



W.P. No. 42965/2025

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MADHYA
PRADESH
AT INDORE
BEFORE
HON'BLE SHRI JUSTICE JAI KUMAR PILLAI**

WRIT PETITION No. 42965 of 2025

DR. RAHUL PATIDAR

Versus

THE STATE OF MADHYA PRADESH AND OTHERS

Appearance:

Shri Ashish Choubey - Advocate for the petitioner.

Ms. Pranjali Yajurvedi –Dy.G.A for the respondent/State.

Shri V.P. Khare – Advocate through VC along with Shri

Vijay Gulani –Advocate for the respondent No.2.

WITH

WRIT PETITION No. 41755 of 2025

DR. SMT. AMITA SHUKLA (DIMRI)

Versus

THE STATE OF M.P. AND OTHERS

Appearance:

**W.P. No. 42965/2025**

Shri L.C. Patne –Advocate for the petitioner.
Ms.Pranjali Yajurvedi –Dy.G.A for the respondents/State.
Shri V.P. Khare – Advocate through VC along with Shri Vijay Gulani –Advocate for the respondent No.2.

WRIT PETITION No. 42806 of 2025

SOUMYA JAIN
Versus
THE STATE OF MADHYA PRADESH AND OTHERS

Appearance:

Shri Mohit Pandya –Advocate for the petitioner.
Ms.Pranjali Yajurvedi –Dy.G.A for the respondents/State.
Shri V.P. Khare – Advocate through VC along with Shri Vijay Gulani –Advocate for the respondent No.2.

WRIT PETITION No. 42812 of 2025

LOKESH YADAV
Versus
THE STATE OF MADHYA PRADESH AND OTHERS

Appearance:

Shri Mohit Pandya –Advocate for the petitioner.
Ms.Pranjali Yajurvedi –Dy.G.A for the respondents/State.

**W.P. No. 42965/2025**

Shri V.P. Khare – Advocate through VC along with Shri Vijay Gulani – Advocate for the respondent No.2.

WRIT PETITION No. 42813 of 2025***RUCHI TIWARI****Versus****THE STATE OF MADHYA PRADESH AND OTHERS***

Appearance:

Shri Mohit Pandya – Advocate for the petitioner.

Ms. Pranjali Yajurvedi – Dy. G.A for the respondents/State.

Shri V.P. Khare – Advocate through VC along with Shri Vijay Gulani – Advocate for the respondent No.2.

Reserved on : 08/05/2026**Post on : 01/07/2026**

ORDER

1. These petitions, having similar facts and involving common questions of law, are being heard and decided together by this common order. For the sake of convenience, the facts of W.P. No. 42965/2025 have been taken as the lead case.



W.P. No. 42965/2025

2. The petitioner has approached this Court invoking the extraordinary writ jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. The primary relief sought is a writ in the nature of certiorari to quash the impugned notification/corrigendum dated 14.10.2025 issued by Respondent No. 2. The petitioner further seeks a writ of mandamus commanding the respondents to treat him as eligible for the post of Assistant Professor (Zoology) under the OBC category and to permit his participation in the ensuing interview and final selection process.

Facts of the case

3. The Respondent No. 1, Higher Education Department (HED), issued a requisition for the recruitment of Assistant Professors (Zoology). Pursuant to this, Respondent No. 2, the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission (MPPSC), published Advertisement No. 51/2022 dated 30.12.2022. The petitioner applied online for the said post under the OBC category, claiming to possess the requisite educational qualifications.

4. The MPPSC conducted the written examination on 04.08.2024, and the results were subsequently declared on 20.11.2024. The selection list included 87% of the total posts in the main merit list, while the remaining 13% were categorized as

**W.P. No. 42965/2025**

provisional. The petitioner was provisionally selected and included in this 13% provisional list. The candidates were required to submit their requisite documents by 11.12.2024, which the petitioner duly submitted.

5. Upon scrutiny of the documents, the MPPSC issued a notification dated 08.09.2025, rejecting the candidature of the petitioner on the ground of lacking the prescribed educational qualification. Through the same notification, the MPPSC invited representations and objections from aggrieved candidates within a period of seven days.

6. The petitioner submitted a detailed representation on 12.09.2025, enclosing documents to substantiate that his Master's degree in Entomology is an allied subject of Zoology. However, the MPPSC issued a subsequent corrigendum on 14.10.2025, again rejecting the candidature. This time, the rejection was based on the specific ground that the petitioner possessed Post Graduate and Ph.D. degrees in Agriculture, and his NET qualification was also in the discipline of Agriculture, thereby rendering him ineligible for the Zoology post.

Contentions of the Petitioners



W.P. No. 42965/2025

7. The petitioner vehemently argues that the impugned action of the MPPSC is arbitrary, illegal, and violative of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India. It is contended that the respondents acted inconsistently by initially rejecting the candidature on one ground, and subsequently changing their stand in the corrigendum dated 14.10.2025 to state that the degrees were in Agriculture, which reflects a complete non-application of mind.

8. It is further submitted that the petitioner's M.Sc. (Agriculture) in Entomology is a cognate and allied subject of Zoology. The petitioner asserts that Entomology is a recognized branch of Zoology dealing with the scientific study of insects. Therefore, rejecting the candidature merely on the basis of the nomenclature of the degree, rather than the subject specialization, is hyper-technical and defeats the objective of the recruitment rules.

9. The petitioner strongly relies upon the State Eligibility Test (SET)-2024 notification issued by the MPPSC itself, wherein Entomology was categorically mentioned as an allied subject to Life Sciences. The petitioner appeared and qualified in the said SET examination under the Life Sciences subject. Thus, it is argued that the respondents cannot now take a contradictory stand to treat the same qualification as invalid for the present recruitment.



W.P. No. 42965/2025

10. Lastly, it is contended that the rejection violates the principles of natural justice and the doctrine of *audi alteram partem*, as no personal hearing was afforded. The petitioner claims that the rejection contravenes UGC Regulations, 2018, which recognize allied and inter-disciplinary subjects, and once provisionally selected, the petitioner had a legitimate expectation to be fairly considered for the interview stage.

Contentions of the Respondents

11. *Per contra*, the answering respondents submit that MPPSC is merely a recruiting agency that selects candidates strictly based on the conditions and requisitions laid down by the employer, i.e., the Higher Education Department. The essential educational qualifications are a matter of policy, governed specifically by the HED's order dated 22.12.2022, which strictly delineates the core and allied subjects.

12. The respondents contend that the petitioner wrongly mentioned a Post Graduate degree in Entomology in the online application. Upon verification of the physical documents, it was revealed that the petitioner actually possesses a Master of Science (Agriculture) Entomology and a NET certificate in Agriculture Entomology. Neither of these meets the mandate of having a

**W.P. No. 42965/2025**

Master's degree in Zoology or its 11 recognized allied subjects, along with a NET in Life Sciences.

13. The respondents rely upon the specific caveat provided in Clause 5 of the advertisement, which strictly shifts the burden of eligibility onto the candidate. The exact clause reads:

“पांच महत्वपूर्ण :- यह सुनिश्चित करने की जिम्मेदारी स्वयं अभ्यर्थी की होगी कि, वे अपने आवेदित पद के लिए निर्धारित समस्त अर्हताओं और शर्तों को पूरा करते हैं। अतः आवेदन करने के पहले अभ्यर्थी अपनी अर्हता की जांच स्वयं कर लें और अर्हता की समस्त शर्तों को पूरा करने पर ही आवेदन-पत्र भरें। लिखित परीक्षा हेतु प्रवेश-पत्र जारी करने अथवा साक्षात्कार के लिए आमंत्रित करने का अर्थ यह कदापि नहीं होगा कि अभ्यर्थी को अर्ह मान लिया गया है। चयन के किसी भी स्तर पर अभ्यर्थी के अनर्ह पाए जाने पर उसका आवेदन पत्र निरस्त कर उसकी उम्मीदवारी समाप्त की जाएगी।”

14. It is categorically stated that the evaluation of degrees and the subsequent rejection was not an arbitrary administrative act. A specialized Committee of Subject Experts, comprising senior officers of the Higher Education Department who have an independent identity, meticulously examined the candidates' documents and representations. It was this expert committee that categorized the subjects and concluded that the petitioner's Agriculture-based degrees did not fit the prescribed criteria.



W.P. No. 42965/2025

15. Legally, the respondents argue that equivalence of qualifications is beyond the scope of judicial review. Relying upon the Hon'ble Supreme Court's mandate in **Zahoor Ahmad Rathor v. Sheikh Imtiyaz Ahmad ((2019) 2 SCC 404)**, it is submitted that prescribing qualifications is a policy matter for the employer. Any appointment made in disregard of the strict terms of the advertisement would amount to a fraud on the public and a violation of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India

Analysis and Conclusion

16. Having heard the rival contentions and perused the record, this Court must first outline the circumscribed scope of judicial review under Article 226 in academic and recruitment matters. It is a well-settled principle of constitutional law that the Court cannot act as an appellate academic body. The constitutional courts do not possess the requisite expertise to assess the equivalence of degrees, and therefore, cannot substitute their views for those of academic experts.

17. In view of the specific directions and rules governing this recruitment process, the solitary issue that falls for the determination of this Court is whether the respondents were justified in rejecting the candidature of the petitioners on the ground

**W.P. No. 42965/2025**

that they did not possess the prescribed Post Graduate Degree in the main or allied subjects, and the NET certificate in the requisite subject.

18. Upon a careful factual evaluation, it is undisputed that the advertisement explicitly required a Master's Degree in Zoology or its specified allied subjects, alongside a NET qualification in Life Sciences. The petitioners in these connected matters possess a Master of Science (Agriculture) Entomology and a NET certificate in Agriculture Entomology. Thus, the petitioners clearly have not passed the Post Graduate Degree in the main subject or the designated allied subjects as required.

19. Crucially, the categorization of these subjects was not done arbitrarily by administrative fiat. As specifically pleaded in the return filed by the respondents, an independent expert committee of the Higher Education Department was constituted for this purpose. The rejection of the petitioners' candidature was made strictly following the examination and checking of their degrees by this expert committee. This Court finds no reason to interfere with the subjective academic satisfaction of the experts.

20. This Court finds immense substance in the arguments advanced by the answering respondents that the prescription of

**W.P. No. 42965/2025**

qualifications for a post is strictly a matter of recruitment policy. The State, acting as the employer, is fully entitled to prescribe specific conditions of eligibility. The employer must bear in mind several features, including the nature of the job, the aptitude required, and the functionality of the qualification to ensure the candidate can perfectly teach core Zoology to students.

21. The petitioner's reliance upon the UGC Regulations and their qualification in the SET-2024 examination is entirely misplaced. As rightly contended in the respondents' reply, the NET/SET is merely a qualifying examination and cannot operate as substantive eligibility for the specific post in question. Furthermore, the UGC does not possess the jurisdiction to restrict the State from prescribing its own essential educational qualifications tailored to assist the needs of its public services.

22. This Court also accepts the respondents' submission regarding the sanctity of the advertisement. When an advertisement mentions a particular qualification, any appointment made in disregard of those explicit terms prejudices all those individuals who possessed similar unadvertised qualifications but refrained from applying. Permitting such flexible interpretations mid-process would amount to a fraud on the public and fundamentally violate

**W.P. No. 42965/2025**

the equality mandate enshrined under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India.

23. The legal position in this regard is firmly crystallized by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of **Zahoor Ahmad Rathor v. Sheikh Imtiyaz Ahmad ((2019) 2 SCC 404)**, which was heavily relied upon by the respondents. The Apex Court categorically held that the prescription of qualifications is a matter of recruitment policy, and it is no part of judicial review to expand upon the ambit of prescribed qualifications. Whether a particular qualification should be regarded as equivalent is exclusively a matter for the State to determine.

24. Resultantly, since the academic criteria were explicitly specified in the recruitment rules and the advertisement, and the expert committee has rightfully applied these rules to the petitioners' academic records, no case for interference is made out. The impugned actions of the respondents suffer from no legal, procedural, or constitutional infirmity. The petitioners do not possess a vested right to claim eligibility contrary to the explicit statutory stipulations.

**W.P. No. 42965/2025**

25. Consequently, in light of the aforesaid analysis and findings, the present writ petitions are bereft of merit and are accordingly **dismissed.**

26. Pending applications, if any, are **disposed of** accordingly. Let a copy of this order be retained in the record of connected writ petitions.

No order as to costs.

(Jai Kumar Pillai)
Judge

hk/