

Devan Ramachandran, J.

W.P(C)No.15353 of 2022

Dated this the 1st day of June, 2022.

ORDER

The predicament of the employees of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), in allegedly not obtaining salary on time, and sometimes after several days it becomes due, is certainly a very serious one - if it is true.

2. The KSRTC is stated to be a company and obviously, therefore, the officers in its charge will have to ensure that such issues obtain resolution effectively and expediently.

3. There is also a complaint impelled that officers and supervisory personnel get their salary in time and that the KSRTC first services their loans with the available income, thus relegating the payment of the salary to other employees - who have no other source of livelihood - to the least priority.

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4. Sri.Deepu Thankan - learned Standing Counsel for the KSRTC, tried to explain the various problems and impediments faced by his client, including that the price of diesel has been inordinately hiked.

5. Whatever be the reasons that the KSRTC may lay out, it is inevitable that the plight of its employees cannot be lost sight of and that they have to be paid salary without any avoidable delay.

6. This Court cannot rest upon the excuses offered or to be offered by the KSRTC and it is imperative that they explain how they propose to attain the necessary levels of efficiency, so that it can become self-reliant and take care of its employees and services. This may not be very easy, but certainly has to be done if it is to survive in future.

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7. At this stage I do not want to say further, since the KSRTC must respond to the various allegations through cogent and reliable figures and inputs.

8. I must also record that the petitioners strongly seek that the officials and supervisory personnel of the KSRTC be ordered not to be paid their salaries, until such time as theirs and that of other similarly placed persons, are honoured. This request is justified because the employees will certainly feel discriminated if the officers and supervisory personnel alone are favoured salary in time. There is also some justification in the grievance that their payments are being honoured with least priority. I, therefore, make it clear that if it so becomes warranted, this Court may pass such orders, but only after the KSRTC responds to this properly; for which

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purpose, I give them time till the next posting date.

9. Before I part, I must record the submissions of Sri.Deepu Thankam, that the KSRTC operates its fleet in public interest and therefore, that profits cannot be its primary objective. This contention has an inherent problem entwined to it because, if the Corporation is not able to achieve operational profits, then it would have to rely on the Government to step in and make good the loss. Obviously, therefore, this is an issue that should be answered by Government at the appropriate level and I record that the learned Government Pleader – Smt.Resmi Thomas, seeks time to obtain instructions in this regard.

Taking note of the abject difficulties stated to be faced by the petitioners and other employees of the KSRTC, I deem it appropriate that this matter be listed

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without delay.

List, therefore, on 08.06.2022.

**Sd/-
DEVAN RAMACHANDRAN
JUDGE**

Raj/01.06.2022.