COURT No.3
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ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH: NEW DELHI

11

OA 2066/2025 with MA 2888/2025 & 2889/2025

Ex Hav (OFC) Naresh Kumar & Ors. ..... Applicant
VERSUS
Union of India and Ors. ..... Respondents

For Applicant : Mr. Ravi Kumar &
Surendra Singh, Advocates
For Respondents : Ms. Sheetal Raghuvanshi, Advocate

CORAM

HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE NANDITA DUBEY, MEMBER (J)
HON'BLE MS. RASIKA CHAUBE, MEMBER (A)

ORDER
15.07.2025

MA 2888/2025

For the reasons stated in this application, the same is allowed. The applicants are allowed to join together by filing one single application for redressal of their grievances.

MA 2889/2025

2. Keeping in view the averments made in the miscellaneous application and finding the same to be bona fide, in the light of the decision in *Union of India and others Vs. Tarsem Singh*[(2008) 8 SCC 648], the MA is allowed condoning the delay of 3978 days in respect of

applicant no. 1 and 3788 days in respect of applicant no. 2 in filing the OA. The MA stands disposed of.

OA 2066/2025

3. The applicants vide the present OA make the following prayers:-

> *"(a) To quash the MoD, policy letter dated 04.01.2023 and 04.09.2024 (Annexure A1& A2, respectively) (impugned orders), only to the extent containing provision, whereby respondents have fixed the cutoff date and unlawful criteria, viz, ".... (except pensioners retired on or after 01.07.2014 on premature retirement/own request)" as the said criteria and cutoff date is discriminatory, arbitrary, illegal and in violation of the constitutional provisions as well as it is contrary to the provisions provided under Para 4 of Principle OROP Policy letter dated 07.11.2015.*
>
> *(b) To issue appropriate directions to the respondents to grant the benefits of the OROP Scheme to the applicants with effect from the respective dates of their discharge from service, as mentioned against each of their names above, and to continue extending such benefits thereafter in accordance with law.*
>
> *(c) To direct the respondents to issue corrigendum PPO and re-fix the pension at enhanced rate as applicable in OROP-III and pay arrears of all OROP Schemes with the interest @12% p.a. wef date of discharge as shown against each.*
>
> *(d) To pass such orders, direction/directions as this Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit and proper in accordance with law."*

4. Notice of the OA is issued and accepted on behalf of the respondents.

5. The applicants in this OA are premature retirees (having discharged prior to 07.11.2015) seeking the benefits of OROP and consequential benefits arising therefore with applicable interest on arrears till the realization of actual payment as per Policy letter no. 12(1)/2014/D(Pen/Pol)-Part II dated 07.11.2015.

6. Their claim for the grant of OROP benefits was denied on the ground that benefits of OROP are not applicable for premature retirees who got premature retirement w.e.f. 01.07.2014.

7. The applicants have placed reliance on the order dated 31.01.2025 in OA 313/2022 of the AFT (PB) New Delhi in ***Cdr Gaurav Mehra*** vs ***Union of India*** and other connected cases to submit to the effect that they are entitled to the grant of the OROP benefits.

8. In view of the factum that vide order dated 15.04.2025 in RA 9/2025 in OA 426/2023 the matter has been kept in abeyance in relation to only those applicants, who have filed applications for premature retirement after 06.11.2015. The applicants herein who had sought premature voluntary retirement and was even discharged before the date 06.11.2015, will not be affected by the same and is apparently entitled to the grant of the OROP benefits in terms of the order dated 31.01.2025 in OA 313/2022.

9. Apparently, the applicants who were discharged from service prior to the date 07.11.2015 on the basis of their having sought premature retirement are entitled to the grant of the OROP benefits and the matter is no longer in issue in view of observations in paragraphs 83 and 84 in OA 313/2022 of the AFT (PB) New Delhi in ***Cdr Gaurav Mehra*** vs ***Union of India*** and other connected cases, which read to the effect:-

> *"83. Pensioners form a common category as indicated in detail hereinabove. PMR personnel who qualify for pension are also included in this general category. The pension regulations and rules applicable to PMR personnel who qualify for pension are similar to that of a regular pensioner retiring on superannuation or on conclusion of his terms of appointment. However, now by applying the policy dated 07.11.2015 with a stipulation henceforth, the prospective application would mean that a right created to PMR pensioner, prior to the issue of impugned policy is taken away in the matter of grant of benefit of OROP. This will result in, a vested right available to a PMR personnel to receive pension at par with a regular pensioner, being taken away in the course of implementation of the OROP scheme as per impugned policy. Apart from creating a differentiation in a homogeneous class, taking away of this vested right available to a PMR personnel, violates mandate of the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in various cases i.e.* ***Ex-Major N.C. Singhal vs. Director General Armed Forces Medical Services*** *(1972) 4 SCC 765,* ***Ex. Capt. K.C. Arora and Another Vs. State of Haryana and Others*** *(1984) 3 SCC 281 and this also makes the action of the respondents unsustainable in law.*
>
> *84. Even if for the sake of argument it is taken note of that there were some difference between the aforesaid categories, but the personnel who opted for PMR forming a homogenous class; and once it is found that every person in the Army, Navy and the Air Force who seeks PMR forms a homogenous category in the matter of granting benefit of OROP, for such personnel*

no policy can be formulated which creates differentiation in this homogeneous class based on the date and time of their seeking PMR. The policy in question impugned before us infact bifurcates the PMR personnel into three categories; viz pre 01.07.2014 personnel, those personnel who took PMR between 01.07.2014 and 06.11.2015 and personnel who took PMR on or after 07.11.2015. Merely based on the dates as indicated hereinabove, differentiating in the same category of PMR personnel without any just cause or reason and without establishing any nexus as to for what purpose it had been done, we have no hesitation in holding that this amounts to violating the rights available to the PMR personnel under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution as well as hit by the principles of law laid down by the Supreme Court in the matter of fixing the cut off date and creating differentiation in a homogeneous class in terms of the judgment of D.S. Nakara (supra) and the law consistently laid down thereinafter and, therefore, we hold that the provisions contained in para 4 of the policy letter dated 07.11.2015 is discriminatory in nature, violates Article 14 of the Constitution and, therefore, is unsustainable in law and cannot be implernented and we strike it down and direct that in the matter of grant of OROP benefit to PMR personnel, they be treated uniformly and the benefit of the scheme of OROP be granted to them without any discrimination in the matter of extending the benefit to certain persons only and excluding others like the applicants on the basis of fixing cut off dates as indicated in this order. The OAs are allowed and disposed of without any order as to costs.",_

read with order dated 15.04.2025 in RA 9 of 2025 in OA 426 of 2023 with observations in para 6 which read to the effect:-

"6. With respect to the classification of the original applicants into three categories, we are of the considered view that the issue for review is relevant only to categories (b) and (c). ***For applicants in category (b), those who applied for the PMR between 01.07.2014 to 06.11.2015, the principles advanced by the learned Assistant Solicitor General will not apply considering the prospective nature of the memorandum dated 07.11.2015. Therefore, the prayer for review concerning these original applicants i.e., Cat (B) stands rejected.***

6(A). For the original applicants who applied for the PMR after the policy dated 07.11.2015 came into effect (category c), the non-applicants (UoI) are directed to serve notice through the respective counsels who represented them in the original application. If the counsel who appeared in the original OAs accepts notice on behalf of the said original applicants, service may be considered complete. In case any counsel does not accept notice, notice to such original applicants be served by speed post. After service the original applicants shall have four weeks to file any reply or objections to the RA, through their counsel if so advised."

(emphasis supplied)

10. Further, in view of the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Lt Col Suprita Chandel*** vs ***Union of India and Ors*** (Civil Appeal No. 1943 of 2022) vide Paras 14 and 15 thereof to the effect:-

"14. It is a well settled principle of law that where a citizen aggrieved by an action of the government department has approached the court and obtained a declaration of law in his/her favour, others similarly situated ought to be extended the benefit without the need for them to go to court. [See Amrit Lal Berry vs. Collector of Central Excise, New Delhi and Others, (1975) 4 SCC 714]

15. In K.I. Shephard and Others vs. Union of India and Others, (1987) 4 SCC 431, this Court while reinforcing the above principle held as under:-

"19. The writ petitions and the appeals must succeed. We set aside the impugned judgments of the Single Judge and Division Bench of the Kerala High Court and direct that each of the three transferee banks should take over the excluded employees on the same terms and conditions of employment under the respective banking companies prior to amalgamation. The employees would be entitled to the benefit of continuity of service for all purposes including salary and perks throughout the period. We leave it open to the

transferee banks to take such action as they consider proper against these employees in accordance with law. Some of the excluded employees have not come to court. There is no justification to penalise them for not having litigated. They too shall be entitled to the same benefits as the petitioners. ....."

(emphasis Supplied)

In view of the aforestated, the applicants are entitled to the grant of the relief as prayed.

11. In view thereof, subject to verification of the date and nature of discharge of the applicants, the respondents are accordingly directed to extend the benefits of OROP to the applicants.

12. The OA 2066/2025 is thus allowed.

(JUSTICE NANDITA DUBEY)
MEMBER (J)

(MS. RASIKA CHAUBE)
MEMBER (A)

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