disability pension could not be granted to respondent No.1, cannot be accepted. The said injury has been made basis of being relieved from service, which injury is concededly attributable to the military service.

7. It should be noted that the present issue has already been dealt with by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in ***Sukhvinder Singh's case (supra)*** and as per the judgment in ***Sukhvinder Singh's case (supra)***, any injury, which led to being invalidated from service of an army personnel is assessed at less than 20%, for the purpose of the grant of disability pension, the same has to be treated as a minimum of 20%. The relevant paragraph of the judgment is as under:

9. We are of the persuasion, therefore, that firstly, any disability not recorded at the time of recruitment must be presumed to have been caused subsequently and unless proved to the contrary to be a consequence of military service. The benefit of doubt is rightly extended in favour of the member of the Armed Forces; any other conclusion would be tantamount to granting a premium to the Recruitment Medical Board for their own negligence. Secondly, the morale of the Armed Forces requires absolute and undiluted protection and if an injury leads to loss of service without any recompense, this morale would be severely undermined. Thirdly, there appears to be no provisions authorising the discharge or invaliding out of service where the disability is below twenty per cent and seems to us to be logically so. Fourthly, wherever a member of the Armed Forces is invalidated out of service, it perforce has to be assumed that his disability was found to



CWP-9303-2026

-4-

be above twenty per cent. Fifthly, as per the extant Rules/Regulations, a disability leading to invaliding out of service would attract the grant of fifty per cent disability pension.”

8. Further, as per the settled principle of law settled by the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in ***Ram Avtar’s case (supra)***, if the disability element of disability pension is assessed @ 20%, the same is to be rounded off to 50%, which is a settled principle of law, which has not been rebutted by the learned counsel for the petitioners.

9. Keeping in view the totality of the circumstances, the impugned order dated 11.04.2023 (Annexure P-3) passed by the Tribunal, keeping in view the facts and circumstances of the present case coupled with the settled principle of law, has not been shown to be perverse in any manner. Hence, no ground is made out for any interference by this Court in the facts and circumstances of the present case and the present petition is accordingly dismissed.

10. Civil miscellaneous application pending, if any, is also disposed of.

(HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI)
JUDGE

(DEEPAK MANCHANDA)
JUDGE

March 27, 2026

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Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes

Whether reportable : No