



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

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CWP-11333-2026

Date of Decision : 17.04.2026

Narain Ram and others

.....Petitioners

Versus

State of Punjab and others

....Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NAMIT KUMAR

Present : Mr. Sukhdip Singh Brar, Advocate with
Mr. Udeyveer Singh Brar, Advocate for the petitioners.

Mr. Satnampreet Singh Chauhan, D.A.G., Punjab.

NAMIT KUMAR, J. (ORAL)

1. The petitioners have invoked the writ jurisdiction of this Court under Articles 226/227 of the Constitution of India, seeking issuance of a writ of mandamus, directing the respondents to grant the petitioners the pay scale of Rs.1200-2100 from the date of their joining/retrospectively i.e. 01.01.1986, with all consequential benefits such as arrears of pay/pension etc.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioners submits that pursuant to the report of the Pay Commission for the year 1967-68, all the posts of Sub Inspectors including those of Horticulture Supervisor and Nursery Supervisor, Compost Inspector and Grading Assistants were clubbed together and consequently, 60% were granted the pay scale of Rs.130-200 and the senior most 40% were granted the pay scale of Rs.140-300. However, in the Second Pay Commission, the posts of Compost Inspector, Agriculture Sub Inspector, Horticulture & Vegetables Supervisor were granted the pay scale of Rs.450-800, whereas the post of Grading Assistants was granted the lower pay scale of Rs.400-660



and this anomaly was occurred only for the reason that the Second Pay Commission was never informed by the Department that the Grading Assistants were in the pay scale of Rs.130-250 & Rs.140-300 and were getting the same pay scale which is being granted to other categories of posts mentioned above. He further submits that the petitioners, who had joined the Department of Agriculture, Punjab, as Grading Assistants are entitled for the pay scale of Rs.1200-2100 w.e.f. 01.01.1986 as has already been granted to the Agriculture Sub Inspectors. He has placed reliance upon the judgment dated 14.07.2023 passed by this Court in ***CWP-6205-1986 titled as 'Ajmer Singh and others Vs. State of Punjab and others'***, whereby the similarly situated employees have been granted the pay scale of Rs.1200-2100 w.e.f. 01.01.1986 upto 18.10.1992.

3. On receipt of advance copy of the petition, learned State counsel appears on behalf of the respondents-State and submits that the petitioners are claiming pay scale of Rs.1200-2100 w.e.f. 01.01.1986 and they have approached this Court only in April 2026, after a delay of more than 40 years. Therefore, the instant petition deserves to be dismissed on the ground of delay and laches.

4. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the relevant documents.

5. All the petitioners except petitioners No.22 & 24 have retired from service between the years 2011 to 2026. The grievance of the petitioners is that in pursuance to the report of the Pay Commission for the year 1967-68, the petitioners, who belong to the category of Grading Assistants in the Punjab Agriculture Department, were placed



in the pay scale of Rs.130-200 for 60% and Rs.140-300 for 40% equivalent to the posts of Compost Inspector/ Agriculture Sub-Inspector/Horticulture and Vegetables Supervisors. At the time when the Second Pay Commission was constituted for the revision of pay-scales of the employees, the Department of Agriculture had not put forth the correct position before the Second Pay Commission, wherein the grade pay of the Grading Assistants has been shown as Rs.130-250 for all the posts, whereas it was actually Rs.130-250 for 60% and Rs.140-300 for 40%. Since the wrong/incomplete information was put before the Second Pay Commission, it recommended the pay scale of Rs.450-800 for the posts of Compost Inspector, Agriculture Sub Inspector, Horticulture & Vegetables Supervisors and lower pay scale of Rs.400-660 for the post of Grading Assistants due to which an anomaly was created. Now the petitioners are claiming pay scale of Rs.1200-2100 w.e.f. 01.01.1986 till 18.10.1992 as has already been granted to the Agriculture Sub Inspectors. However, they have approached this Court after a delay of more than 40 years and that too after their retirement. Since there is an undue and unexplained delay in approaching this Court, therefore, the instant petition deserves to be dismissed on the ground of delay and laches.

6. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Yunus (Baboobhai) A Hamid Padvekar Vs. State of Maharashtra Through its Secretary and others : 2009 (2) SCT 24***, while referring to the issue of delay and laches, had held as follows:-

“8. Delay or laches is one of the factors which is to be borne in mind by the High Courts when they exercise their discretionary powers under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, 1950 (in short the ‘Constitution’). In an appropriate



case the High Court may refuse to invoke its extraordinary powers if there is such negligence or omission on the part of the applicant to assert his right as taken in conjunction with the lapse of time and other circumstances, causes prejudice to the opposite party. Even where fundamental right is involved the matter is still within the discretion of the Court as pointed out in **Durga Prasad v. Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (AIR 1970 Supreme Court 769)**. Of course, the discretion has to be exercised judicially and reasonably.

9. What was stated in this regard by Sir Barnes Peacock in **Lindsay Petroleum Company v. Prosper Armstrong Hurde etc., (1874) 5 PC 221** at page 239 was approved by this Court in **Moon Mills Ltd. v. Industrial Courts, (AIR 1967 SC 1450)** and **Maharashtra State Transport Corporation v. Balwant Regular Motor Service (AIR 1969 Supreme Court 329)**, Sir Barnes had stated:

"Now the doctrine of laches in Courts of Equity is not an arbitrary or technical doctrine. Where it would be practically unjust to give a remedy either because the party has, by his conduct done that which might fairly be regarded as equivalent to a waiver of it, or where by his conduct and neglect he has though perhaps not waiving that remedy, yet put the other party in a situation in which it would not be reasonable to place him if the remedy were afterwards to be asserted, in either of these cases, lapse of time and delay are most material. But in every case, if an argument against relief, which otherwise would be just, is founded upon mere delay, that delay of course not amounting to a bar by any statute of limitation, the validity of that defence must be tried upon principles substantially equitable. Two circumstances always important in such cases are, the length of the delay and the nature of the acts done during the interval which might affect either party and cause a balance of justice or injustice in taking the one course or the other, so far as relates to the remedy."

10. It would be appropriate to note certain decisions of this Court in which this aspect has been dealt with in relation with Article 32 of the Constitution. It is apparent that what has been stated as regards that Article would apply, a fortiori, to Article 226. It was observed in **R.N Bose v. Union of India (AIR 1970 Supreme Court 470)** that no relief can be given to the petitioner who without any reasonable explanation approaches this Court under Article 32 after inordinate delay. It was stated that though Article 32 is itself



a guaranteed right, it does not follow from this that it was the intention of the Constitution makers that this Court should disregard all principles and grant relief in petitions filed after inordinate delay.

11. *It was stated in **State of M.P. v. Nandlal (AIR 1987 Supreme Court 251)** that the High Court in exercise of its discretion does not ordinarily assist the tardy and the indolent or the acquiescent and the lethargic. If there is inordinate delay on the part of the petitioner and such delay is not satisfactorily explained, the High Court may decline to intervene and grant relief in exercise of its writ jurisdiction. It was stated that this rule is premised on a number of factors. The High Court does not ordinarily permit a belated resort to the extraordinary remedy because it is likely to cause confusion and public inconvenience and bring in its trail new injustices, and if writ jurisdiction is exercised after unreasonable delay, it may have the effect of inflicting not only hardship and inconvenience but also injustice on third parties. It was pointed out that when writ jurisdiction is invoked, unexplained delay coupled with the creation of third party rights in the meantime is an important factor which also weighs with the High Court in deciding whether or not to exercise such jurisdiction.*

12. *In view of the aforesaid position we are not inclined to interfere in this appeal which is dismissed accordingly.”*

7. In a recent judgment by a Division Bench of this Court in **Ram Kumar Vs. State of Haryana and others : 2022 (3) SCT 346**, while rejecting the claim of the petitioner for counting of his ad hoc service, for the purpose of seniority/pension and regularization in service on completion of 02 years as per policy, held that the petition filed by him suffered from gross, inordinate and unexplained delay in approaching the High Court. In the said judgment, it has been held as under:-

“10. What we wish to emphasize, in particular, is that services of the appellant were regularized w.e.f. 01.04.1997. And, he was assigned a specific seniority position in the cadre. Whereafter, he continued to serve the



department for nearly twenty five years, before attaining the age of superannuation in January, 2022. Needless to assert that during all these years, he availed all admissible benefits, promotions, and retired as Inspector. Thus, it rather appears that institution of the petition by the appellant was speculative and an attempt to resurrect a stale and dead claim. The Supreme Court, in **New Delhi Municipal Council v. Pan Singh & Ors., 2007(9) SCC 278**, observed:

“15. There is another aspect of the matter which cannot be lost sight of. Respondents herein filed a Writ Petition after 17 years. They did not agitate their grievances for a long time. They, as noticed herein, did not claim parity with the 17 workmen at the earliest possible opportunity. They did not implead themselves as parties even in the reference made by the State before the Industrial Tribunal. It is not their case that after 1982, those employees who were employed or who were recruited after the cut-off date have been granted the said scale of pay. After such a long time, therefore, the Writ Petitions could not have been entertained even if they are similarly situated. It is trite that the discretionary jurisdiction may not be exercised in favour of those who approach the Court after a long time. Delay and laches are relevant factors for exercise of equitable jurisdiction. See **Govt. of W.B. v. Tarun K. Roy And Others [(2004) 1 SCC 347]**, **Chairman, U.P. Jal Nigam & Anr. v. Jaswant Singh And Anr. [2006 (12) SCALE 347]** and **Karnataka Power Corpn. Ltd. through its Chairman & Managing Director and Another v. K. Thangappan and Another [(2006) 4 SCC 322]**”

11. Similarly, in **Jagdish Lal & Ors. Vs. State of Haryana & Ors., (1997) 6 SCC 538**, it was held by the Supreme Court:

“That apart, as this Court has repeatedly held, the delay disentitles the party to the discretionary relief under Article 226 or 32 of the Constitution. It is not necessary to reiterate all catena of precedents in this behalf. Suffice it to state that the appellant kept sleeping over their rights for long and elected to wake up when they had the impetus from *Vir Pal Chauhan* and *Ajit Singh’s* ratios.....



Therefore, desperate attempts of the appellants to re-do the seniority had by them in various cadres/grades though in the same services according to 1974 Rules or 1980 Rule, are not amenable to judicial review at this belated stage....”

12. *In the wake of the position as sketched out above, we are dissuaded to interfere with the impugned order and judgment rendered by the learned single Judge. The appeal being bereft of merit is, accordingly, dismissed.”*

8. The Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in ***Prem Nath Vs. State of Punjab : 2018(2) SCT 687***, while rejecting the claim of additional increments on acquisition of higher qualifications has held as under:-

*“3. It is the case set up on behalf of the petitioners that they had all been appointed before 19.02.1979 and had even improved/acquired higher qualifications before 19.02.1979 and as such there would be no difference between the employees working with the Punjab Government, holding corresponding post and the employees like the petitioners who have worked for Punjab Privately Managed Recognised Aided Schools. It is also the assertion made by counsel representing the petitioners that their claim would be covered in terms of decision dated 02.07.2013 rendered by this Court in a bunch of writ petitions including **CWP No.8083 of 1989 titled as Radha Krishan Narang and others vs. State of Punjab and others.***

4. *Having heard counsel for the petitioners at length, this Court is of the considered view that the claim of the petitioners would not require any consideration on merits and the writ petition deserves to be dismissed on the sole ground of delay and laches.*

5. *Placed on record and appended at Annexure P-1 are the particulars of the petitioners. The tabulation at Annexure P-1 would show that all the petitioners stand retired on various dates between the years 1995 to 2012. Out of 32 petitioners in all, 22 petitioners superannuated more than 10 years back.*

6. *There is no justification coming forth as regards the inordinate delay in having approached the Writ Court.*



There is also no explanation put forth by the petitioners as to why the claim raised in the instant petition was not agitated by the petitioners while they were in service. The entire thrust of the submissions advanced by counsel is that similarly situated employees had approached this Court and have been granted relief.

7. The issue regarding delay in invoking the extraordinary writ jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India was considered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Chairman, U.P. Jal Nigam and another v. Jaswant Singh and another, 2007(1) SCT 224 : (2006)11 SCC 464**. In such case, certain employees raised the issue that they were not liable to be retired at the age of 58 years but should be permitted to continue in service till they attain the age of 60 years. Such employees were still in service when the writ petitions were filed. The writ petitions were ultimately allowed. Placing reliance upon such judgment, some of the employees, who had already superannuated, filed writ petitions seeking the same benefit. Even such petitions were allowed by the High Court in terms of following the earlier judgment. The judgment of the High Court was challenged before the Apex Court and wherein while referring to earlier judgments in **Rup Diamonds v. Union of India, (1989)2 SCC 356; Jagdish Lal v. State of Haryana, 1998(1) S.C.T. 26 : (1997)6 SCC 538 and Government of West Bengal v. Tarun K. Roy, 2004(1) SCT 78 : (2004)1 SCC 347**, it was opined that persons who approached the Court at a belated stage placing reliance upon the order passed in some other case earlier, can be denied the discretionary relief on the ground of delay and laches. The relevant observations made by the Supreme Court are contained in Paras 5, 6 and 16 of the judgment and are extracted here under:-

“5. So far as the principal issue is concerned, that has been settled by this court. Therefore, there is no quarrel over the legal proposition. But the only question is grant of relief to such other persons who were not vigilant and did not wake up to challenge their retirement and accepted the same but filed writ petitions after the judgment of this court in **Harwindra Kumar v. Chief Engineer, Karmik, 2006(1) SCT 541 : (2005) 13 SCC 300**. Whether they are entitled to same relief or not?



Therefore, a serious question that arises for consideration is whether the employees who did not wake up to challenge their retirement and accepted the same, collected their post-retirement benefits, can such persons be given the relief in the light of the subsequent decision delivered by this court?

6. *The question of delay and laches has been examined by this court in a series of decisions and laches and delay has been considered to be an important factor in exercise of the discretionary relief under Article 226 of the Constitution. When a person who is not vigilant of his rights and acquiesces with the situation, can his writ petition be heard after a couple of years on the ground that same relief should be granted to him as was granted to person similarly situated who was vigilant about his rights and challenged his retirement which was said to be made on attaining the age of 58 years. A chart has been supplied to us in which it has been pointed out that about 9 writ petitions were filed by the employees of the Nigam before their retirement wherein their retirement was somewhere between 30.6.2005 and 31.7.2005. Two writ petitions were filed wherein no relief of interim order was passed. They were granted interim order. Thereafter a spate of writ petitions followed in which employees who retired in the years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005, woke up to file writ petitions in 2005 and 2006 much after their retirement. Whether such persons should be granted the same relief or not?*

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16. *Therefore, in case at this belated stage if similar relief is to be given to the persons who have not approached the court that will unnecessarily overburden the Nigam and the Nigam will completely collapse with the liability of payment to these persons in terms of two years' salary and increased benefit of pension and other consequential benefits. Therefore, we are not inclined to grant any relief to the persons who have approached the court after their retirement. Only those persons who have filed the writ petitions when they were in service or who have obtained interim order for their retirement, those persons should be allowed to stand*



to benefit and not others.

(Emphasis Supplied).”

8. *The issue of delay was also dealt with by this Court in **Tarsem Pal vs. Punjab State Power Corporation Limited and others, 2013 (3)SLR 314**. In the case of Tarsem Pal(supra), the petitioner was serving as a Clerk with the respondent-Corporation and had retired on 31.03.2005. Claim in the writ petition was to grant to him the benefit of proficiency set up in the pay scale on completion of 23 years of service from the due date as per policy of the Corporation. During the service career, he had not agitated the claim for increments. For the first time, such claim had been made on 28.02.2005 i.e. just one month prior to superannuation. While non-suiting the petitioner on account of delay and laches it was held as follows:-*

“11. In the aforesaid judgments, it has been clearly laid down that discretionary relief in a writ jurisdiction is available to a party who is alive of his rights and enforces the same in court within reasonable time. The judgment in another case does not give a cause of action to file a writ petition at a belated stage seeking the same relief. Such petitions can be dismissed on account of delay and laches. As has already been noticed above in the present case as well, the petitioner joined service in the year 1965 and retired in the year 2005, but raised the issue regarding benefit of proficiency step up in the pay scale on completion of 23 years of service from the due date more than five years after his retirement referring to a judgment of this court and filed the petition claiming the same relief.

12. The petitioner retired from service on 31.3.2005 and the claim pertaining to the benefit of proficiency step up, which may be admissible to the petitioner during his service career, was sought to be raised more than five years after his retirement, the claim made at such a late stage deserves to be dismissed on account of delay and laches only. The petitioner could raise a grievance about the pay scales admissible to him or the last pay drawn by him within a reasonable time after his retirement. He cannot be permitted to raise the same at any time on the plea that the same is recurring cause of action.



13. *Considering the enunciation of law, as referred to above, in my opinion, the petitioner herein is not entitled to the relief prayed for and the petition deserves to be dismissed merely on account of delay and laches.”*

9. *At this stage, counsel appearing for the petitioners would make an attempt to overcome the obstacle of delay by placing reliance upon a Full Bench Judgment of this Court in **Saroj Kumar vs. State of Punjab, 1998(3) SCT 664**. Counsel would argue that as per dictum laid down in Saroj Kumar's case(supra), matters of pay fixation involve a recurring cause of action and as such, writ petitions for such claim cannot be dismissed on the ground of delay and laches and the Court at the most, may restrict the arrears upto 38 months from the date of filing of the petition and disallow the arrears for the period for which even a suit had become time barred.*

10. *The reliance placed by counsel upon the judgment in Saroj Kumar's case, is wholly misplaced. The observations and aspect of delay in Saroj Kumar's case, were in the light of the judgment of the Supreme Court in **M.R. Gupta vs. Union of India and others, 1996(1) SCT 8 : 1995(4) RSJ 502**. In M.R. Gupta's case(supra), it had been categorically held that so long as an employee “is in service” a fresh cause of action arises every month when he is getting his monthly salary on the basis of a wrong calculation made contrary to rules. It was further held that the claim to be awarded the correct salary on the basis of a proper pay fixation “is a right which subsists during the entire tenure of service”.*

11. **In the present case, however the petitioners choose not to agitate their claim while in service. It is much subsequent to their superannuation that they have woken up and seek to gain impetus from certain decisions that may have been rendered in the case of similarly situated employees.**

12. *Considering the dictum of law as laid down in Chariman, U.P. Jal Nigam's case (supra), **the petitioners herein are not entitled to any relief as prayed for and the petition deserves to be dismissed on the sole ground of delay and laches.***

13. *Ordered accordingly.”*



9. A Division Bench of this Court in ***H.S. Gill Vs. Union of India and others : 2016(2) SCT 477***, has held that an employee cannot claim the revised pay scale after retirement once he has been receiving the pay scale granted by the employer for the last 09 years. The relevant portion from the said judgment, reads as under:-

“14. The petitioner is also not entitled to any relief on account of principle of delay and laches. He has been receiving the pay in the pay scale of Rs.6500-10500 right from his transfer to CSIO, Chandigarh i.e. 2.7.2002. For the first time, he moved the representation on 29.8.2011, so, he kept mum for about 9 years. Thus, the claim of the petitioner is highly belated and stale.”

10. In the present case, the petitioners, who are fence sitter, are claiming pay scale of Rs.1200-2100 w.e.f. 01.01.1986 to 18.10.1992, whereas they have approached this Court in April, 2026 i.e. after a delay of more than 40 years. Further, all the petitioners, except petitioners No.22 & 24, have already been retired from service, on attaining the age of superannuation. Such belated invocation of the writ jurisdiction, without furnishing any satisfactory explanation for the prolonged silence, defeats the very object of equitable relief and disentitles the petitioners from any discretionary relief under Article 226 of the Constitution of India.

11. Moreover, the petitioners, except petitioners No.16, 17 & 18, have filed the instant petition without approaching the competent authority for redressal of their grievances. They have never raised the said grievance, while they were in service.



12. In view of the abovesaid discussion and the settled legal position, the present petition is dismissed on the ground of gross delay and laches with no order as to cost.

17.04.2026

Kothiyal

(NAMIT KUMAR)
JUDGE

Whether Speaking/reasoned
Whether Reportable

Yes/No
Yes/No