

Court No. 1**ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL, REGIONAL BENCH, LUCKNOW****ORIGINAL APPLICATION No. 96 of 2022**Friday, this the 15th day of July, 2022**“Hon’ble Mr. Justice Umesh Chandra Srivastava, Member (J)
Hon’ble Vice Admiral Abhay Raghunath Karve, Member (A)”**

Ex. Rect. B.R. Konar, Service No. 14601446-P, Son of Sri S.D. Konar, 70, Dayal Nagar, Shahganj, District – Agra, Uttar Pradesh-282010.

..... ApplicantLd. Counsel for the Applicant : **Shri V.K. Chahar**, Advocate

Versus

1. Union of India through the Secretary, Government of India, Ministry of Defence, South Block, New Delhi-110011.
2. The Chief of the Army Staff, Integrated HQs of MoD (Army), Post – DHQ, New Delhi-110011.
3. The Officer - in - Charge, The Records EME, Secunderabad-21.
4. The PCDA (P), Draupadi Ghat, Alahabad, PIN – 211014 (U.P.).

..... RespondentsLd. Counsel for the Respondents. : **Ms. Deepti Prasad Bajpai**, Advocate
Central Govt. Counsel**ORDER****“Per Hon’ble Mr. Justice Umesh Chandra Srivastava, Member (J)”**

1. The instant Original Application has been filed under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007 for the following reliefs:-

This Hon'ble Armed Forces Tribunal may be pleased to pass an order or any other direction to call upon the Respondents to produce the records in respect of Impugned Order N. 14601446P/DP-4/Pen dated 29th Jan 2021 and set aside the same and direct the Respondents to –

- (i) accept/declare the ID "SCHIZOPHRENIA" of the Applicant as aggravated by the Military Service.*
- (ii) Grant disability pension to the Applicant @30% w.e.f. 23rd Jun 1987, with the benefits of broad banding @50%, with all consequential benefits.*

and pass such further or other orders as this Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit & proper in the circumstances of the case and thus render justice.

2. Briefly stated facts of the case are that applicant was enrolled in the Corps of EME of Indian Army on 21.12.1986 and was invalided out from service on 23.06.1987 (AN) in Low Medical Category under Rule 13 (3) Item III (iii) of the Army Rules, 1954 after rendering 06 months and 02 days of service. At the time of invalidation from service, the Invaliding Medical Board (IMB) held at Military Hospital, Secunderabad on 10.06.1987 assessed his disability '**SCHIZOPHRENIA (ICD NO. 295)**' @30% for two years and opined the disability to be neither attributable to nor aggravated

(NANA) by service. The applicant's claim for grant of disability pension was rejected vide letter dated 02.03.1988 which was communicated to the applicant vide letter dated 30.04.1988. The applicant preferred Petition dated 26.05.1998 which replied vide letter dated 15.07.1998. The applicant again preferred Petition dated 24.02.2017 which too was rejected vide letter dated 06.06.2017. The applicant preferred another Petition dated 10.12.2021 which too was rejected vide letter dated 29.01.2021. It is in this perspective that the applicant has preferred the present Original Application.

3. Ld. Counsel for the applicant pleaded that the applicant was enrolled in the Army in medically and physically fit condition. It was further pleaded that an individual is to be presumed in sound physical and mental condition upon entering service if there is no note or record to the contrary at the time of entry. In the event of his subsequently being invalided out from service on medical grounds, any deterioration in his health is to be presumed due to service conditions. The Ld. Counsel for the applicant, on account of aforesaid, pleaded for disability pension to be granted to the applicant.

4. On the other hand, Ld. Counsel for the respondents submitted that since the IMB has opined the disability as NANA, the applicant is not entitled to disability pension. He further accentuated that the applicant is not entitled to disability pension in terms of Regulation 173 of Pension Regulations for the Army, 1961 (Part-I), which stipulates *that, "Unless otherwise specifically provided a disability pension consisting of service element and disability element may be granted to an individual who is invalided out of service on account of a disability which is attributable to or aggravated by military service in non-battle casualty and is assessed at 20 per cent or over. The question whether a disability is attributable to or aggravated by military service shall be determined under the rule in Appendix II."* Accordingly, the applicant was informed about the rejection/non-entitlement of disability pension. He pleaded that in the facts and circumstances, as stated above, Original Application deserves to be dismissed.

5. We have heard Ld. Counsel for the parties and perused the material placed on record.

6. On careful perusal of the documents, it has been observed that the applicant was enrolled on 21.12.1986,

and the disease applicant was found to be suffering with in medical test first started in July, 1985, i.e. prior to joining of service.

7. In the above scenario, we are of the opinion that since the disease has started before his enrolment, hence by no stretch of imagination, it can be concluded that it has been caused by stress and strains of military service. Additionally, it is well known that mental disorders can escape detection at the time of enrolment, hence benefit of doubt cannot be given to the applicant merely on the ground that the disease could not be detected at the time of enrolment. Since there is no causal connection between the disease and military service, we are in agreement with the opinion of the IMB that the disease is NANA. In view of the foregoing and the fact that the disease manifested before enrolment in Army, we are in agreement with the opinion of IMB that the disease is NANA.

8. Apart from above, in similar factual background this Tribunal had dismissed the claim for disability pension in T.A. No. 1462/2010 vide order dated 23.05.2011, wherein the applicant was enrolled on 21.01.2000 and was discharged on 27.04.2000, as he was suffering from

Schizophrenia. Said disability was assessed @ 80% for two years and it was opined by the Medical Board to be neither attributable to nor aggravated by military service. The said order has been upheld by the Hon'ble Apex Court in Civil Appeal arising out of Dy. No. 30684/2017, *Bhartendu Kumar Dwivedi Versus Union of India and Others*, decided on November 20, 2017, by dismissing Civil Appeal on delay as well as on merits.

9. Additionally, in Civil Appeal No 7672 of 2019 in ***Ex Cfn NarsinghYadavvs Union of India &Ors***, decided on 03.10.2019, it has again been held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court that mental disorders cannot be detected at the time of recruitment and their subsequent manifestation (in this case after about three years of service) does not entitle a person for disability pension unless there are very valid reasons and strong medical evidence to dispute the opinion of Medical Board. Relevant part of the aforesaid judgment as given in para 20 is as below :-

"20. In the present case, clause 14 (d), as amended in the year 1996 and reproduced above, would be applicable as entitlement to disability pension shall not be considered unless it is clearly established that the cause

of such disease was adversely affected due to factors related to conditions of military service. Though, the provision of grant of disability pension is a beneficial provision but, mental disorder at the time of recruitment cannot normally be detected when a person behaves normally. Since there is a possibility of non-detection of mental disorder, therefore, it cannot be said that 'Paranoid Schizophrenia (F 20.0)' is presumed to be attributed to or aggravated by military service.

21. Though, the opinion of the Medical Board is subject to judicial review but the courts are not possessed of expertise to dispute such report unless there is strong medical evidence on record to dispute the opinion of the Medical Board which may warrant the constitution of the Review Medical Board. The Invaliding Medical Board has categorically held that the appellant is not fit for further service and there is no material on record to doubt the correctness of the Report of the Invaliding Medical Board."

10. In view of the above, the Original Application is devoid of merit and deserves to be dismissed. It is accordingly **dismissed**.

11. No order as to costs.

12. Pending applications, if any, are disposed of accordingly.

(Vice Admiral Abhay Raghunath Karve) (Justice Umesh Chandra Srivastava)
Member (A) Member (J)

Dated : 15 July, 2022

AKD/-