

Reserved Judgment**ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL, REGIONAL BENCH, LUCKNOW
(CIRCUIT BENCH AT NAINITAL)****Original Application No. 457 of 2018****Thursday, this the 1st day of November, 2018****Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.V.S. Rathore, Member (J)****Hon'ble Air Marshal BBP Sinha, Member (A)**

No. 14505068K Ex Havildar/Hony Naib Subedar Shakhar Chandra
 S/o Shri Krishnanand Joshi
 R/o Village – Khankar
 Post Office – Khankar
 District – Bageshwar

.....Applicant

Ld. Counsel for the : **Ms. Shruti Joshi**, Advocate
 Applicant

Versus

1. Union of India through Secretary, Ministry of Defence,
Central Civil Secretariat, New Delhi.
2. Chief of the Army Staff,
Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Army),
New Delhi.
3. Director Pension/Policy,
Government of India,
Ministry of Defence, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare,
New Delhi.
4. Senior Record Officer, EME, Secunderabad - 500021.
5. P.C.D.A.P. (Pension), Allahabad.

...Respondents

Ld. Counsel for the: **Dr. Shailendra Sharma Atal**,
 Respondents. Govt Standing Counsel

ORDER

“Hon’ble Mr. Justice S.V.S. Rathore, Member (J)”

1. The instant Original Application has been filed on behalf of the applicant under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007, and he has claimed the reliefs as under:-

“Humble petitioner/applicant seeks prayer to summon the entire records regarding the pension of the petitioner and to grant of pension benefits as per the recommendation of 6th Central pay Commission to the pre 1.1.2006 retirees and consequently to direct the respondents to extend the benefits of the letter dated 12.6.2009 to the petitioner/applicant with arrears w.e.f. 1.1.2006 who retired prior to 1.1.2006, and the due arrears from 01/01/2006 to 30/06/2014 may be given to the petitioner.”

2. Since grant of pension is a recurring cause of action, delay in filing the Original Application has been condoned vide order dated 10.09.2018.

3. Heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the record.

4. The fact of the case is that the applicant was enrolled in the Army on 21.06.1971 and he was discharged from service on 30.06.1995 on completion of terms and conditions in the Army in the rank of Havildar. He was bestowed honorary rank of Naib Subedar after retirement effective from 15.08.1995. The grouse of the applicant is that though he was sanctioned service pension of the rank of Havildar, he was not paid the pension and pensionary benefits associated with the post of Naib Subedar as per the recommendations made by the 6th Pay Commission. Learned Counsel for the applicant submitted that despite several orders and judgments passed by the Armed Forces Tribunals on the subject and reinforcement of the same from Hon’ble Apex Court, he has not been given the said benefit.

5. Precise submissions made by the learned counsel for the applicant is that notwithstanding recommendations of the 6th Pay Commission for grant of pension for honorary rank of Naib Subedar having been accepted as contained in Govt. Policy letter dated 12.06.2009 and circulated by the Adjutant General's Branch by letter dated 06.07.2009, the same has not yet been extended to him. The applicant is not getting pension of the rank of Hony Naib Subedar w.e.f. 01.01.2006 inspite of Corrigendum PPO issued vide PPO No. S/Corr/6th CPC/228419/2013 dated 25.11.2013 in the rank of Hony Naib Subedar. To support his submission on this count, learned counsel for the applicant further submitted that in **O.A No 42 of 2010 Virendra Singh and others v Union of India**, the Regional Bench of Armed Forces Tribunal at Chandigarh vide its order dated 8.2.2010 had allowed the relief similar to the relief as prayed by the applicant in this case and this decision of the Tribunal was taken in challenge by the Union of India before **Hon'ble The Apex Court in SLP No 18582 of 2010**. The said SLP, it is stated, culminated in being dismissed by Hon'ble The Apex Court vide order dated 13.12.2010.

6. **Per contra**, Learned Counsel for the respondents submitted that the applicant was bestowed honorary rank after retirement on 15.08.1995 and his service pension was revised from time to time as per policy of the Government of India in the rank of Havildar. He further submitted that since the applicant had not been granted honorary rank during service, he was not eligible for service pension at par with Honorary Naib Subedar discharged on or after 1st Jan 2006. He also submitted that the Government of India, Ministry of Defence vide letter No 1(8)/2008-D (Pen/Policy) dated

12th June 2009 has announced the policy decision whereby the benefit has been extended to the personnel who retired on or after 01.01.2006. Since, the applicant is pre 01.01.2006 retiree, he is not eligible for grant of service pension in the rank of Hony Naib Subedar under the provision of Government letter dated 12.06.2009.

7. In the matter of benefits whether to be extended to Havildar who was conferred honorary rank of Naib Subedar before 01.01.2006, the Learned Counsel for the applicant relied upon the judgment and order dated 8.2.2010 in the case of **O.A No 42 of 2010 Virendra Singh and Ors Vs. Union of India and Ors** passed by a Regional Bench of the Armed Forces Tribunal at Chandigarh. It may be noticed that in that case, a question had arisen in regard to the implementation of the orders **whether the petitioners and others who were granted honorary rank of Naib Subedars were to be entitled to a sum of Rs 100/- per month as honorary Naib Subedars in addition to their pension as Havildars or were entitled to the pension of a Naib Subedar**. On a further question raised in that case based upon the Government of India Ministry of Defence by means of letter dated 3.6.2009, it was mentioned in the said order that this letter takes effect from 01.01.2006. On yet another question whether these benefit is to be extended to Havildar granted honorary rank of Naib Subedar on or after 01.01.2006, it was held by the Court that the date **“01.01.2006”** is the date when this letter came into effect and it does not carry connotation that the persons who retired pre- 01.01.2006 would not be entitled to these benefits.

8. It follows from the above decision that the benefits as extended by that decision apply to all whether he was pre-01.01.2006 retiree or post -

01.01.2006 retiree. It is important to note that appeal by Union of India against the above order of the Armed Forces Tribunal Chandigarh Bench was dismissed by the Hon'ble Apex Court.

9. We further take note of the fact that the matter has been finally settled by the Apex Court in **Union of India & Ors vs. Subhash Chander Soni, Civil Appeal No. 4677 of 2014**, decided on 20.05.2015 and a clarification has been given that no interest shall be payable in such cases. For the sake of convenience, the said judgment is reproduced below :-

“From the reading of the impugned judgment of the Armed Forces Tribunal, it gets revealed that the Tribunal has relied upon its earlier judgment dated 8.2.2010 rendered in O.A. No 42 of 2010 titled as “Virendra Singh and Ors v. U.O.I” where identical relief was granted to the petitioners therein who were similarly situated. Further, we note that against the said judgment of the Tribunal, SLP (c) CC No 18582 of 2010 was preferred which was dismissed by this Court on 13.12.2010. We further find that by the impugned judgment, the Tribunal had decided 35 O.As and the Union of India has preferred the instant appeal only in one of those 35 cases. For all these reasons, we are not inclined to entertain this appeal which is dismissed accordingly. We, however, clarify that no interest shall be payable.

Two months' time is granted to the appellants to comply with the impugned judgment passed by the High Court.”

10. Keeping in view the settled position enunciated in **Virendra Singh's** case (supra), we are of the considered view that the applicant is entitled for the pension of the rank of Hony Naib Subedar with effect from 01.01.2006.

11. Thus, in the result, the Original Application No. 457 of 2018 is **allowed**. Based on the Government letter dated 12.06.2009, the respondents are directed to release the enhanced/revised service pension to the applicant

in the rank of Hony Naib Subedar w.e.f. 01.01.2006. The respondents are also directed to comply with the order within four months from the date of receipt of the certified copy of the order, further making it clear that no interest shall be admissible and payable to the applicant in this regard. In case, the respondents fail to comply with the order within the stipulated period, the amount payable shall start earning interest @ 9% per annum from the date of order.

No order as to costs.

(Air Marshal BBP Sinha)
Member (A)

(Justice S.V.S. Rathore)
Member (J)

Dated : November, 2018
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