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W.P.No.29113 of 2024

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 20.11.2025

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE **G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN**

W.P.No.29113 of 2024
and W.M.P.Nos.31785 and 31793 of 2024

S.Ravichandran

... Petitioner

-Vs-

1. The Chairman,
Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission,
TNPSC Road, Broadway,
Chennai-600 003.
2. The Secretary,
Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission,
TNPSC Road, Broadway,
Chennai-600 003.
3. The Controller of Examinations,
Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission,
TNPSC Road, Broadway,
Chennai- 600 003.
4. The Secretary To The Government of Tamil Nadu,
Higher Education Department,
Fort St.George,
Chennai-600 009.
5. The Secretary,
Human Resource and Management Department,
Secretariat,
Chennai-600 009.



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6. The Deputy Secretary,
Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission,
TNPSC Road, Broadway,
Chennai-600 003.

7. Suresh

... Respondents

Prayer : Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of Constitution of India praying for the issuance of a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, to call for the records passed in G.O.No.03/2023 dated 11.09.2024 published by 2nd Respondent and quash the same and direct the 1st and 2nd respondents to recruit the petitioner for the Post of Tourist officer.

For Petitioner : Mr.K.Venkataramani
for Mr.M.Maharaja

For R1 to R3

and R6 : Mr.I.Abrar Md.Abdullah
Standing Counsel

For R4 : Mr.M.R.Gokulkrishnan
Additional Government Pleader

For R5 : Mr.Yogesh Kannadasan
Special Government Pleader

For R7 : Mr.M.R.Jyothimanian

ORDER

This writ petition has been filed challenging the selection list published by the second respondent dated 11.09.2024.

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



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3. The petitioner had applied for the post of Tourist Officer in Tamil Nadu General Service and appeared for the examination. There were three vacancies for the said post. However, the petitioner was not selected. Apparently, 12 candidates were called for certificate verification in ratio 1:4. The petitioner was also selected for the certificate verification. Subsequently, as per communication dated 22.03.2024, the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission directed the candidates to upload a No Objection Certificate in the prescribed format and the equivalence Government Order for a Master of Tourism and Travel Management. The petitioner had obtained a Post Graduate degree in Master of Tourism and Travel Management in Annamalai University. As per G.O.(Ms).No.130 dated 24.07.2024, a resolution was passed by the 26th Equivalence Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department and an equivalence certificate was issued. The certificate obtained by the petitioner is equivalent to the qualification prescribed under the notification for the post of Tourist Officer.

4. Accordingly, the petitioner's certificate was verified and the petitioner was called for an interview. However, the petitioner was not selected and the 7th respondent was selected for the said post. The 7th respondent had secured 72 marks in the oral test, while other candidates secured only 54 marks. Further,



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the petitioner alleged that the 7th respondent had applied for the said post under the Educational qualification category of a PG degree with a diploma in Tourism. However, the 7th respondent persuaded a PG degree along with a PG Diploma in Tourism Management. There is a variation between Diploma and PG Diploma courses in terms of tenure, syllabus etc. Further, as directed by the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission, the 7th respondent had uploaded his equivalence Government Order for a PG Diploma in Tourism Management as equivalent to a PG Diploma in Tourism and No Objection Certificate. Thereafter, the 7th respondent was directed to upload the semester mark sheet for one of the subjects in Diploma/PG Diploma.

5. The petitioner obtained information under the Right to Information Act that no equivalence Government Order had been passed earlier for PG Diploma in Tourism Management awarded by Madurai Kamaraj University as equivalent to Diploma in Tourism for employment purposes as of 05.09.2024 and no equivalent Government Order had been passed earlier for PG Diploma in Tourism Management awarded by any Universities as equivalent to a Diploma in Tourism for employment purposes. Therefore, the 7th respondent does not possess any equivalent qualification to the Diploma in Tourism as prescribed in the educational qualification notification.



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6. A perusal of the counter filed by the respondents 2, 5 and 7 and also the submissions made by the counsel on either side, reveals that the petitioner had studied Master of Tourism and Travel Management in Annamalai University. The educational qualifications, as per the notification dated 25.01.2023 for the post of Tourist Officer, are as follows:-

- “ 1) (i) Post Graduate degree in Travel and Tourism; (or)
(ii) Any Post Graduate degree with one subject on Tourism; (or)
(iii) Any Post Graduate degree with M.Phil in Tourism;
(or)
(iv) Any Post Graduate degree with Diploma in Tourism.
2) Certificate course in Computer on Office Automation awarded by the Directorate of Technical Education or its equivalent; and
(3) Proficiency in English and Tamil Languages (i.e., must have passed both the Tamil and English as one of the subject at Degree level). Provided that other things being equal, preference shall be given to the holders of MBA degree.”*

7. The 7th respondent is also one of the applicants for the said post along with the petitioner. The 7th respondent is qualified with a PG degree with a Diploma in Tourism Management awarded by Annamalai University. The petitioner is also qualified with a PG in Master of Tourism and Travel Management awarded by Annamalai University. As per clause 5(B)(1)(ii) of the the notification, candidates who claimed a PG degree in a Tourism related course viz., Master of Tourism and Travel Management, sought an equivalent



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Government Order. The Government had issued G.O.Ms.No.130 Higher Education (K1) Department dated 24.07.2024, in which it was ordered that the resolution passed therein on the subjects approved by the equivalence Committee would take effect from the date of issuance of such degree. Accordingly, the subjects of Tourism Management, Tourism Promotion, Publicity and Marketing subjects in Master of Tourism and Travel Management awarded by Annamalai University are deemed equivalent. Therefore, the petitioner's qualification was considered for the post of Tourist Officer.

8. Insofar as the 7th respondent is concerned, his qualification has been accepted based on the orders obtained in the previous recruitment, in C.No.2772/APD-A2/2017 dated 31.10.2018 relating to the previous notification dated 09.05.2017. For similar candidates who possessed the said Diploma in Tourism Management awarded by Annamalai University, the qualification had been accepted for the post of Tourist Officer, wherein a similar qualification was prescribed. That apart, as per G.O.Ms.No.99 Higher Education (K1) Department dated 29.05.2025 the resolution passed in the 32nd Equivalence Committee meeting held on 15.04.2025 under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department was approved. Accordingly, a PG diploma in Tourism Management awarded by Annamalai University is



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equivalent to a Diploma in Tourism for the purpose of employment in public services. Therefore, the 7th respondent is fully qualified to apply for the post of Tourist Officer.

9. Even prior to the Government Order dated 29.05.2025, the 7th respondent was selected to the post of Tourist Officer based on the previous recruitment notification dated 09.05.2017 and the order dated 31.10.2018 under the MBC/DC-G category. He secured highest marks among the three candidates under various categories. But the petitioner scored only 581.75 marks and there is only one vacancy earmarked for MBC/DC-G. Therefore, the petitioner was not selected for the post of Tourist Officer. Hence, the challenge to the selection list is not maintainable, since the 7th respondent is fully qualified and was rightly selected to the post of Tourist Officer.

10. On similar grounds, the appointment was challenged and the Single Bench of Madurai Bench of this Court allowed the writ petition. It was challenged by the selected candidates in W.A.(MD).Nos.860 of 2025 and etc., and by an order dated 17.07.2025, the same was allowed by the Hon'ble Division Bench of Madurai Bench of this Court. The relevant portion of the Judgment are as follows:-



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“ 5.It is true that it has been stated that government orders regarding equivalence of qualification issued after the date of notification will not be accepted. But it is not as if Kaleeswaran and Sangeetha have approached the Court on the strength of G.O.(Ms)No.99 dated 29.05.2025. On the other hand, in the perception of recruiting agency ie., TNPSC, P.G. Diploma in Tourism can also be considered as an eligible qualification. It is this perception that stands validated by the recently issued Government Order.

6.Our attention is also drawn to the decision of the Hon'ble Full Bench reported in 2013 SCC OnLine Mad 3625 (vide Nadar Thanga Shubha Laxman. A v. State of Tamil Nadu). The issue was whether the Equivalence Certificate issued by the Committee constituted by the Government, declaring that the degree obtained from one University is equivalent to the degree obtained from another University is only prospective in operation. The Hon'ble Full Bench answered in the negative and held that the Equivalence Certificate issued by the Committee constituted by the Government declaring that the Degrees obtained from one University is equivalent to the Degrees obtained from another University cannot be held to be only prospective in operation but will have its effect and validity right from the date of issuance of the degree. The Hon'ble Full Bench placed reliance on the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court reported in (2012) 3 SCC 129 (vide Chandrakala Trivedi vs State of Rajasthan) in which it was held as follows:

“8. The word “equivalent” must be given a reasonable meaning. By using the expression “equivalent” one means that there are some degrees of flexibility of adjustment which do not lower the stated requirement. There has to be some difference between what is equivalent and what is exact. Apart from that, after a person is provisionally selected, a certain degree of reasonable expectation of the selection being continued also comes into existence.”

7.In view of the proposition laid down in Nadar Thanga Shubha Laxman, we hold that the G.O.(Ms)No.99 dated 29.05.2025 issued by the government would have retrospective effect. Any other interpretation would defeat the accrued/vested



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right of the the selected candidates without any justification. Since the appellants (Sangeetha and Kaleeswaran) were also provisionally selected, they would have reasonable expectation of the selection being continued.”

11. That apart, the petitioner obtained an interim order before this Court, as if the 7th respondent obtained a PG Diploma in Tourism from Madurai Kamaraj University and as such, G.O.Ms.No.99 Higher Education (K1) Department dated 29.05.2025 is not applicable. The 7th respondent had obtained PG Diploma from Annamalai University and as such G.O.Ms.No.99 Higher Education (K1) Department dated 29.05.2025 is very much applicable. Therefore, the 7th respondent has been properly selected for the post of Tourist Officer and this Court finds no infirmity or illegality in the selection list published by the second respondent dated 11.09.2024.

12. The learned Senior Counsel appearing for the petitioner would submit that aggrieved by the order passed by the Hon'ble Division Bench of Madurai Bench of this Court, a Special Leave Petition has been filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and it is pending without any interim order. Therefore, the petitioner is at liberty to challenge the appointment of the 7th respondent subject to the result of the Special Leave Petition. The respondents 1 to 6 are directed to appoint the 7th respondent and issue appointment order to the post of



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Tourist Officer, forthwith.

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13. In view of the above, the writ petition is devoid of merits and is liable to be dismissed. Accordingly, this writ petition stands dismissed. Consequently, connected Miscellaneous petitions are closed. No costs.

20.11.2025

Internet: Yes

Index : Yes/No

Neutral Citation: Yes/No

Speaking/Non Speaking order

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G.K.ILANTHIRAIYAN. J.

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