

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

(14) WRIT PETITION NO.17020 OF 2025

Ramesh Devram Dhomse & Ors.Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors.Respondents

WITH

(15) WRIT PETITION NO.17021 OF 2025

Maruti Kisan Dhoble & Ors.Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors.Respondents

WITH

(16) WRIT PETITION NO.17022 OF 2025

Yashwant Balshiram Date & Ors.Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors.Respondents

WITH

(17) WRIT PETITION NO.17023 OF 2025

Hemantkumar Devram Nagare & Ors.Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors.Respondents

WITH

(18) WRIT PETITION NO.17024 OF 2025

Sanjaykumar Tanaji Lande & Ors.Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors.Respondents

WITH

(56) WRIT PETITION NO.17025 OF 2025

Santosh Gajanan Chavhan & Ors.Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors.Respondents

WITH

(57) WRIT PETITION NO.17026 OF 2025

Mahendra Narayan Deshpande & Ors.Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors.Respondents

WITH

(501) WRIT PETITION NO.17097 OF 2025

Dhondu Chandar Shingade & Anr. Petitioners

versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors. Respondents

Mr. Shrikrishna Chaudhari for the Petitioners in all Petitions.

Mrs.Nisha Mehra, AGP for the Respondent -State in WP No. 17020 of 2025.

Mrs.D.S.Deshmukh, AGP for the Respondent -State in WP No. 17021 of 2025.

Ms.P.N.Diwan, AGP for the Respondent -State in WP No. 17022 of 2025.

Mr.Yatin Khochare, 'B' Panel Counsel for the Respondent -State in WP No. 17023 of 2025.

Ms.Priyanka Chavan, AGP for the Respondent -State in WP No. 17024 of 2025.

Mr.P.P.Kakade, Addl.GP with Mr.A.C.Bhadang, AGP for the Respondent -State in WP No. 17097 of 2025.

Mr.Karan Thorat, 'B' Panel Counsel for the Respondent -State in WP No. 17025 of 2025.

Mr.V.G.Badgujar, AGP for the Respondent -State in WP No. 17026 of 2025.

CORAM : RAVINDRA V. GHUGE

&

ASHWIN D. BHOBE, JJ.

DATE : 15th DECEMBER, 2025

P.C. :-

1. Writ Petition No.17097 of 2025 is not on board. On mentioning, taken on the production board.

2. In all these Petitions, the Petitioners have put forth identical prayer clauses. For brevity, we are reproducing Prayer Clauses 'B' and 'C' from Writ Petition No.17020 of 2025, as under :

“B] By issuing writ of Mandamus or any other appropriate writ, order or direction as the case may be, the respondent authorities may kindly be direct to give / release the benefits of Ekstar (one step from the initial date of pay scale) from appointment as per G. R. dated 06.08.2002 & 29.02.2024 as they are working in Tribal / PESA / difficult area & direct the respondents to pay the salary of the petitioners as per the Ekstar (one step pay scale) till the petitioners working in Tribal /PESA / difficult area and consequential benefits including arrears.

C] The Respondent authorities may kindly be direct to pay arrears of salaries of the petitioners as per the Ekstar (one step pay scale) from the initial dates of appointment as they are working in Tribal Area from their appointment till today as per G. R. dated 06.08.2022 issued by the Resp. No. 1 & further directs not to revoke the benefits of Ekstar (one step pay scale) as per G. R. dated 06.08.2002 & 29.02.2024 though petitioner entitled for time bound promotion.”

3. We have considered the submissions of the learned Advocate for the Petitioners and the learned AGPs for the State Authorities. We have perused the series of orders passed by this

Court in favour of similarly situated Petitioners, which have been annexed to these Petitions.

4. The learned Advocate for the Petitioners submits that the orders annexed to these Writ Petitions are applicable to the present cases. The order dated 21st December 2021, passed by this Court, at the Principal Seat, in Writ Petition No.8824 of 2021, is also applicable to this case. All the AGPs submit that, 12 years of service, which is reckoned for granting A.C.P.S. benefits, cannot overlap with the working in the PESA areas. According to them, once a candidate gets the benefits of the A.C.P.S. in the form of additional increment, after 12 years, if he/she is in PESA, he/she would be entitled for one single increment as long as the candidate is serving in the PESA.

5. In view of the above, **all these Writ Petitions are disposed off** in the following terms :

- (i) The Education Officer of the Zilla Parishad shall scrutinize the records of all these Petitioners and the places at which they are deployed for performing their duties, within a period of 30 days.

(ii) Those cases, which are without any legal impediment after verification, shall be cleared by the Education Officer and the salary benefits, to which the Petitioners are entitled to, in the light of the one-step pay-scale, made available to the employees working in the Tribal and PESA areas, shall be paid along with arrears as well as their current salaries, within a period of 45 days thereafter.

(iii) After scrutiny, if any of these Petitioners, on the basis of their records, are found to be ineligible, the Education Officer, Zilla Parishad, would issue notices to each of such Petitioners, so as to enable them to appear before the said authority and address the Education Officer.

(iv) After such hearing, which shall be completed within 90 days, the Zilla Parishad shall pass appropriate orders and grant benefits of one-step pay-scale to those candidates, who are found to be eligible.

(v) Those Petitioners, who suffer adverse orders after the above stated exercise is completed, would be at liberty to avail of a statutory remedy, as is permissible in law.

(vi) If any of these Petitioners have superannuated from service, their pensionary benefits would be recalculated if they are held to be eligible for the one step increment.

(ASHWIN D. BHOBE, J.)

(RAVINDRA V. GHUGE, J.)