



IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA AT CUTTACK

**W.P.(C) Nos.7613, 9582, 9583, 9585, 9588, 9607, 9608,
9621, 9665, 9795, 9803, 9814, 9829, 9831, 9855,
9856, 9857, 10185, 10186, 10188, 10203, 10205 &
10254 of 2026**

**Manasmita Maharana and
Others**

....

Petitioners

Mr. B. Routray, Sr. Advocate
with Mr. S. Mallik, Advocate

-versus-

OSSSC and Others

....

Opposite Parties

Mr. A. Tripathy, AGA
Mr. A. Kanungo, Advocate with
Mr. D.N. Rath, Advocate for Caveators

CORAM:

JUSTICE BIRAJA PRASANNA SATAPATHY

ORDER

06.05.2026

Order No.

- 05.** 1. This matter is taken up through Hybrid Arrangement (Virtual/Physical) Mode.
2. Heard Mr. B. Routray, learned Senior Counsel appearing along with Mr. S. Mallik, learned counsel appearing for the petitioners, Mr. A. Tripathy, learned Addl. Govt. Advocate for the State, Mr. A. Kanungo and Mr. D.N. Rath, learned counsels appearing for some of the Opp. Parties.
3. Since all these Writ Petitions have been filed *inter alia* challenging order dated 02.02.2026, so passed by



the Govt.-O.P. No.1 rejecting the claim of the petitioners so made in their representations dtd. 19.12.2025, all the matters were heard analogously and disposed of by the present common order.

4. Learned Senior Counsel appearing for the petitioners contended that petitioners after being appointed as against the post of Assistant Conservator of Forests under Odisha Forest Service, Group-‘A’ (J.B.) as per the service rule governing the field at the relevant point of time i.e. Odisha Forest Service, Group-‘A’ (J.B.) (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2013, they undergo the required training for a period of 2(two) years. But in terms of the unamended provision contained under the 2013 Rules, they were extended with the benefit of stipend, in place of salary for the period they undergo the training.

4.1. It is contended that the aforesaid 2013 Rule was amended vide Notification dated 13.03.2024 and as per the said amendment, it was provided that during the training, the trainee shall be paid with the salary and other allowances as admissible by the Govt. from time to time.

4.2. It is contended that basing on the amendment so notified on 13.03.2023, petitioners when raised their claim to get the benefit of salary instead of stipend for the period they undergo the training after being



appointed as against the post of ACF, the same was rejected pursuant to the earlier order passed by this Court in W.P.(C) No.35626 of 2022 vide a common order dated 02.02.2026.

4.3. It is contended that similar provision with regard to release of stipend was also there in respect of Forest Rangers, coming under Odisha Forest Service, Group- 'B' (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2013. The aforesaid Rule was also amended with issuance of similar Notification on 13.03.2024, *inter alia* providing that such Forest Rangers will be entitled to get the salary during the training period, in place of stipend.

4.4. It is contended that in terms of the Notification issued on 13.03.2024, while amending 2013 Rules so far as it relates to OFS Group-B Services is concerned, benefit of salary during the training period, was extended in terms of the order passed by this Court in W.P.(C) No.12179 of 2023 in favour of Forest Rangers.

4.5. But similar claim so allowed by this Court vide order dated 19.11.2024 in W.P.(C) No.16708 of 2024, and on the plea that such an order is under challenge before the Hon'ble Apex Court in SLP(Civil) Diary No.21086 of 2026, claim of the petitioners pursuant to order dated 02.12.2025 in W.P.(C) No.35626 of 2022



was rejected vide the impugned order dated 02.02.2026.

4.6. It is contended that since benefit of salary during the training period was extended in favour of Forest Rangers coming under OFS Group-B basing on similar nature of Notification issued on dtd.13.03.2024, pursuant to the order passed by this Court in W.P.(C) No.12179 of 2023, similar claim made pursuant to the amendment carried to the 2013 Rules with issuance of similar Notification on 13.03.2024, in respect of Asst. Conservator of Forests, coming under OFS Group-A (J.B.), could not have been rejected on the ground indicated in the impugned order dated 02.02.2026.

4.7. It is accordingly contended that petitioners are also eligible and entitled to get the benefit of salary for the period they undergo the training after being appointed in the rank of ACF by way of direct recruitment and such rejection on the ground that the matter is pending before the Hon'ble Apex Court, is not sustainable, and that too on the face of extension of similar benefit in favour of the employees appointed as Forest Rangers under OFS Group-B.

5. Mr. A. Tripathy, learned Addl. Govt. Advocate on the other hand contended that similar claim allowed by this Court in W.P.(C) No.16708 of 2024 following the decision in W.P.(C) No.12179 of 2023, is pending before



the Hon'ble Apex Court and the said order has not yet been implemented. However, it is fairly contended that similar claim in respect of Forest Rangers pursuant to the order passed by this Court in W.P.(C) No.12179 of 2023, has been implemented by the State.

6. Mr. A. Kanungo, learned counsel along with Mr. D.N. Rath, learned counsel appearing for some of the private Opp. Parties on the other hand contended that even though in terms of the amended provision, so contained in Notification dated 13.03.2024, petitioners raised the claim to get the benefit of salary during the period they undergo training, but pursuant to the order passed by this Court on 02.12.2025 in W.P.(C) No.35626 of 2022, petitioners while raising the claim to get the benefit of salary, made further prayer claiming Seniority vis-à-vis persons appointed in the similar cadre.

6.1. In support of such submission, both the learned counsels bring it to the notice of this Court the representation made by one of the petitioner so Annexed as Annexure-12 in W.P.(C) No.7613 of 2016.

6.2. It is contended that while making the claim for release of the salary for the period they undergo the training, since claim for seniority was also made, which is not there under the amended provision so notified on 13.03.2024, such claim of the petitioners has been



rightly rejected vide order dated 02.02.2026 and it requires no interference.

6.3. It is however fairly contended that similar benefit of salary during the training period have been extended in favour of Forest Rangers pursuant to similar amendment issued by the Department vide Notification dtd.13.03.2024 and taking into account the order passed by this Court in W.P.(C) No.12179 of 2023.

7. At this point of time, learned Senior Counsel appearing for the petitioners contended that petitioners in the present batch of Writ Petitions confine their claim so far as release of salary is concerned during the period they undergo the training in terms of notification dtd. 13.03.2024 and any claim made towards Seniority may be treated as not pressed. It is also contended that there is no interim order passed by the Apex Court in SLP(Civil) Diary No.21086 of 2026.

8. Having heard learned counsel for the parties, considering the submission made and since in the present batch of Writ Petitions, the prayer is now confined so far as extension of salary during the training period is concerned in terms of notification dtd. 13.03.2024, this Court is inclined to consider the claim of the petitioners.

8.1. It is found that similar benefit has been extended in favour of Forest Rangers coming under OFS Group-B



pursuant to similar amendment carried to the 2013 Rules vide similar notification issued on 13.03.2024 pursuant to the order of this Court in W.P.(C) No.12179 of 2023. Therefore, this Court is of the view that pendency of the appeal before the Hon'ble Apex Court against the order passed in W.P.(C) No.16708 of 2024, is not a ground to deny similar benefit to the petitioners.

8.2. Since admittedly similar benefit has been extended pursuant to similar nature of amendment notified by the Department in favour of Forest Rangers on 13.03.2024, it is the view of this Court that petitioners in view of the amendment so notified on 13.03.2024, are also entitled to get the benefit of salary during the period they have undergone the training.

8.3. Therefore, this Court while quashing the impugned order dated 02.02.2026 so far as it relates to rejection of the petitioner's claim to get the benefit of salary during the training period is concerned, direct Opp. Party No.1 to release the salary as due and admissible during the period petitioners had undergone the training. However, such extension of the benefit shall be subject to final outcome of the appeal so pending before the Hon'ble Apex Court in SLP(Civil) Diary No.21086 of 2026.



Opp. Party No.1 is directed to comply with the direction within a period of 2(two) months from the date of receipt of this order.

9. All the Writ Petitions stand disposed of accordingly.

Photocopy of this order be placed in other connected matters listed today.

(Biraja Prasanna Satapathy)
Judge

Basudev