

**BEFORE THE UTTARAKHAND PUBLIC SERVICES TRIBUNAL
AT DEHRADUN**

CLAIM PETITION NO.21/SB/2026

Sri Mohan Lal, s/o Sri Rattan Lal Puri, aged about 61 years, r/o Ward No. 10, Tuntowala Mehwala mafi, Dehradun.

.....Petitioner

vs.

1. State of Uttarakhand, through Secretary, Medical, Health and Family Welfare, Government of Uttarakhand.
2. Director General, Medical, Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of Uttarakhand, Danda Lakhond, P.O. Gujrara, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun.
3. Procurement and Disbursement Officer, Medical Health, Directorate of Health, Danda Lakhond, P.O. Gujrara, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun.
4. The Director, Directorate of Pension, Treasury & Entitlement, 23 Laxmi Road, Dalanwala, Dehradun.

.....Respondents

Present: Sri Abhishek Divakar Chamoli & Ms. Manisha Kaintura, Advocates, for the petitioner.

Sri V.P. Devrani, A.P.O. for the State Respondents.

JUDGMENT

DATED: JANUARY 28, 2026.

Justice U.C. Dhyani (Oral)

By means of present claim petition, petitioner seeks the following reliefs:

"i) Quash and set aside the impugned order/letter dated 13/11/2025 whereby refixation of the pay of the petitioner is being done and recovery of ₹2,98,990/- has been ordered from the petitioner, as well as the consequential recovery reflected in the Pension Payment Order dated 27/11/2025;

ii. Direct the respondents to refix the pay of the petitioner correctly in accordance with law by granting the due benefit of proper pay fixation

on promotion and to refix the pension and other retiral benefits accordingly:

Direct the respondents to refund the recovered amount of 2,98,990/- to the petitioner forthwith, along with interest at such rate as this Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit;

iv. Restrain the respondents from effecting any further recovery from the pension or other retiral dues of the petitioner;

V. Issue an order or direction, directing the Respondents to pay applicable interest as this Hon'ble Tribunal deems fit on the delayed payment of retiral dues, namely:

a. Gratuity

b. Commutation of pension

c. Arrears of pension

d. GIS Amount

Calculating the delay from the date of entitlement (30.08.2025)

till the actual dates of payment.

vi. Award costs of the present claim petition in favour of the petitioner, and

vii. Pass such other and further orders as this Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case."

2. Claim petition is supported by the affidavit of the petitioner.

Relevant documents have been filed along with the petition.

3. Petitioner was appointed as 'Chowkidar' on 26.01.1996, a Group-D employee in the respondent department. He was promoted as Junior Assistant, Group-C, on 19.09.2016 in the pay scale of Rs.5200-20200 grade pay Rs.2000/-. On completion of 26 years of service, petitioner was granted benefit of 3rd ACP grade pay Rs.2800/- *vide* order dated 28.11.2016. Petitioner was further promoted to the post of Senior Assistant *vide* order date 15.04.2025 in the pay scale of Rs.29200-92300/-. He retired as Senior Assistant from the office of Respondent No.2, on attaining the age of superannuation on 30.08.2025.

4. It was informed to the petitioner by Respondent No.3, *vide* order dated 13.11.2025, that due to wrongful fixation of pay *w.e.f.* 20.09.2016, the pay of the petitioner has been revised, therefore, recovery of Rs.2,98,990/- is proposed to be made from the petitioner (Annexure: A-1) and, accordingly a

sum of Rs.2,98,990/- was recovered from the gratuity of the petitioner (Copy of PPO dated 27.11.2025- Annexure: A-8 *colly*).

5. Ld. Counsel for the petitioner submitted that recovery from gratuity, post-retirement, that too from a Group-C employee, specially when he had no role to pay in the alleged wrong fixation of salary, is not permissible in law.

6. Order dated 13.11.2025 issued by Respondent No.2 (Annexure: A-1) and pension payment order dated 27.11.2025, issued by Respondent No.4, are under challenge in present claim petition.

7. Ld. Counsel for the petitioner relied upon the decisions rendered by Hon'ble Apex Court in *Shyam Babu vs. Union of India*, (1994) 2SCC 521; *Sahib Ram vs. State of Haryana*, (1995) (Suppl) 1 SCC 18; *Syed Abdul Qadir vs. State of Bihar*, (2009) 3 SCC 475, on 02.05.2022 in Civil Appeal No. 7115 of 2010; *Thomas Daniel vs. State of Kerala & others*, & in Civil Appeal No. 13407/ 2014 with Civil Appeal No. 13409 of 2015, *B.Radhakrishnan vs. State of Tamil Nadu* on 17.11.2015, decisions rendered by Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court on 12.04.2018 in WPSS No. 1346 of 2016, *Smt. Sara Vincent vs. State of Uttarakhand and others*, in WPSS No. 1593 of 2021, *Balam Singh Aswal vs. Managing Director and others and connected writ petitions* on 14.06.2022 & in WPSS No. 363 of 2022 and connected petitions on 05.01.2024 and decision rendered by Hon'ble Madras High Court on 019.06.2019 in WP(MD) No. 23541/ 2015 and M.P. (MD) No. 1 of 2015, *M. Janki vs. The District Treasury Officer and another*, in this regard.

8. Ld. Counsel for the petitioner also submitted that in the decision rendered on 08.08.2024, in Claim Petition No.98/NB/SB/2022, *Smt. Archana Shukla vs. State of Uttarakhand and others*, the Tribunal has followed same view, which was taken by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Jogeshwar Sahoo and others vs. the District Judge, Cuttack & others, in civil appeal, arising out of SLP (C) No. 5918/2024*, while following the decision rendered by Hon'ble Court in *State of Punjab and others Vs. Rafiq Masih (White Washer) and others*, 2015 (4) SCC 334.

9. Similar situation, which is confronted by the petitioner in present petition, has been dealt with by the Hon'ble Apex Court in Jogeshwar Sahoo's decision (supra). Relevant extracts of the said decision are reproduced herein below for convenience:

"3. At the relevant time, the appellants were working as Stenographer Grade-I and Personal Assistant in the establishment of District Judiciary, Cuttack, Orissa. They were granted financial benefit for a sum of Rs 26,034/-, Rs.40713/-, Rs. 26539/-, Rs. 24683/- and Rs. 21,485/- by way of credit to their account vide Office Order No. 63 dated 10.05.2017 passed by the District Judge, Cuttack granting promotion/appointment retrospectively w.e.f 01.04.2003 consequent upon upgradation of the Stenographers in three grades such as Stenographer Grade-I, Stenographer Grade-II and Stenographer Grade-III by relying upon the recommendations of the respondent no. 1 in compliance towards the implementation of the report of the Shetty Commission.

4. After grant of such financial benefit, in the year 2017, the appellants have superannuated from their respective posts sometimes in the year 2020. After three years of their retirement and six years of granting the financial benefit, respondent no. 1 ordered for recovery of the said amount on the ground that extension of benefit of Shetty Commission's recommendations to the appellants were on an erroneous interpretation of such recommendations, therefore, the financial benefit granted to them is liable to be recovered and under orders dated 12.09.2023 and 08.09.2023, the appellants were directed to deposit the excess drawn arrears. Since the orders were passed without affording any opportunity of hearing to the appellants, they preferred a writ petition before the High Court which came to be dismissed under the impugned judgment and order.

5. Learned counsel appearing for the appellants argued that the appellants were granted financial benefit without there being any fraud or misrepresentation by them, therefore, recovery of the amount after three years of their retirement is illegal and arbitrary. It is argued that the High Court has failed to consider the settled legal position in catena of decisions of this Court wherein such recovery from a low paid employee after retirement have been held bad in law.

6. *Per contra*, learned counsel appearing for the respondents would support the impugned judgment on submission that the appellants were not entitled to the financial benefit extended to them and the order passed by the District Judge, Cuttack was affirmed by the High Court of Orissa in exercise of an administrative power, therefore, the recovery is justified. It is also argued that such financial benefit upon retrospective promotion was granted with the condition that excess amount, if any, paid shall be refunded by the appellants and the appellants have furnished their respective undertakings to the said effect, therefore, they are estopped from challenging the recovery.

7. The issue falling for our consideration is not about the legality of the retrospective promotion and the financial benefit granted to the appellants on 10.05.2017. The issue for consideration is whether recovery of the amount extended to the appellants while they were in service is justified after their retirement and that too without affording any opportunity of hearing.

8. The law in this regard has been settled by this Court in catena of judgments rendered time and again; Sahib Ram vs. State of Haryana, Shyam Babu Verma vs. Union of India, Union of India vs. M. Bhaskar and V. Gangaram vs. Regional Jt. Director and in a recent decision in the matter of Thomas Daniel vs. State of Kerala & Ors..

9. This Court has consistently taken the view that if the excess amount was not paid on account of any misrepresentation or fraud on the part of the employee or if such excess payment was made by the employer by applying a wrong principle for calculating the pay/allowance or on the basis of a particular interpretation of rule/order, which is subsequently found to be erroneous, such excess payments of emoluments or allowances are not recoverable. It is held that such relief against the recovery is not because of any right of the employee but in equity, exercising judicial discretion to provide relief to the employee from the hardship that will be caused if the recovery is ordered.

10. In Thomas Daniel (supra), this Court has held thus in paras 10, 11, 12 and 13:

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11. In the case at hand, the appellants were working on the post of Stenographers when the subject illegal payment was made to them. It is not reflected in the record that such payment was made to the appellants on account of any fraud or misrepresentation by them. It seems, when the financial benefit was extended to the appellants by the District Judge, Cuttack, the same was subsequently not approved by the High Court which resulted in the subsequent order of recovery. It is also not in dispute that the payment was made in the year 2017 whereas the recovery was directed in the year 2023. However, in the meanwhile, the appellants have retired in the year 2020. It is also an admitted position that the appellants were not afforded any opportunity of hearing before issuing the order of recovery. The appellants having superannuated on a ministerial post of Stenographer were admittedly not holding any gazetted post as such applying the principle enunciated by this Court in the above quoted judgment, the recovery is found unsustainable.

12. For the aforesaid, we are of the considered view that the appeal deserves to be allowed. Accordingly, we allow the appeal and set aside the order of the High Court and in consequence the orders dated 12.09.2023 and 08.09.2023 by

which the appellants were directed to deposit the excess drawn arrears are set aside."

[Emphasis supplied]

10. Refixation after giving opportunity of hearing (after notice) is, however, permissible in view of the decision rendered by Hon'ble Supreme Court, in Civil Appeal No.1985 of 2022, the State of Maharashtra and another vs. Madhukar Antu Patil and another, on 21.03.2022 and decision rendered by Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Allahabad on 17.12.2018 in Writ -A No. 26639/2018, Smt. Hasina Begum vs. Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd, Prayagraj and 02 others [Citation- 2018:AHC:204373].

11. Hon'ble Supreme Court, in the Madhukar Antu Patil (supra) has observed as below:

5., we are of the opinion that there shall not be any recovery on re-fixation of the pay scale. However, the respondent shall be entitled to the pension on the basis of the re-fixation of the pay scale

[Emphasis supplied]

12. Relevant paragraphs of the judgment rendered by Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Allahabad in the decision of Smt. Hasina Begum (supra), read as under:

"5. The Division Bench has placed reliance upon a similar case decided by them earlier of one Smt. Omwati who had filed Writ - A No. 28420 of 2016 and the Court had observed that no recovery of excess payment can be made from the writ petitioner although the respondents may correct the pension that had been wrongly fixed for future disbursement to the widow. For this conclusion arrived at by this Court reliance was placed on the Supreme Court's decision in State of Punjab and others Vs. Rafiq Masih (White Washer) and Ors., (2015) 4 SCC 334.

6. It is undisputed that some excess payment has been made to the petitioner. If some correction has been done by the respondents, they are entitled to correct and refix the family pension as the Supreme Court has observed in several cases that administrative mistake regarding the pay fixation or family pension can be corrected by the authorities. However, in view of the law settled by the Supreme Court in Rafiq Masih (supra) no recovery of excess payment allegedly made to the petitioner already can be done from her.

7. This writ petition is disposed off with a direction to the respondents to pay the correctly fixed pension from December, 2018 onward to the petitioner and not to make recovery of alleged excess payment already made to the petitioner due to wrong pay fixation earlier."

[Emphasis supplied]

13. The Tribunal, therefore observes that the petitioner is entitled to a refund of a sum Rs. 2,98,990/-, which was recovered from the gratuity of the petitioner, but it is afraid, he will not be entitled to any interest on the same. It has been observed in several decisions that the relief is to be granted on the basis of equity and not as a matter of right. It is not his entitlement. When an employee is not entitled to keep the money, as of right, then he is not entitled to interest. After all, it is public money/ tax payers' money, which was received by the recipient without any authority of law.

14. Ld. Counsel for the petitioner submitted that he will make a representation regarding refixation, which may kindly be directed to be decided by Respondent No.3, as expeditiously as possible, without unreasonable delay. Ld. A.P.O. has no objection to such innocuous prayer of Ld. Counsel for the petitioner.

15. The claim petition is disposed of, at the admission stage, by directing Respondent No.3 to decide the representation of the petitioner, in accordance with law, as expeditiously as possible, without unreasonable delay on presentation of certified copy of this order along with representation, enclosing the documents in support thereof.

(JUSTICE U.C.DHYANI)
CHAIRMAN

DATE: JANUARY 28, 2026
DEHRADUN

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