



W.P.Nos.9668, 9705, 9710, 9750, 11187, 11190, 19028 and 23768 of 2023 and
W.M.P.Nos. 9720, 9722, 9723, 9772, 9773, 9834, 9836, 9837, 9840,
11061, 11062 and 23285 of 2023

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

Dated: 25.09.2023

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE N.SATHISH KUMAR

W.P.Nos.9668, 9705, 9710, 9750, 11187, 11190,
19028 and 23768 of 2023

and

W.M.P.Nos.9720, 9722, 9723, 9772,
9773, 9834, 9836, 9837, 9840, 11061, 11062 and 23285 of 2023

W.P.No.9668 of 2023

1. G. Dilip

2. M. Thiruppathi

3. R. Kanmani Muthu

...

Petitioners

versus

1. The Commissioner of Food Safety and Drug Administration
DMS Campus, Old Fisheries Building II Floor,
359, Anna Salai, Chennai 600006.

2. The Member Secretary,
Medical Services Recruitment Board (MRB)
7th Floor, DMS Building, 359, Anna Salai,
Teynampet, Chennai 600006.

3. The Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu
Health and Family Welfare Department,
The Secretariat, Chennai 600005.



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4. The Union of India

Rep.by Secretary to Government
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,
Room No.156-A, Nirman Bhavan,
New Delhi – 110011

5. The Director (Regulations),

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India,
FDA Bhawan, Kolta Road, New Delhi 110002.

[R4 & R5 suo motu impleaded vide order

dated 3.4.2023 made in WP.No.9668/2023] ... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus to call for the records and quashing the impugned notification dated 13.3.2023 vide No.02/MRB/2021 issued by the 2nd Respondent as regards the Petitioners by showing their Roll Numbers in Sl.Nos.93, 65 and 105 respectively as being withheld in Annexure-I and in Sl.Nos.17, 12 and 20 respectively in Annexure-II of the above notification dated 13.03.2023 and consequently direct the respondents to include their names in the selection list for the post of Food Safety Officers for the Recruitment Year 2021 so as to complete further process for issuing their appointment order within time frame.

For Petitioner : Mr.K. Ravi Ananthapadmanabhan
Senior Counsel for
Mr. B. Thirumalai [in WP.9668/2023]

For Respondents : Mr.P. Kumaresan
Addl. Advocate General
Assisted by
Mr.P. Balathandayutham
Special Government Pleader
[for R1 & R3]



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Mr.L. Murugavelu [for R2]

Mr.R. Rajesh Vivekanandhan
[for R4 and R5]

COMMON ORDER

Writ Petitions in W.P.Nos.9668, 9710, 9750 and 11190 of 2023 have been filed to quash the impugned notification dated 13.03.2023 vide No.02/MRB/2021 issued by the Medical Services Recruitment Board, wherein the petitioners names are withheld for the purpose of production of equivalence certificate and consequently direct the respondents to include the petitioners names in the selection list for the post of Food Safety Officer for the Recruitment Year 2021.

2. W.P.Nos.9705 and 11187 of 2023 have been filed to declare the degree of B.Tech in Food Processing Engineering possessed by the petitioners is deemed to equal to the degree of B.Tech in Food Technology as per the proceedings reference No.E.1/AC/135/V.1/2018 dated 27.02.2018



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issued by the Tamilnadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, and include the Petitioners' names in the Selection List, as the petitioners names are withheld for the purpose of production of equivalence certificate.

3. W.P.Nos.19028 and 23768 of 2023 have been filed to issue direction to the respondents to issue Formal Appointment Orders to the Petitioners who were declared as newly selected Food Safety Officers as they were already selected, sent for training and on successful completion of the same they are waiting for the Appointment Orders.

4. Since all the above petitions are filed seeking certain reliefs against the impugned order of the Medical Services Recruitment Board dated 13.03.2023, they are all disposed of by way of this Common Order.

5. The Petitioners have applied for the post of Food Safety Officer vide Notification No.02/MRB/2021 dated 13.10.2021. Education qualification for the post is as follows:



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6B. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:

Candidates should possess the following or its equivalent qualification for the post of Food Safety Officer on the date of this notification (13.10.2021)

i. A Bachelor's degree in Food Technology or Dairy Technology or Biotechnology or Oil Technology or Agricultural Science or veterinary Sciences or Bio- Chemistry or Microbiology or Master's Degree in Chemistry or a Bachelor's degree in medicine from a University recognized by the University Grants Commission. (or)

ii. Any other equivalent / recognized qualification notified by the Central Government.

Note: Candidate should have studied Tamil as one of the subject in HSC.

6. The petitioners though provisionally selected, the selection has been withheld for the production of Equivalence Certificate. It is relevant to note that the Government has passed G.O.(Ms) No.93 Higher Education (K2) Department dated 30.05.2019 and constituted a New Equivalence



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Committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department with nine (9) members to examine the request of the educational institutions to issue equivalence to the courses offered by them. In the said G.O., the Government also directed the general public / students / teachers / colleges / Universities / Recruitment boards / other stakeholders who seek equivalence of the courses offered by the Colleges / Universities to address the Tamil Nadu State council for Higher Education, directly.

7. Though this Government Order has been passed in the year 2018 much prior to the notification referred above, it is relevant to note that as far as the equivalence degree in respect of appointment of Food Safety Officers, the notification clearly stipulates that equivalence should be recognised or notified by the Central Government. Therefore, in view of the above specific direction contained in the notification that equivalence should be recognised/notified by the Central Government, the State Government now cannot contend that as per G.O.(Ms) No.93 No.93 Higher Education (K2) Department dated 30.05.2019, the candidates ought to have applied to the



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Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education directly with regard to equivalence. Even any application received by the Government, the Government could not have been in a position to notify the equivalence or recognised qualification as mandated in the notification since it is only by the Central Government such notification is required as per the above notification.

8. It is not disputed that the petitioners are provisionally selected. The results are withheld only due to non-production of equivalence certificate. It is relevant to note that equivalence certificate cannot be produced by the candidates as required by the notification then and there. It is for the concerned Government to constitute the committee every year to assess the equivalent degree. The notification also does not specify that the equivalence certificate should have been issued prior to the notification. Whereas it stipulates only the degree or any other equivalent /recognised qualification notified by the Central Government.



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9. Taking note of the above, this Court, on the submissions of the learned Additional Advocate General appearing for the MSRB, passed an order on 03.04.2023 wherein it is the stand of MSRB that the Central Government has to determine the equivalence of the educational qualification of the Petitioners and other similarly placed persons in respect of which the Commissioner, Tamil Nadu Food Safety and Drug Administration Department, Chennai has sent a letter R.No.4884/2019/S10/FSD dated 28.03.2023 to the Chief Executive Officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, New Delhi in that regard and its outcome is awaited for further course of action in the matter.

10. Having regard to the stand taken by the Respondents particularly, MSRB and the State Government this Court has suo motu impleaded the Union of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to determine the equivalence of the educational qualification of the candidates as per the letter of the Tamilnadu Food Safety and Drug Administration Department dated 28.03.2023 and this Court is also made it clear that MSRB shall not take



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any decision entailing adverse civil consequences to the petitioners without prior permission of this Court until further orders.

11. Pursuant to the above order this Court also passed subsequent directions on 26.07.2023 and 29.08.2023 which are as follows:

Order dated 26.07.2023:

“This Court, in W.P.Nos.9668, 9705, 9710 and 9750 of 2023 has passed the following Order :

“The Director [Regulations], Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, New Delhi in consultation of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi shall take necessary action for determining the equivalence of the educational qualifications of the candidates [including the petitioners in these cases] as soung in letter R.No.4884/2019/S10/FSD dated 28.03.2023 sent by the Commissioner, Food Safety and Drug Administration Department, Chennai and submit report in that regard before the next hearing.”



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As per the above Order, no report has been filed.

Hence, the respondents are directed to file a report before this Court on or before 29.08.2023.”

Order dated :29.08.2023:

“Pursuant to the earlier order passed by this Court on 26.07.2023, it is now stated that the Expert Committee has submitted its report and the same has been produced before this Court.

2.On a perusal of the Expert Committee's report, it is seen that the Committee has decided that BDS, BSMS, BHMS and other medicine degrees fall in the ambit of the words “degree in medicine”. It is also decided that these degrees fall under the eligible criteria. Similarly, it is decided that the degrees with previous nomenclature like Food Process Engineering, etc., which now have been changed to B.Tech. (Food Technology) may also be considered equivalent to Bachelor degree in Food Technology.

3.The learned Deputy Solicitor General submitted that the report of the Expert committee has been accepted by the Health Ministry and now, the draft notification has been forwarded to the Law Ministry for issuing formal notification.



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WEB COPY made thereunder, namely:-

2. A Bachelor's degree or Master's degree or Doctorate degree from
a recognized University or institution in the following disciplines:-

Disciplines "Food Technology"	Disciplines deemed to be covered under "Agricultural Science"
(i) Food Engineering (ii) Food Engineering and Technology (iii) Food Processing and Preservation (iv) Food Processing Technology (v) Food Technology and Management (vi) Food Biotechnology (vii) Food Plant Operations Management (viii) Food Process Engineering and Management (ix) Food Processing (x) Food Safety and Quality Management (xi) Process and Food Engineering	(i) Agriculture (ii) Agriculture Engineering (iii) Biotechnology (iv) Dairy Technology (v) Fisheries (vi) Food Technology (vii) Food Nutrition and Dietetic (viii) Horticulture

G. KAMALA VARDHANA RAO, Chief Executive Officer"

13. In the light of the above notification there is no doubt that any of
the degree as notified in the above said notification, the candidates who
acquired such decree will be eligible for consideration. The same has been
taken note by the MSRB. Admittedly, the petitioners have been provisionally
selected and their results have been withheld only awaiting of the
equivalence certificate. Now the notification is issued. Therefore, the
Respondents shall consider the writ petitioners appointment, who are
withheld for want of equivalence certificate, if they are otherwise suitable as



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per their original rank. The Respondents shall also consider the Writ
Petitioners who were already selected, sent for training and awaiting for the
Appointment Orders. Such exercise shall be made within a period of two
months from the date of receipt of copy of this Order.

14. With the above directions, these Writ Petitions are disposed of.
No costs. Consequently, connected Writ Miscellaneous Petitions are closed.

25.09.2023

Index : Yes/No

Neutral citation: Yes/No

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Copy to:

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Campus, Old Fisheries Building II Floor, 359, Anna Salai, Chennai-6.
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7th Floor, DMS Bldg, 359, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai 600006.
3. The Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu, Health and Family Welfare
Department, The Secretariat, chennai 600005.
4. The Secretary to Government, Govt.of India, Ministry of Health and
Family Welfare, Room No.156-A, Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi – 110011
5. The Director (Regulations), Food Safety and Standards Authority of



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India, FDA Bhawan, Kolta Road, New Delhi 110002.

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