

Form No.4
[(SEE RULE 11(1))]
IN THE ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL, REGIONAL BENCH, KOLKATA
ORDER SHEET

APPLICATION NO. O.A. No. 139/2016

APPLICANT (S)	COL ARUN SHARMA (RETD)
RESPONDENT (S)	UNION OF INDIA & ORS.
Legal Practitioner of applicant	Legal Practitioner for Respondent (s)
Mr. Aniruddha Datta	Mr. Tapas Kr. Chatterjee

<u>ORDERS OF THE TRIBUNAL</u>	
<u>Order Serial Number :</u> 12	<u>Dated :</u> 19-12-2017
Coram : Hon'ble Mr. Justice V. S. Ravi Member (J) Hon'ble Lt Gen Gautam Moorthy, Member (A)	
Present : Mr. Aniruddha Datta for the applicant. Mr. Tapas Kr. Chatterjee, learned counsel for the respondents as also Maj Deepali Malhotra, Departmental representative, present.	
<p>1. This O.A. has been filed under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007, praying for grant of Broad Banding benefit to the applicant. The applicant was commissioned in the Indian Army on 24.12.1982 and released on superannuation on 31.01.2016 in low medical category. The applicant is getting 20 per cent. disability element of pension for life by vide PPO issued by PCDA(P), Allahabad (Annexure A-2 collective)</p> <p>2. Since it is a case of "broad-banding" from 20% to 50% and the documents annexed to the instant application are not refuted by the respondents, we proceed to dispose of the case after hearing both sides in full.</p> <p>3. Heard learned counsel for the applicant and learned counsel for the respondents as also departmental representative present in court.</p> <p>4. The learned counsel for the applicant referring to the PPO issued by the competent authority submits that since the applicant is receiving disability element of pension at the rate of 20%, he is entitled to the benefit of "broad-banding" the same to 50% in terms of the order passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 10.12.2014 in Civil Appeal No. 418 of 2012 (Union of India & Ors. vs. Ram Avatar). The learned counsel, therefore, submits that a direction needs to be issued to the respondents to grant benefit of broad banding of the disability element of pension from 20% to 50% with arrears and interest thereon.</p> <p>5. The learned counsel for the respondents on the other hand, referring to the policy decision of Govt. of India dated 31.01.2001, has submitted that since the applicant has been released on superannuation, he is not entitled to the benefit of "broad-banding". The learned counsel has further submitted that the said</p>	

policy decision relates to grant of "broad-band" benefit to the persons who have been invalidated out from service.

6. We have considered the submissions advanced by the both parties.

7. It is not in dispute that the applicant was enrolled in Army service and released on superannuation in low medical category on 31.01.2016 on completion of about 33 years of colour service and he has been receiving the disability element of pension at the rate of 20% for life with effect from the date of his release, as it is evident from the PPO issued by the competent authority.

8. The issue relating to the grant of rounding off benefit of the disability element of pension is no longer res-integra in view of the order passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Ram Avatar (supra), whereby the Hon'ble Supreme Court has directed the respondents to grant the said benefit also to the personnel who have not only been invalidated out from service but to other categories also. The Govt. of India has also decided to implement the aforesaid direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court to grant the benefit of "broad-banding" the disability element of pension to the Armed Forces personnel, who have retired or discharged on completion of the term of engagement with disability aggravated by or attributable to military service from the date mentioned in the respective Court orders, which has been communicated by the Under Secretary to Govt. of India, Ministry of Defence, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare D(Pension/Legal) vide letter P.No.3(11)2010-D Pen/Legal-Pt.V dated 18.04.2016 to the Chiefs of all three services. Relevant portions of the letter is set out below :

"(a) The Hon'ble Supreme Court vide order dated 10.12.2014 dismissed more than 800 Civil Appeals tagged with Civil Appeal No. 418 of 2012 filed by the Union of India Vs. Ram Avtar challenging grant of broad banding of disability element by AFTs to Armed Force Personnel other than "Invalided out" from service. The Hon'ble Supreme Court ruled that an Armed Force Personnel retired on completion of tenure with disability aggravated by or attributable to military service is eligible for broad banding of disability pension/element.

(b) Accordingly, approval of competent authority is hereby conveyed for implementation of Court/AFTs orders granting broad banding of disability element to an armed force personnel retired or discharged on completion of terms of engagement with disability aggravated by or attributable to military service from the date mentioned in respective court orders."

9. That being the position, we are of the considered opinion that the applicant is entitled to the benefit of broad banding of the disability element of pension.

10. In view of the above, respondents are directed to pay the benefit of broad banding of the disability element of the pension to the applicant from 20% to 50%. The respondents are further directed to make payment of the arrears with effect from the date next to the date of release within four months from today,

in default thereof, the arrears shall carry interest @ 8 per cent per annum till the date of actual payment is made.

11. The OA is allowed accordingly. No costs.

12. Learned counsel appearing for the respondents has made an oral prayer to grant leave to appeal to Hon'ble Supreme Court U/Section 31 of the AFT Act, 2007. Since the order does not involve any question of law having general public importance, the prayer for leave to appeal to the Hon'ble Supreme Court stands rejected.

13. Let a plain copy of this order, duly countersigned by the Tribunal Officer, be given to the parties after observance of requisite formalities.

(Lt Gen Gautam Moorthy)
Member(Administrative)

(Justice V. S. Ravi)
Member(Judicial)

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