

## **Service Records of a retired temple employee:**

Claiming that he had served in Sornapureeswarar and Prasanna Venkatesa Perumal Temple, Salavakkam in Kanchipuram district for 25 years, the petitioner sent a representation to the HR&CE stating that he had retired in July 2015 but payment of wages for nine years and retirement benefits were due to him. Since there was no action on this representation, he moved a petition under RTI. Shocked by a reply that there were no records of his service in the temple, he moved an appeal before the Commission. HR&CE had appointed a Fit Person / Executive Officer for the temple in 2015, pending the appointment of a regular Trustee. During the enquiry, the Fit Person produced a letter from a person who held charge as Arangavalar for over 8 years till 2015 to the effect that the petitioner had never come to the temple during his tenure and that there were no records in the temple about his employment. On the other hand, the petitioner produced his Service Book issued by the temple in 1990 at the time of his appointment to beat 'damaaram' and 'melam' during daily pooja. It carries entries till 2006 when the previous dharmakarta passed away. The very same person who had given a signed statement to the Fit Person that there were no records of employment of the petitioner in the temple is seen to have signed in the Service Book of the petitioner for several years, before 2006, apparently on behalf of the regular dharmakarta. The petitioner's claim is that he was being paid salary at Rs 50 per month, later raised to Rs 75, and after the death of the regular dharmakarta, the payment stopped but the in charge person told him to continue saying that he would get pay and arrears after a regular dharmakarta was appointed. But no such regular appointment materialized till HR&CE stepped in by which time the petitioner was due to retire. The Service Book produced by the petitioner carries his horoscope as proof of date of birth, his nomination of his wife to receive any terminal benefits and even a copy of a draft of payment to the HR&CE presumably towards some such terminal benefit. The Commission requested the Joint Commissioner HR&CE to have the representation of the petitioner about his pay arrears and terminal benefits enquired into by someone other than the Fit Person. Taking into consideration the fact that the petitioner's claim towards pay arrears over 9 years had been jeopardized by the blunt denial any record relating to him, thereby causing him detriment and mental agony, the Commission ordered a compensation of Rs 10,000 to be paid to him. **RTI came to the help of a poor retired temple employee to confirm his service, paving the way for possible benefits as eligible after enquiry.**

[\(SA 3550/16](#) dated 24.8.16)