

24.07.2014  
S.D

W.P. No. 21192 (W) of 2014

Aditya Ranjan Das

-vs-

The State of West Bengal & Ors.

Mrs. Sabita Khutia (Bhunya)

... for the Petitioner.

None appears on behalf of the respondents when the matter is called on. No accommodation is prayed for. Let affidavit-of-service be kept on record.

This writ petition is filed by the writ petitioner for a direction upon the respondent authorities to pay interest on arrear pension for belated payment of the same.

Having heard the learned Counsel appearing for the respective parties and also considering the facts and circumstances of the case, I find that the petitioner was an Assistant Teacher of Chaka N. High School, District-Bankura and the petitioner retired from the above service on May 31, 2008 on attaining the age of retirement on superannuation.

First payment was made to the petitioner on September 29, 2008. First payment on the basis of revision was made on December 31, 2011.

A prayer is made on behalf of the petitioner not to press the claim of interest on pension in respect of first payment for delayed payment of the same and to confine the prayer of the petitioner in respect of the benefit of West Bengal Non-Government Aided Educational Institutions Employees (Revision of Pay and Allowances) Rules, 2009 or interest for delayed payment of that benefit, as the case may be.

The point of law, which is involved in this writ application on an almost similar issue of delayed payment of gratuity, has already been settled by a judgment delivered by a Single Bench of this Court in W.P. 10750 (W) of 2007 on July 9, 2008 in the matter of Abha Acharya –vs- State of West Bengal & Others. In the above case the petitioner was a primary school teacher and there was delay in releasing his gratuity money. Operative portion of the above decision is quoted below :

*“Following the said Judgment and/or Order, I dispose of W.P. No. 1867 (W) of 2007 on 04.04.2008 and in other similar matters, I observed that since the issue was similar, the Order that I had passed in the said W.P. No. 1867 (W) of 2007 should govern those cases also.*

*However today when this huge file of cases were heard, a submission was made which was not made in the cases before me referred to above, and which was to the effect that there cannot be any adjudication on the question as to who was responsible for delay in matters pertaining to payment of gratuity because the entitlement to gratuity is automatic and is to be paid on the very day the person retires. Even the learned Advocate General did not dispute this contention and very frankly and fairly stated that so far as the gratuity is concerned, it has to be paid on the date the person retires with the only exception that it can be withheld in cases where a departmental action is pending against the concerned employee.”*

On the basis of the above observation, direction was given to the respondent authority to pay interest of gratuity at the rate of 10% per annum. I do not find any reason for disagreeing with the above decision on the point involved in an almost similar issue of delayed payment of gratuity.

Accordingly, I direct the respondent authority to give 9% interest per annum on the revised arrear pension amount paid to the petitioner from May 19, 2009, i.e. the date of issuing G.O. No.74-SE(B)/1M-4/2009 dated May 19, 2009 till the date of its actual payment. Such payment shall be made within 90 days from the date of

communication of this order along with copy of this writ application upon the Director of Pension, Provident Fund and Group Insurance, Government of West Bengal as also the concerned Treasury Officer.

It is further made clear that failure on the part of the respondent authority to pay the aforesaid interest within the stipulated time, an additional interest at the rate of 2% per annum shall be paid to the petitioner.

It is necessary to point out that the rate of interest is fixed at 9% per annum taking into consideration the highest rate of interest payable by a nationalised bank on fixed deposit.

The writ petition, is, thus, disposed of. However, there will be no order as to costs.

Urgent photostat certified copy be supplied to the parties, if applied for, on priority basis.

(Debasish Kar Gupta, J.)