

(2012) 10 CAL CK 0041
In the Calcutta High Court
Case No : Writ Petition No. 23659 (W) of 2012

Jharna Palit

APPELLANT

Vs

The State of West Bengal and Others

RESPONDENT

Date of Decision : 18-10-2012

Acts Referred:

Constitution of India, 1950 — Article 226
Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 — Section 8

Citation : (2012) 10 CAL CK 0041

Hon'ble Judges : Jayanta Kumar Biswas, J

Bench : Single Bench

Advocate : Susanta Pal, for the Appellant; Benazir Ahmed for the State and Mr. Pantu Deb Roy, Jaladhi Das for CTC, for the Respondent

Judgement

Hon''ble Mr. Justice Jayanta Kumar Biswas

1. The petitioner in this WP under art. 226 dated October 16, 2012 is alleging that for undisclosed reasons the respondents, liable to pay service benefits of her husband and not disputing her entitlement and their liability, have not paid the benefits. It is not disputed that the husband of the petitioner retired from services of Calcutta Tramways Company (in short CTC) on December 31, 2010, and that CTC incurred an obligation to pay him gratuity, leave salary, etc. on January 1, 2011. Nor is it disputed that CTC has not paid him the benefits.

2. Mr. Deb Roy appearing for CTC submits that the petitioner's husband was paid in excess of his entitlement; that the amount payable could not be paid for acute financial crisis; and that for gratuity the petitioner had a remedy under s. 8 of the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. He has relied on an unreported Division Bench decision dated March 27, 2012 in MAT No. 112 of 2012 (The Managing Director, CTC Ltd. & Ors. v. Munshi Abdul Rouf & Ors.).

3. In my opinion, financial crisis, if any, of CTC is not a ground to say that it was or is entitled to withhold the petitioner's gratuity, leave salary, pension,

commuted value of pension, etc. It was under an obligation to pay the benefits on January 1, 2011. By withholding the benefits it has caused irreparable loss and harassment to the petitioner. This is a litigation it has generated without any valid reason.

4. The plea that for gratuity the petitioner had a remedy under s. 8 of the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 is without any merit. Availability of a statutory remedy such as the one under s. 8 of the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 is not a bar to seek the art. 226 remedy. Besides, the petitioner's entitlement to gratuity and liability of CTC to pay gratuity both are undisputed.

5. In my opinion, CTC should be ordered to pay the petitioner all the benefits to which he is entitled. The relied on Division Bench decision does not entitle CTC to withhold the benefits or pay them in the manner it wishes. It is liable to pay interest. I think interest, if ordered at the rate of 7% p.a., will be fair and reasonable. For these reasons, I dispose of the WP directing CTC to pay the petitioner gratuity, leave salary, etc. according to law with interest at the rate of 7% p.a. from January 1, 2011, within four weeks from the date this order is served on it. No costs. Certified xerox.