

**IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA
AT HYDERABAD**

**TUESDAY, THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY
TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY SIX**

PRESENT

**THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE APARESH KUMAR SINGH
AND**

THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE G.M. MOHIUDDIN

WRIT APPEAL NO: 982 OF 2025

Writ Appeal under clause 15 of the Letters Patent Preferred Against the Order Dated 05-12-2024 in W.P.No.16415 of 2021 on the file of the High Court.

Between:

Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC), Rep. by its Secretary, M.J. Road, Nampally, Hyderabad, Telangana State.

**.....APPELLANT/RESPONDENT No.2
In WP.No.16415 of 2021**

AND

1. Y. Jagadish, S/o Venkateswarlu, Aged 30 years Occ Unemployee, Caste OC Male H.T.No.1218049230 Zone V, R/o H.No.2-116 Vallapuram Village, Mudigonda, Mandal Khammam District-507158 TS.
2. M Sathish, S/o Kanakaiah, Aged 31 years, Occ ; Unemployee, Caste BCB Male, H.T.No.1218030452, Zone V, R/o H.No.4-44, Dhoolmitta Village Maddur Mandal Siddipet District-506367 T.S.
3. Chakka Venkateswar Rao, S/o Ranga Rao, Aged 32 years, Occ Unemployee, Caste SC Male, H T No 1218016582 ZoneV R/o H No 17-82, Teachers Colony, Husnabad Mandal Husnabad Dstrict-505467 TS.
4. T. Ganesh, S/o Pandu, Aged 29 years, Occ Unemployee Caste BCD Male H T No 1218057948, ZoneVI R/o H No 2-12 Alwal Village Kashampet Mandal, Mahabubnagar District-509408 TS.
5. Y. Venkateshwarlu, S/o Uppalaiah, Aged 29 years, Occ Unemployee, Caste BCD Male, Zone-V, R/o H No 16-1-168, SRR Thota, Karimabad Road, Warangal District-506002 TS.
6. K. Bharath, S/o Ravinder, Aged 27 years, Occ Govtemployee, Caste BCB Male, Zone-VI, R/o H No 3-3-33 Azad Road, Bhongir, Nalgonda District-508116 TS.
7. B. Mohan, S/o Raju, Aged 32 years, Occ Unemployee, Caste ST Male, Zone-VI, R/o H No 3-40, Thoompally Village, Sirikonda Nizamabad District -503 165 TS.

8. R. Rajendra Prasad, S/o Dasharatham, Aged 29 years, Govt employee Caste BCB Male, H T No 1218010443, ZoneV, R/o H No 4-3-1/126/27E, Santhosh Nagar Colony, Bhainsa Adilabad District -504103 TS.
9. P. Veer kumar Goud, S/o Mysaiah, Aged 38 years, Occ ; Unemployee, Caste BCB Male, H T No 1218075604, ZoneVI, R/o H.No.3-89 Mallikarjun Nagar Peerjadiguda, Medipally Medchal District-500039 T.S.
10. Ravikumar, S/o Badya, Aged 33 years, Occ ; Unemployee, Caste ST Male, Zone-VI, R/o H.No.3-26 Kothurthanda, Seetharampuram Yellandu, Khammam District-507123 T.S.
11. S. Bhavana, S/o Sudhakar, Aged 26 years, Occ ; Unemployee, Caste BCB Female, Zone-VI, R/o H No 3-10-126/1, Suryanagar Nizamabad District-503001 T.S.
12. R. Ashok, S/o Deepla, Aged 30 years, Occ ; Unemployee, Caste ST Male H T No 1218001087 ZoneVI, R/o H No 3-45 Mahammadabad Thanda Jakkul, Kamareddy District-503305 T.S.
13. R. Ramkishore, S/o Rajaiah, Aged 29 years, Occ ; Unemployee Caste BCD Male, ZoneV R/o H No 7-2-533/59 Ganga nagar, Godavarikhani, Ramagundam, Karimnagar District-505209 T.S.
14. Dupati Sruthi, D/o Krishna Murthy, Aged about 26 years, Student R/o H No 1-1/B-2 Ayyappa Nagar, Narsampet Warangal District TS -506132.
15. Ketavath Keerthy, D/o Ketavath Makatlal, Aged about 27 years, R/o H No 20324-3, MKR nagar Devarakonda, Nalgonda District.

.....RESPONDENTS/WRIT PETITIONER IN WP.NO.16415 OF 2021

16. The State of Telangana, Rep. by its Principal Secretary, Planning Department, Secretariat, At Hyderabad, TS.
17. The Director of Economics and Statistics, Rep. by its Director, Hyderabad, Telangana State.

.....RESPONDENTS/RESPONDENTS

I.A.NO:2 OF 2025

Petition Under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to suspend the order dated 05.12.2024 in WP No 16415 of 2021 in the interest of justice.

Counsel for Appellants : SRI P.S.RAJASEKHAR (SC FOR TGPSC)

Counsel for the Respondent Nos.1 to 5, 7 to 9 & 11 to 15 : SRI D.V.SITHARAM MURTHY, SENIOR COUNSEL REPRESENTING SRI MAMIDI AVINASH REDDY

Counsel for Respondent No.6 : -

Counsel for the Respondent Nos.16 & 17 : G.P FOR SERVICES-III

The Court made the following JUDGMENT : -

**IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA
AT HYDERABAD**

**THE HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE SRI APARESH KUMAR SINGH
AND**

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE G.M.MOHIUDDIN

WRIT APPEAL No.982 of 2025

DATE: 17.02.2026

BETWEEN:

Telangana Public Service Commission
(TGPSC)

....Appellant

AND

Y. Jagadish and 16 others.

....Respondents

JUDGMENT

This writ appeal, preferred under Clause 15 of the Letters Patent, assails the order dated 05.12.2024 passed by the learned Single Judge in W.P.No.16415 of 2021. By the impugned order, the learned Single Judge allowed the writ petition filed by the respondents herein (original writ petitioners) and directed the appellant-Commission to consider their candidature for the post of Mandal Planning and Statistical Officer/Assistant Statistical Officer strictly in accordance with G.O.Ms.No.3, Planning (Establishment) Department, dated 01.03.2012 and Notification No.12/2018, dated 02.06.2018.

Factual background (in brief)

2. On 02.06.2018, the appellant-Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC) issued Notification No.12/2018 inviting

applications for 474 posts of Mandal Planning and Statistical Officer/Assistant Statistical Officer in the Directorate of Economics and Statistics Subordinate Services Department.

3. The educational qualifications prescribed for the said post are set out in paragraph 4 of the Notification, which are traceable to G.O.Ms.No.3, Planning (Establishment) Department, dated 01.03.2012 (whereby the Andhra Pradesh Economics and Statistical Subordinate Service Rules, 1991 were amended). The relevant portion reads as under:

4) EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Applicants must possess the qualifications from a recognized University/ Institution as detailed below or equivalent thereto, as specified in the relevant Service Rules, indented by the Department as on the Date of Notification.

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	Educational Qualifications as specified by the department vide G.O.Ms.No.3 Planning (Establishment) Dept., Dt. 01/03/2012 read with G.O.Ms.No.13 Planning (XI) Dept., Dt.10/05/2002.
1	Mandal Planning and Statistical Officer /Assistant Statistical Officer	1. Bachelor's Degree with Statistics as one of the main subjects. (OR) 2. Bachelor's Degree with Mathematics (with Statistics as a paper in one year or two years or all the three years as the case may be) as one of the main subjects. (OR) 3. Bachelor's Degree with Economics (with Statistics as a paper in one year or two years or all the three years as the case may be) as one of the main subjects. (OR) 4. Bachelor's Degree with Commerce (with Statistics as a paper in one year or two years or all the three years as the case may be) as one of the main subjects. (OR) 5. Bachelor's Degree with Computer Science (with Statistics as a paper in one year or two years or all the three years as the case may be) as one of the main subjects. from a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act or State Act, or such Institutions declared as deemed to be Universities under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 or a foreign University approved by the Central Government from time to time.

4. The respondents, who are B.Tech (Computer Science) graduates, applied for the said posts and were permitted to appear for the written examination conducted on 03.09.2018 and were subsequently called for certificate verification between 10.01.2019 and 12.01.2019. During certificate verification, the Commission noticed that the respondents had studied 'Probability and Statistics' for only one semester (six months) in their B.Tech course, whereas the prescribed qualification required study of Statistics for 'one year' or 'two years' or 'all the three years.' In order to clarify the said requirement, the Commission issued a Memo dated 31.12.2018 containing the following notes as under:

Note- 1: *Study of Statistics for one year or 2 semesters is necessary to be eligible for the said post.*

2: *As such Candidates who studied B.Tech (Computer Science) with minimum of one year study of Statistics are also eligible.*

5. Aggrieved thereby, certain candidates filed W.P.No.3043 of 2019 and batch challenging the Memo dated 31.12.2018. By interim order dated 04.04.2019, this Court directed the respondents therein to consider the cases of the petitioners without reference to the Memo dated 31.12.2018 and strictly in terms of G.O.Ms.No.3. Pursuant to the said interim order, the Commission referred the matter to a Committee of Subject Experts comprising:

- i) Prof. V.V. Hara Gopal, Professor of Statistics, BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus;

- ii) Prof. Madhuchhanda Bhattacharjee, Professor of Statistics, University of Hyderabad, Gachibowli, Hyderabad; and
- iii) Prof. B. Sudhakar Reddy, Chairman, Board of Studies, Department of Economics, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

6. The Expert Committee submitted its report dated 12.04.2019 observing, *inter alia*, as follows:

"As per G.O.Ms.No.3 dated 01.03.2012, the 'year' means an academic year consisting of 12 months or two semesters of six months' duration each.

In an academic year, the examination will be held at the end of the academic year with full coverage of Statistics, while in a semester (6 months), which is not a full academic year, where only the foundations of Statistics are being learnt."

7. Based on the report of the Expert Committee, the appellant-Commission issued individual rejection memos dated 29.05.2019 to the respondents informing them that their candidature stood rejected on the ground that they did not possess the requisite qualification of having studied Statistics for one academic year.

8. Challenging the said rejection memos, the respondents filed the present writ petition *vide* W.P. No.16415 of 2021. During the pendency of the writ petition, certain subsequent developments took place, including withdrawal of W.A.No.402 of 2019 and batch by the State on 17.02.2021, and closure of W.P.Nos.6595, 3043, 3332, 5202 and 5792 of 2019 on 05.07.2021, granting liberty to the petitioners therein to challenge the respective rejection orders.

9. The learned Single Judge, by the impugned order dated 05.12.2024 allowed the writ petition holding that the rejection of the

respondents' candidature was unsustainable. The learned Single Judge observed that study of 'Probability and Statistics' as a core subject in the B.Tech course satisfies the requirement of studying Statistics as a paper for one year, and further held that issuance of the Memo dated 31.12.2018 after commencement of the recruitment process was impermissible in view of the decision in ***Tej Prakash Pathak v. Rajasthan High Court and others***¹.

10. Aggrieved by the said order, the TGPSC has preferred the present writ appeal.

11. Heard Sri P.S.Rajasekhar learned Standing Counsel for TGPSC appearing for the appellant and Sri D.V.Sitharam Murthy, learned Senior Counsel representing Sri M.Avinash Reddy, learned counsel for respondent Nos.1 to 5, 7 to 9 and 11 to 15 and perused the record.

Contentions on behalf of appellant-Commission

12. Learned Standing Counsel appearing for the appellant-Commission has raised the contentions as under:

- i. That the learned Single Judge erred in interpreting the expression 'Statistics as a paper in one year' occurring in G.O.Ms.No.3 and the Notification. According to the learned Standing Counsel, the expression 'one year', in the context of an academic qualification, necessarily means a full academic year consisting of two semesters

¹ (2013) 4 SCC 540

(or three trimesters), culminating in an examination at the end of such academic period. The respondents admittedly studied only one paper titled 'Probability and Statistics' in a single semester of six months, which does not amount to study for 'one year'.

- ii. That the issue pertains to interpretation of an educational qualification, which is essentially an academic matter. The Commission had referred the issue to a Committee of Subject Experts comprising Professors of Statistics from reputed institutions. The Committee, upon deliberation, opined that study of Statistics in one semester covers only foundational aspects of the subject, whereas a full academic year provides comprehensive coverage, and that such expert opinion ought to have been accorded due weight by the learned Single Judge.
- iii. That the Memo dated 31.12.2018 did not alter the 'rules of the game' mid-process, but merely clarified the existing eligibility criteria. The Notification itself prescribed study of Statistics for 'one year'. The Memo only clarified what constitutes one year, namely, two semesters or a full academic year. Such clarification, it is argued, does not amount to change of rules. Therefore, reliance placed on **Tej Prakash Pathak** (supra 1) is stated to be misplaced.

- iv. That reliance placed by the learned Single Judge on the order in W.P.No.11642 of 2019 is misconceived, as the said case is factually distinguishable. In that case, the candidate had pursued an M.Sc. (Integrated) in Applied Mathematics from I.I.T., wherein he studied Probability and Statistics for two semesters, which constituted one full academic year in that programme, and his eligibility was acknowledged by the Expert Committee itself. The present respondents, having studied Statistics only for one semester, cannot claim parity.
- v. That the B.Tech curriculum of the respondents shows that out of more than 58 subjects studied during the four-year course, only one subject pertained to Statistics, which constitutes a negligible portion of the overall coursework. Statistics was not studied as a main subject. The qualification was prescribed to ensure adequate proficiency in Statistics for discharge of duties such as compilation of GSDP estimates, conduct of surveys, and analysis of statistical data. A candidate who studied Statistics for only one semester cannot be said to satisfy this requirement.
- vi. That the recruitment process was completed on 22.07.2019 and, except for one vacancy under the PWD category, all posts have been filled. As per the General

Ranking List, the respondents were placed far below the last selected candidate. Several candidates higher in merit were not selected due to limited vacancies. Interference at this stage would unsettle the concluded selection process.

vii. That Courts ordinarily do not sit in appeal over academic determinations. The question whether a particular course of study is equivalent to another falls within the domain of academic experts. Unless the opinion of the expert body is shown to be arbitrary or perverse, judicial deference is warranted. The Expert Committee's report, according to the appellant, is reasoned and based on academic considerations.

viii. That mere participation in the examination does not confer any vested right to appointment. Eligibility must be determined in accordance with the rules as they stood on the date of notification. Since the respondents did not fulfill the prescribed qualification, their candidature was rightly rejected. On the above grounds, it is prayed that the impugned judgment be set aside and the writ petition be dismissed.

Contentions on behalf of the respondents

13. Learned counsel appearing for the respondents has supported the learned Single Judge's order and raised the contentions as under:

- i. That rejection of the respondents' candidature is illegal, arbitrary and violative of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India. The respondents were permitted to apply, issued hall tickets, allowed to appear in the examination, and called for certificate verification. Their certificates were verified by the competent authorities. It was only thereafter that the Memo dated 31.12.2018 introduced a restrictive interpretation not reflected in the original Notification.
- ii. That the Memo dated 31.12.2018 and the subsequent rejection memos dated 29.05.2019 amount to alteration of the 'rules of the game' after commencement of the recruitment process. Such alteration is impermissible in view of the law laid down by the Supreme Court in **Tej Prakash Pathak** (supra 1) and **K. Manjushree v. State of A.P.**². The respondents fulfilled the qualification prescribed in the Notification, namely, Statistics as a paper in one year, by studying 'Probability and Statistics' in their B.Tech course. The subsequent clarification that 'one year' means two semesters is a substantive modification.
- iii. That study of 'Probability and Statistics' in one semester constitutes a complete course in the subject as per university curriculum. The Expert Committee's observation that a semester covers only foundational aspects is stated to be unsupported by objective material.

² (2008) 3 SCC 512

- iv. That materials from universities including JNTU, Osmania University, and the Indian Statistical Institute were placed on record to demonstrate that 'Probability and Statistics' and 'Operations Research' fall within the discipline of Statistics. Thus, the learned Single Judge rightly took these materials into consideration.
- v. That the order in W.P.No.11642 of 2019, wherein a similarly placed candidate was granted relief, has attained finality. Consistency in judicial approach requires that the same principle be applied in the present case.
- vi. That withdrawal of W.A.No.402 of 2019 and batch on 17.02.2021 resulted in the interim directions of the learned Single Judge attaining finality. Those directions required consideration of candidature strictly in terms of G.O.Ms.No.3 without reference to the Memo dated 31.12.2018. The rejection based on the Expert Committee's report is stated to be contrary to the said direction.
- vii. That the right to be considered for appointment is protected under Article 16 of the Constitution. The respondents had a legitimate expectation of fair consideration, and rejection based on a belated clarification defeats such expectation.
- viii. That the question involved is one of eligibility and not merit. If found eligible, the respondents are entitled to consideration against the vacancies kept vacant pursuant to

interim orders of this Court, and that the judicial deference to expert opinion is not absolute. Where such opinion is arbitrary or based on an erroneous premise, the Court is competent to interfere. On the above grounds, it is prayed that the writ appeal be dismissed and the order of the learned Single Judge be affirmed.

- ix. That the essential qualification prescribed is a "Bachelor's Degree with Mathematics, Economics, Commerce and Computer Science". It has to be construed as such in the light of the settled principles of statutory interpretation of the text placed within parentheses. It is submitted that expressions placed within brackets are ordinarily explanatory or illustrative in nature and therefore do not carry the same mandatory force as the principal text. In that view of the matter, the reference to Statistics must be treated as directory rather than mandatory and should be excluded from the core consideration of eligibility.
- x. That, as per the information obtained under the Right to Information Act, 2005, the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC), Vijayawada, has appointed 12 candidates possessing B.Tech (CSE) qualifications to the post of Statistical Officer. It is submitted that the prescribed qualifications for the post of Statistical Officer notified by the A.P. Public Service

Commission are identical to those contained in the impugned notification.

14. We have taken note of the respective contentions urged and perused the material on record, including the Notification dated 02.06.2018, G.O.Ms.No.3 dated 01.03.2012, the Memo dated 31.12.2018, the report of the Expert Committee, the respondents' academic records, and the precedents cited.

Consideration by this Court

15. The main controversy in the present appeal revolves around the interpretation of the educational qualification prescribed for the post in question, namely, that candidates possessing a Bachelor's Degree with Computer Science must have studied 'Statistics as a paper in one year or two years or all the three years, as the case may be.' The respondents, who are B.Tech (Computer Science) graduates, have studied 'Probability and Statistics' only for one semester (six months) during the course of their four-year programme. The appellant-Commission, placing reliance on the report of the Subject Experts Committee, rejected their candidature on the ground that study of the subject for a single semester does not satisfy the requirement of having studied Statistics for 'one year' as contemplated under the Notification and G.O.Ms.No.3 dated 01.03.2012.

16. In the present case, the learned Single Judge relied upon the well-settled principle that 'rules of the game cannot be changed after

the game has commenced,' as laid down in the cases of **Tej Prakash Pathak** (supra 1) and **K. Manjushree** (supra 2). However, it is to be noted that its applicability depends upon the nature of the action impugned.

The relevant para from the **Tej Prakash Pathak's** case (supra 1) is extracted hereunder:

10. Under the scheme of our Constitution an absolute and non-negotiable prohibition against retrospective law-making is made only with reference to the creation of crimes. Any other legal right or obligation could be created, altered, extinguished retrospectively by the sovereign law-making bodies. However, such drastic power is required to be exercised in a manner that it does not conflict with any other constitutionally guaranteed rights, such as, Articles 14 and 16, etc. Changing the "rules of game" either midstream or after the game is played is an aspect of retrospective law-making power.

The relevant para from the **K. Manjushree's** case (supra 2) is extracted hereunder:

32. In Maharashtra SRTC v. Rajendra Bhimrao Mandve [(2001) 10 SCC 51 : 2002 SCC (L&S) 720] this Court observed that "the rules of the game, meaning thereby, that the criteria for selection cannot be altered by the authorities concerned in the middle or after the process of selection has commenced". In this case the position is much more serious. Here, not only the rules of the game were changed, but they were changed after the game had been played and the results of the game were being awaited. That is unacceptable and impermissible.

17. In **Tej Prakash Pathak's** case (supra 1), a new minimum qualifying benchmark was introduced after the written examination. In **K. Manjushree's** case (supra 2), an additional eligibility condition was imposed after commencement of selection. In both cases, substantive changes were introduced which were not part of the original notification. However, in the present case, the Notification itself prescribed that candidates must have studied 'Statistics as a

paper in one year or two years or all the three years.' The expression 'one year' was thus part of the original eligibility condition.

18. It is to be noted that the Memo dated 31.12.2018 clarified that study of Statistics for 'one year' means study for one academic year, i.e., two semesters. The Memo did not introduce a new qualification; it clarified the meaning of an existing expression. The clarification was issued prior to certificate verification and well before final selection. Therefore, the respondents were aware that their eligibility would be assessed in accordance with the clarified understanding.

19. Further, on perusal of the record, it is evident that the Notification expressly provided that admission to examination or verification of certificates is provisional and subject to final scrutiny of eligibility, and that the Commission reserves the right to reject candidates at any stage. In this regard, the Memo dated 31.12.2018 cannot be treated as alteration of eligibility conditions. It was a clarification of an existing criterion.

20. It is pertinent to note that the Commission referred the issue of whether study of Statistics in one semester can be equated to study for 'one year' to a Committee of Subject Experts comprising senior Professors of Statistics and allied disciplines.

21. It is settled law that Courts ordinarily defer to expert opinion in matters concerning academic qualifications and equivalence. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *University of Mysore v. C.D. Govinda*

Rao³, emphasized that determination of equivalence of qualifications lies primarily within the domain of academic experts. The relevant para is extracted hereunder:

12. Before we part with these appeals, however, reference must be made to two other matters. In dealing with the case presented before it by the respondent, the High Court has criticised the report made by the Board and has observed that the circumstances disclosed by the report made it difficult for the High Court to treat the recommendations made by the expert with the respect that they generally deserve. We are unable to see the point of criticism of the High Court in such academic matters. Boards of Appointments are nominated by the Universities and when recommendations made by them and the appointments following on them, are challenged before courts, normally the courts should be slow to interfere with the opinions expressed by the experts. There is no allegation about mala fides against the experts who constituted the present Board; and so, we think, it would normally be wise and safe for the courts to leave the decisions of academic matters to experts who are more familiar with the problems they face than the courts generally can be.....

(emphasis supplied)

22. The Expert Committee in the present case opined that 'year' in the context of G.O.Ms.No.3 refers to an academic year consisting of 12 months or two semesters, and that a semester study ordinarily covers only foundational aspects of Statistics. The report assigns reasons and reflects academic consideration. No material has been placed to demonstrate that the opinion is arbitrary, *mala fide*, or based on irrelevant considerations.

23. It is to be noted that the learned Single Judge, while interpreting the qualification, did not record any finding that the Expert Committee's opinion was perverse or irrational. In absence of

³ AIR 1965 SC 491

such finding, substitution of judicial interpretation in place of expert opinion is not warranted.

24. The respondents are B.Tech (Computer Science) graduates who studied 'Probability and Statistics' in one semester of the four-year programme. The course material on record indicates that the said subject was taught in a single semester. The Expert Committee opined that such study does not amount to study for one academic year.

25. It is to be noted that the prescribed qualification specifically requires study of Statistics 'for one year.' In light of the Expert Committee's interpretation that 'one year' means one academic year comprising two semesters, a single semester cannot be treated as satisfying the requirement. Further, the object of prescribing such qualification is to ensure adequate grounding in Statistics for discharge of duties attached to the post. The recruiting authority is entitled to insist upon compliance with the prescribed academic duration. Therefore, the study of 'Probability and Statistics' for one semester does not fulfill the requirement of study of Statistics 'for one year' within the meaning of G.O.Ms.No.3 and the Notification.

26. In regard to the applicability of W.P.No.11642 of 2019 it is apposite to note that the relief was granted therein was to a candidate who had pursued an integrated M.Sc. programme wherein Probability and Statistics was studied for two semesters, which was treated as equivalent to one academic year. The Expert Committee in that case



had not found the candidate ineligible. The factual matrix was therefore materially different. However, in the instant case respondents studied Statistics only for one semester. The Expert Committee has specifically opined that they do not meet the requirement. The earlier order, being fact-specific, does not lay down any general proposition applicable to all B.Tech candidates. It is therefore distinguishable.

27. It is to be noted that under Articles 315 and 320 of the Constitution of India, each State Public Service Commission is a distinct authority. The TGPSC is not legally bound by the APPSC's equivalence or parity determination. The TGPSC possesses the independent mandate to determine the suitability and educational qualifications of the candidates for appointments in the State of Telangana. TGPSC cannot be compelled to replicate an interpretation made by the APPSC. TGPSC is bound by its own recruitment rules and expert findings. If the expert committee appointed by TGPSC determines that a specific qualification does not meet the requisite standard, that finding remains final for all recruitment within its jurisdiction.

28. It is a fundamental canon of interpretation that every word, phrase and symbol employed by the drafting authority must be given its full effect. The contention that the text within parentheses should be excluded from consideration is legally untenable. The Hon'ble

Supreme Court has reiterated that it is not permissible to omit or treat as surplusage any part of a statute or notification. In educational nomenclature, parentheses are frequently used to define the essential components of a preceding term. When qualification lists a bachelor's degree in Mathematics, Economics, Commerce, Computer Science "(with Statistics as a paper in one year)", the parenthetical clause acts as a restrictive condition. It specifies the type of degree required, thereby narrowing the eligibility to those who possess specific qualification, in this case, Statistics as a paper in atleast one year. The recruiting authority prescribes qualifications based on functional requirements of the post. To ignore the bracketed text would be to frustrate the very purpose of the recruitment notification and would result in an absurd interpretation, where a candidate without proper background in Statistics is appointed to a post of Statistical/Assistant Statistical Officer.

29. Further, we are of the considered view that the jurisprudence on the following points/aspects is clear:

- i. Deference to Expert bodies: In matters concerning educational qualifications and equivalence of degrees, the Courts are required to exercise considerable restraint. The determination as to whether a particular course of study satisfies a prescribed qualification lies primarily within the domain of academic and expert bodies. Judicial interference

is warranted only where the decision of such expert body is shown to be patently arbitrary, irrational, *mala fide*, or vitiated by perversity.

- ii. Interpretation of qualifications: The interpretation of eligibility conditions contained in a recruitment notification is the function of the recruiting authority. A clarification issued by such authority explaining the scope or meaning of an existing eligibility criterion cannot be construed as a change in the 'rules of the game.' A candidate cannot claim a vested right to an interpretation that is favourable to him when the clarification merely elucidates the original prescription.
- iii. Provisional Nature of Eligibility: It is a settled principle that eligibility in recruitment processes is provisional at all stages, unless otherwise expressly declared. Mere participation in the selection process, issuance of hall tickets, or even provisional verification of certificates does not create any indefeasible right to appointment, if the candidate is ultimately found not to possess the prescribed qualification.
- iv. Purpose of Qualifications: The educational qualifications are not empty formalities; they are prescribed with a definite object, namely, to ensure that candidates possess the requisite knowledge and competence to discharge the duties attached to the post. Therefore, such qualifications must be

interpreted in a manner that advances the purpose underlying their prescription, and not in a manner that dilutes or defeats it.

- v. Finality of Recruitment: Once a recruitment process has been completed and appointments have been made, particularly after a considerable lapse of time, the Court ought to be slow in unsettling the same. The rights of those who have been duly appointed and have been discharging their functions cannot be lightly disturbed, unless compelling legal grounds are made out.

30. The present case reiterates the settled limits of judicial review in matters concerning academic qualifications. Though the jurisdiction of this Court under Article 226 of the Constitution is wide, it must be exercised with restraint in areas involving academic or technical expertise. Determination of whether a particular course of study satisfies a prescribed qualification, or whether study for one semester is equivalent to study for one academic year, lies primarily within the domain of subject experts.

31. Even if it is presumed that the respondents satisfy the prescribed qualification, their entitlement to appointment would still be governed by their position in the merit list. The material on record indicates that the respondents' positions in the General Ranking List range between 19 and 2123, whereas only 474 posts were notified. It

is also not in dispute that several candidates higher in merit than the respondents could not be accommodated owing to limited vacancies. Any direction at this stage for appointment of the respondents would necessarily disturb the appointments already made, and the selected candidates are not parties to the present proceedings.

32. Further, the contention of the respondents that 25 vacancies were kept unfilled pursuant to interim orders of this Court does not advance their case, as the said vacancies were retained subject to the outcome of pending litigations. If the respondents are found ineligible, the question of their adjustment against such vacancies does not arise. Even otherwise, eligibility alone would not confer an automatic right to appointment; selection would still depend upon *inter se* merit among similarly situated candidates. Thus, the respondents have failed to establish that they would fall within the zone of selection even if treated as eligible.

33. It is further to be noted that the recruitment process was concluded in the year 2019 and appointments have since been made. Considerable time has elapsed, and interference at this stage would result in administrative complications and unsettle a process that has already attained finality. Therefore, as the respondents do not possess the prescribed qualification, no relief can be granted.

Conclusion

34. For the foregoing reasons, this Court is of the considered view that the order dated 05.12.2024 passed by the learned Single Judge in W.P.No.16415 of 2021 cannot be sustained. The interpretation placed by the respondents on the eligibility criteria and the consequent interference with the decision of the appellant-Commission is unsustainable. The impugned order dated 05.12.2024 is therefore liable to be set aside.

35. Accordingly, the Writ Appeal is allowed. The impugned order dated 05.12.2024 passed by the learned Single Judge in W.P.No.164-15 of 2021 is hereby set aside. The rejection memos dated 29.05.2019 issued by the appellant-Commission are upheld. No order as to costs.

As a sequel, miscellaneous petitions, pending if any, stand closed.

//TRUE COPY//

SD/-M. RAMANA KRISHNA
JOINT REGISTRAR

SECTION OFFICER

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(For His Lordship's Kind Perusal)
AND

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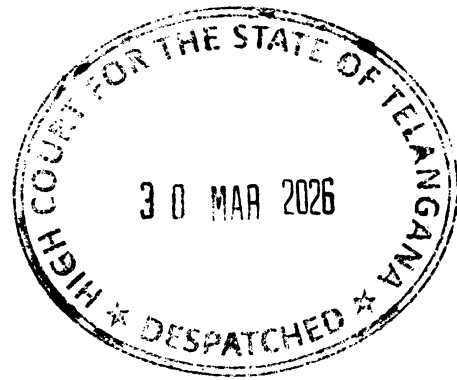
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HIGH COURT

DATED:17/02/2026



JUDGMENT

WA.No.982 of 2025

**ALLOWING THE W.A
WITHOUT COSTS.**

(24) PMG
12/3/26.