



W.P.No.11551 of 2023

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

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DATED : 10.12.2025

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE Ms. JUSTICE **P.T.ASHA**

W.P.No.11551 of 2023
and W.M.P.Nos.11448, 11449 of 2023

Dr.S.Haritha

... Petitioner

-VS-

1. The Director(Regulations),
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India,
FDA Bhawan,
Kotla Road, New Delhi - 110 002.

2.The Secretay to Government,
Health and Family Welfare Department,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.

3.The Member Secretary,
Medical Services Recruitment Board,
7th Floor, DMS Buildings,
Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai - 600 006.

4.National Medical Commission of India,
Rep. by its Secretary, Pocket, 14, Sector -8,
Dwaraka Phase-1, New Delhi -110 077.

5.The Joint Secretary,
Dental Council of India,
Aiwan E-Ghalib Marg, Kotla Road,



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Temple Lane, Opp. to mata Sundari College for Women,
New Delhi-110002.

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6.The Registrar,
The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University,
No. 69, Anna Salai, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032.

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

(R7 SUO MOTU IMPLEADED
VIDE ORDER DT 17.04.2023
MADE IN WP.11551/2023 BY PDAJ)

Respondent(s)

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the entire records relating to the impugned list of ineligible candidates bearing No. 02/MRB/2021 issued by the 3rd respondent dated 13.03.2023 and quash the same in so far as the petitioner name is concerned which is in S.No. 132, Application/register No. 137994 and Roll No. 201032192, and consequently direct the respondents to issue an order of an appointment to the petitioner as food safety Officer on temporary basis in Tamil Nadu Food safety and Drug Administration department.

For petitioner	: Mr.R.Pushpalatha
Respondents	
For R3	: Mr.L.Murugavelu,



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For R2

Standing Counsel
: Mr.P.Kumaresan, AAG,
Assisted by Mr.M.Bindran,AGP

For R4

: Mr.S.Subharanjani Anandh

For R1

: Mr.Su.Srinivasan, CGSC

For R7

: Mr.V.Ashok Kumar,
Standing Counsel

For R5

: Mr.Subramanian Vaidyanathan

For R6

: Mr.G.Arumugam

ORDER

This writ petition has been filed to quash the impugned notification dated 13.03.2023 by Medical Services Recruitment Board (hereinafter referred as “MRB”) and consequently, to direct the MRB to issue / publish a notification afresh for certificate verification by including the petitioner’s name in the cadre of “SC/Women Candidates” relating to the recruitment for the post of Food Safety Officer.

2. The sum and substance of the petitioner’s grievance articulated in this writ petition are as follows:

2.1. The petitioner has completed a medical degree in BDS



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(Bachelor of Dental Surgery). The MRB had called for direct recruitment for the post of Food Safety Officer *vide* their publication dated 13.10.2021, in notification No.2/MRB/2021. The petitioner had applied for the above post for which there is a reservation under the category of SC/Women Quota. One of the qualifications prescribed in the notification for the above post was a Bachelor's Degree in Medicine from the University recognized by the University Grants Commission.

2.2. It is the contention of the petitioner that a BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) is a degree equivalent to MBBS degree in Medicine and is regulated under Sections 2(h) and 35 of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020, (hereinafter referred as "the NCISM Act"). It is a recognized medical qualification to practice medical profession. It is the contention of the petitioner that the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case Civil Appeal No.4578 of 2021 had observed that the Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree is also one among the recognized medical



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qualifications under Sections 2(h) and 35 of the NCISM Act and under Sections 2(f) and 35 of NCH Act, 2020 with the course duration of 5 1/2 years. These degrees also possess full pledged PG courses and PhD courses similar to that of MBBS and are regulated by the concerned National Commissions.

2.3. However, the petitioner's candidature was not considered and in response dated 23.11.2022 to the RTI query, the Public National Officer / Administrative Officer of the Union of India had communicated that the Graduates in Bachelor's in Dental Surgery is not mentioned in the FSSAI Act and Rules for the qualification of Food Safety Officer. This clarification is not in *sync* with the clarification letter dated 12.10.2022 of the Director (Regulations), FSSAI.

2.4. Meanwhile, the MRB had released a list of cut off marks and the candidates are called for "certificate verification" including the reservation for the post of Food Safety Officer. In this list, the



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MRB had mentioned that the candidate is ineligible under SC/Women category. This act clearly emphasizes the fact that the MRB was not considering the candidature of the students who have obtained Bachelor's Degree in Dental Surgery for the post of Food Safety Officer.

2.5. The petitioner aggrieved by this action had made representation to the MRB, to which, there was no response. The certificate verification is also proposed to be held on 23.02.2023. Since the petitioner who is qualified for the said post has been denied an opportunity to participate in the selection process, the petitioner has filed the above writ petition for the relief stated *supra*.

3. Heard the learned counsel on either side and perused the materials available on record.

4. It is brought to the notice of this Court that the Co-ordinate Bench of the Madurai Bench of this Court had occasion to



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consider the very same issue in a batch of writ petitions. The learned Judge, after extracting the qualification for the post of Food Safety Officer and considering the provisions of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, and the National Medical Commission Act, 2012, and FSSAI Act and Rules, had observed that the term “medicine” as set out in Rule 2.1.3 of the Food Safety and Standards Rules, 2011, should be given a wider meaning and would include the Indian System of Medicine. After discussing the Rule 2.1.3 of the Food Safety and Standards Rules, 2011, the learned Judge, went on to hold that the very Rule is broad and sweepy and virtually declares any science or medical graduate would be eligible to become Food Safety Officer. Ultimately, the learned Judge, had allowed the writ petitions and had directed that the petitioners shall be considered for the post of Food Safety Officer.

5. Thereafter, the MRB had taken up this order in an appeal and the Hon’ble Division Bench of this Court, by an order dated 08.10.2025, dismissed the writ appeal and held that the learned



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Single Judge observations with reference to importance and relevance of Dental Medicine and other medical degrees was spot on. Apart from the above judgment, the Government of India in the Gazette Notification dated 28.03.2025 amended the notification as follows:

In the said notification, after paragraph 2, the following paragraph shall be inserted, namely:-

“3. The other discipline recognised for the post of Food Safety Officer, shall include the following, namely:-

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery or Bachelor of Dental Surgery or Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery or Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery or Bachelor of Siddha Medicine and Surgery or Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery or Bachelor of Sowa Rigpa Medicine and Surgery.”

6. Therefore, the equivalence of BDS to a regular degree of Medicine has been notified. On the conspectus of the above and since the matter has already been considered in detail, this Court is not traversing into the factual matrix of the case.



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Accordingly, the writ petition is allowed as prayed for. No

costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petitions stand closed.

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Internet : Yes

Index : Yes/No

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P.T.ASHA, J.,

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