IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL K. NARENDRAN

&

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE MURALEE KRISHNA S.

WEDNESDAY, THE 4TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2026 / 13TH KARTHIKA, 1948

OP(KAT) NO. 290 OF 2026

AGAINST THE JUDGMENT DATED 25.09.2026 IN OP(KAT)NO.1023 OF 2025 OF HIGH COURT OF KERALA

PETITIONERS/APPLICANTS 1 & 2:

1 ARUN SHYAMNATH
AGED 41 YEARS
S/O.G. SHYAMNATH,
WORKING AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PLANNING, PRESENTLY WORKING AT KERALA STATE PLANNING BOARD, PATTOM P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695 004, RESIDING AT GRA 272, KOTTAVATTOM MADHOM, KOTTARA LANE, GOUREESHAPATTOM, PATTOM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

2 HUSSAIN.M.
AGED 50 YEARS
S/O. MUHAMMED HANEEF M.,
JOINT DIRECTOR AND CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER, PRESENTLY WORKING AT DIRECTORATE OF SCHEDULED CASTE DEVELOPMENT, NANDHAVANAM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695 033, RESIDENT OF MINNATH, K.S. PURAM P.O., KARUNAGAPPALLY, KOLLAM, PIN - 690544

BY ADVS.
SRI.K.R.GANESH
SHRI.ADARSH BABU C.S.
SMT.RESHMA PRAKASH KURIAN
SHRI.ELVIN PETER P.J. (SR.)

RESPONDENTS/RESPONDENTS 1 TO 3 & 3RD APPLICANT:

1 STATE OF KERALA
REPRESENTED BY
PIN - 682031

2 KERALA STATE PLANNING BOARD,
REPRESENTED BY ITS MEMBER SECRETARY,
STATE PLANNING BOARD OFFICE, PATTOM,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695004

3 KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION,
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, PATTOM.P.O.,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695004

4 ANIL.K. PAPPACHAN
AGED 49 YEARS
S/O. K.C. PAPPACHAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
SOCIAL SERVICE DIVISION, PRESENTLY WORKING AT KERALA STATE PLANNING BOARD, PATTOM P.O.,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695 004,
RESIDENT OF KAINIKKARA HOUSE,
AISWARTA NAGAR B 23, NALANCHIRA P.O.,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN – 695015

SMT. ANN MARIA FRANCIS – GP
SRI. P.C. SASIDHARAN - SC

THIS OP KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL HAVING BEEN FINALLY HEARD ON 23.10.2026, ALONG WITH O.P.(KAT)NOS.291/2026, 292/2026, THE COURT ON 04.11.2026 DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL K. NARENDRAN

&

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE MURALEE KRISHNA S.

WEDNESDAY, THE 4TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2026 / 13TH KARTHIKA, 1948

OP(KAT) NO. 291 OF 2026

AGAINST THE ORDER DATED 25.09.2026 IN OA NO.1004 OF 2025 OF KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

PETITIONER/APPLICANT:

SUNIL XAVIER
AGED 46 YEARS
S/O .V.A.XAVIER,
ASSISTANT DISTRICT PLANNING OFFICER,
PLANNING ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT DISTRICT PLANNING OFFICE, PATHANAMTHITTA R/AT VELIKETTUMTHARA HOUSE,
EZHUPUNNA SOUTH,
ALAPPUZHA DISTRICT, PIN - 688537

BY ADVS.
SHRI.A.N.RAJAN BABU
SHRI.P.J.PHILIP
SHRI.P.GOPALAKRISHNAN (MVA)
SRI.A.R.EASWAR LAL

RESPONDENTS:

1 **STATE OF KERALA**
REPRESENTED BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
PLANNING ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN – 695001

2 THE SECRETARY
KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION,
KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION HEAD OFFICE,
PATTOM P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695004

SRI. AYYPPAN SANKAR – SR. GP
SRI. P.C. SASIDHARAN - SC

THIS OP KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL HAVING BEEN FINALLY HEARD ON 23.10.2026, ALONG WITH OP(KAT).290/2026 AND CONNECTED CASES, THE COURT ON 04.11.2026 DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL K. NARENDRAN

&

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE MURALEE KRISHNA S.

WEDNESDAY, THE 4TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2026 / 13TH KARTHIKA, 1948

OP(KAT) NO. 292 OF 2026

AGAINST THE JUDGMENT DATED 25.09.2026 IN OA NO.1104 OF 2025 OF KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

PETITIONERS/APPLICANT:

DR. JIKKU KURIEN
AGED 42 YEARS,
S/O. KURIEN I K, MUDRA 132A,
TC 19/2130(9),
MUDAVANMUGAL P.O.,
POOJAPPURA,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695012

BY PARTY-IN-PERSON DR. JIKKU KURIEN

RESPONDENTS/RESPONDENTS:

1 **STATE OF KERALA**
REPRESENTED BY THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
PLANNING, GOVT. SECRETARIAT,
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
PIN - 695001

2 **KERALA STATE PLANNING BOARD**
REPRESENTED BY ITS MEMBER SECRETARY,
STATE PLANNING BOARD OFFICE, PATTOM,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
PIN - 695004

**3 KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, PATTOM P.O.,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN – 695004**

**SSMT. ANN MARIA FRANCIS - GP
SRI.P.C. SASIDHARAN - SC**

THIS OP KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL HAVING BEEN FINALLY HEARD ON 23.10.2026, ALONG WITH OP(KAT).290/2026 AND CONNECTED CASES, THE COURT ON 04.11.2026 DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

JUDGMENT

[O.P.(KAT)Nos.290 of 2026, 291 of 2026 & 292 of 2026]

Muralee Krishna S., J.

These original petitions are filed by the petitioners-applicants under Article 227 of the Constitution of India, challenging the common order dated 25.09.2026 passed by the Kerala Administrative Tribunal, Thiruvananthapuram (the 'Tribunal' for short), in the respective original applications, whereby the Tribunal accepted the interpretation of the Kerala Public Service Commission ('PSC' for short) pertaining to the qualification to the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) in the Kerala State Planning Board as provided in Rule 2(g) of the Special Rules for State Services in Kerala State Planning Service ('Special rules' for short), which was the qualification notified by the PSC in the General Recruitment Notification dated 31.12.2022 as Category No.657/2022 for the aforesaid post and held that the petitioners-applicants are not qualified for the said post. For convenience of reference, the parties and documents are referred to in this judgment as they are in the respective original

applications. Since the points to be decided in these original petitions are the same, they are heard together and are being disposed of by this common judgment.

O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026

2. The petitioners in this original petition are the applicants 1 and 2 in O.A.No.1023 of 2025. All the applicants are officers under the Kerala State Planning Service. Petitioner No.1-applicant No.1 has been working as Deputy Director (Planning) at Kerala State Planning Board; petitioner No.2-applicant No.2 has been working as Joint Director and Chief Planning Officer at Directorate of SC Development, Thiruvananthapuram; and applicant No.3 has been working as Assistant Director at Kerala State Planning Board. As per the Gazette Notification dated 31.12.2022, PSC invited applications for the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) in the Kerala State Planning Board under Category No.657/2022. Though the applicants applied for the said post, their applications were rejected, stating the reason that the applicants do not have Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialisation in Econometrics and Economic Forecasting

from a recognised University or Institution.

2.1. In fact, the applicants had taken part in the written test for the post conducted by the PSC, being issued with Annexures A-4 to A-4(b) hall tickets issued to them. But while publishing Annexure A-5 short list dated 22.04.2025, none of the applicants was included in the short list, and only one candidate was included in the short list. According to the applicants, only upon verification of their profile, the applicants understood the status of their application as 'Disposed' 'No proper qualification'. The printout of the status of the applications of the applicants appeared in their profile is produced as Annexures A-6 to A-6(b) in the original application. The applicants submitted separate representations before the Secretary, PSC, stating that they are qualified for selection to the post as per the notification, as they are holders of a Master's Degree in Economics and that they need no other Diploma or Training qualifications prescribed in the Rules. But, by Annexure A-7 and Annexure A-7(a) letters dated 28.05.2025, the PSC informed the applicants that they had not claimed Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialisation in Econometrics and

Economic Forecasting from a recognised University or Institution, and that was the reason for rejection of their application.

2.2. The applicants contend that the PSC failed to understand the plain and simple meaning of the qualification of MA Economics prescribed in the first limb of the Rules as well as the notification for the post under Clause (c) among the qualifications. According to them, a reading of the qualifications under the first limb of Clause 7(1)(c) of the notification would show that a first-class or high second-class degree in Economics and 7 years' experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Economic methods in Macro and Micro level Planning is the required qualification for Master’s Degree holders in Economics, whereas the Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialisation in Econometrics and Economic Forecasting, besides experience qualification, is required for holders of Master’s Degree in Mathematics prescribed in the second limb. According to the applicants, the 2nd applicant has more than 20 years of experience, and the 1st and 3rd applicants have more than 14 years of experience, as prescribed in the Special Rules. They studied

Statistical methods, Econometric method, Mathematical method in their postgraduate studies, and that is the reason why a Master's Degree in Economics alone is prescribed in the first limb of the qualifications. With these pleadings, the applicants in O.A.No.1023 of 2025 filed that original application under the provisions of Section 19 of the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985, seeking the following reliefs;

> "1. Call for the records leading to Annexure A-6, A-6(a) and A-6(b) and A-7 and A-7(a) and set aside the same.
> 2. Declare that the applicants who are Master's Degree holders in Economics working in Kerala State Planning Board are qualified hands to take part in the selection process pursuant to Annexure A-1 notification as prescribed under Clause 7 (c) of the notification and that the prescription of Diploma or Training in Statistics With specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting are not required for them and consequentially direct the 2nd Respondent to include the applicants in all stages of further selection process pursuant to Annexure A-2 notification and include them in the ranked list if they are otherwise qualified."

2.3. In O.A.No.1023 of 2025, on behalf of the 2nd respondent Ext.P2 reply statement dated 10.12.2025, and on behalf of the 1st respondent Ext.P3 reply statement dated

20.02.2026 were filed opposing the reliefs sought for. In Ext.P2 reply statement filed on behalf of the 2nd respondent, the qualifications necessary for the post are restated based on the Special Rules and the notification issued by the PSC. In Ext.P3 reply statement filed on behalf of the 1st respondent, after stating the qualification for the post prescribed in the Special Rules and in the notification issued by the PSC, it is contended that the applicants do not possess the required qualifications. Paragraphs 7 to 9 of that reply statement read thus;

> "7. Kerala State Planning Service Rules,1975, Rule 2(g) 1(c) says, "A First Class or High Second Class Master's Degree in Economics/Mathematics with Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution and Seven years' experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Economic methods in macro and micro level Planning.". The phrase "with Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic Forecasting" invariably applies to both Economics and Mathematics degree holders. Since the applicants have failed to establish that they possess a Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting, the action of the Public Service

Commission in rejecting the applications cannot be held to be erroneous.

8. Note -3 under- Rule 2 of Kerala State Planning Service Rules (Note (ii) of the Annexure A1 notification indicates that, in the case of candidates who are already in service, only a minimum pass qualification in the relevant Master's degree is required however, along with the said minimum pass qualification, all other qualifications prescribed under the Rule 2(g) must also be possessed. That is relaxation given in the special rules does not extend to the other prescribed academic qualifications such as diploma/training in statistics or specialisation in econometrics. The Public Service Commission has interpreted the Rule correctly and excluded the applicants.

9. The shortlisting and assessment of eligibility of candidates are matters falling exclusively within the domain of the Kerala Public Service Commission (KPSC), which is an independent constitutional authority."

2.4. To the reply statement filed by the 1st respondent, the 1st petitioner-applicant filed Ext.P4 rejoinder dated 29.07.2026, producing therewith Annexures A-9 and A-10 documents. In the rejoinder, it is further contended as under;

"3. The applicants had specifically pleaded that the Rule employs two different connecting expressions, namely "with" and "and'', each having a distinct purpose. The

respondents have not attempted to explain the use of these expressions nor have they answered the applicants' contention that the word "with" qualifies only the immediately preceding qualification, namely Master's Degree in Mathematics, while the word "and" introduces the common requirement of seven years' experience applicable to both categories of Master's Degree holders.

4. It is respectfully submitted that if the intention of the Rulemaking authority was to insist upon a Diploma or Training qualification for both holders of Master's Degree in Economics and Master's Degree in Mathematics, the Rule would have been drafted in clear and unambiguous terms as "Master's Degree in Economics or Mathematics and Diploma or Training". The Rule has not been so framed. On the contrary, the qualifying expression beginning with the word "with" is attached only to the immediately preceding qualification of Master's Degree in Mathematics.

5. The respondents have also failed to explain why the Rule maker deliberately employed the word "and" only before the experience qualification. The use of the word "and" unmistakably indicates that the requirement of seven years' experience is common to both streams of educational qualification, whereas the expression beginning with "with" is intended to qualify only one of the educational qualifications. Any other interpretation would render the deliberate use of two different connecting expressions wholly redundant. The Respondents are trying to rewrite the

special rules according to their whims and fancies.

6. The Rule uses “Economics/Mathematics" and not “Economics and Mathematics". The use of the slash (''/'') denotes alternative qualifications, creating two separate streams of eligibility. Once the Rule treats them as alternative qualifications, the qualifying phrase introduced by “with" naturally attaches only to the latter stream (Mathematics), unless the Rule expressly states otherwise.

7. It is further submitted that the interpretation canvassed by the respondents is contrary to the well-settled principle of statutory interpretation known as the Rule of the Last Antecedent, according to which a qualifying word or phrase ordinarily refers only to the immediately preceding word or expression unless a contrary intention is evident from the language of the statute. In Clause 7(1)(c), the qualifying expression “with” Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic Forecasting" immediately follows the expression “Master's Degree in Mathematics" and, therefore, in the ordinary grammatical construction, qualifies only that qualification. There is nothing in the Rule to indicate that the said qualifying expression was intended to travel backwards and qualify "Master's Degree in Economics" as well. If such had been the intention of the Rule-making authority, the Rule would have been couched in entirely different language by expressly making the Diploma or Training qualification common to both Master's Degree holders in Economics and

Mathematics.

8. The statements filed by the respondents thus contain only a bald assertion regarding the applicability of the Diploma or Training qualification to Master's Degree holders in Economics without meeting the specific legal and grammatical interpretation pleaded by the applicants. An assertion without any supporting reasoning cannot override the plain language of the statutory Rules.

9. It is further submitted that a candidate possessing a Master's Degree in Economics necessarily undergoes study in subjects such as Economics, Statistical Methods, Econometrics and allied quantitative techniques as part of the postgraduate curriculum. This is evident from Annexure A-8 result sheet of the 1st applicant, which clearly shows that the applicant had studied Statistical Methods and Econometrics during the Master's Degree course. It is precisely for this reason that the Rule-making authority has not insisted upon any further Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic Forecasting for candidates possessing a Master's Degree in Economics. Likewise, a candidate holding a Master's Degree in Econometrics would have necessarily acquired advanced knowledge in Economics and Econometric methods as part of the course of study. On the other hand, candidates possessing a Master's Degree in Mathematics or Statistics do not by virtue of those qualifications alone, necessarily acquire specialized knowledge in Economics, Economic

Planning or Economic Forecasting. It is for this reason that the Special Rules insist upon an additional qualification by way of Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic Forecasting for candidates belonging to the Mathematics and Statistics stream. To demonstrate the distinction in the curriculum, the syllabus of the M.Sc. Programme in Mathematics and M.Sc. Programm Statistics courses of the University of Kerala are produced herewith as Annexure A-9 and Annexure A-10 respectively.

10. It is further submitted that the nature of duties attached to the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) itself demonstrates the legislative intent underlying the Special Rules. The work of the Kerala State Planning Board primarily relates to Economic planning, Development Planning and formulation of planning strategies. Consistent with the nature of the post, Paper I of the selection examination conducted by the Kerala Public Service Commission is titled “Economic Planning and Development" carrying 100 marks. Further, in Paper 11, the highest weightage, namely 34 marks out of 100, is allotted to Economics. The scheme of examination thus unmistakably recognizes Economics as the core discipline relevant to the post. This clearly establishes that the Rule- making authority never intended to subject candidates possessing a Master's Degree in Economics to the additional qualification prescribed only for candidates possessing a Master's Degree in Mathematics or

Statistics. The contrary interpretation adopted by the respondents not only ignores the plain language of the Special Rules but also defeats the very object and scheme of the recruitment."

2.5. Thereafter, the 3rd respondent PSC filed Ext.P5 reply statement dated 17.07.2025. Paragraphs 6 to 14 of Ext.P5 reply statement filed by the PSC are extracted hereunder for better understanding of the contentions taken by the PSC.

"6. As per the details provided in the PSC registration profile, the applicants are currently employed in various offices under Kerala State Planning Board. It was alleged in the OA that their applications were rejected by the Commission in spite of possession of the requisite qualification and experience. The requisite qualifications for the post is as mentioned para (a), (b) and (c). Under the title, qualifications, note (ii) is included as : 'Only a pass in Masters Degree in the concerned subject is necessary in the case of candidates already in the Department'. It means that first class/high second class is not needed for the candidates who are already working in Kerala State Planning Board, but only a pass in the post graduate course is sufficient for such candidates. All other conditions including training, Diploma, Experience etc. mentioned in the notification are applicable to them as to the direct candidates. It is pertinent to note that no relaxation has

been provided to departmental candidates on conditions of experience, Diploma and training as prescribed in the notification. The Commission has unambiguously followed the combination of qualifications in strict adherence to Special Rules.

7. The first applicant, Arun Shyamnath has claimed MA Economics as his qualification while applying for the post. It accounts for the first part in qualification listed as (c) i.e, A First class or High Second Class Masters Degree in Economics/ Mathematics. But (c) also insists that the applicant must have Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution and seven years experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Economic Methods in Macro and Micro Level Planning, which the petitioner lacks. Even though he earned a PhD in 2021 that accounts for the first part of requisite qualification (a) above, he doesn't have '4 year experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Econometric methods in macro and micro level planning' before the last date of receipt of application. Clause (iii) of note under qualifications clearly insists that the qualification of experience prescribed for the post shall be one acquired after the acquisition of academic qualification prescribed for the post. Hence his application was rejected as this applicant neither has a qualification as per (a) nor as per (c).

8. The other applicants, Hussain M and Anil K Pappachan,

both claimed MA Economics as their qualification while applying for the post, which accounts for the first part of the qualification (c). But neither of them possess the required qualification of diploma or training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution and hence their applications were also rejected as no exemption in possessing this qualification is extended to the employees of Planning Board, as explained in the case of applicant Arun Shyamnath in the OA.

9. Vide I.0 dated 13.06.2025 in the OA, it was directed to include the petitioners provisionally in the further process of selection and a stay was issued on Annexures A6, A6(a}, A6(b), A(7) and A7(a). The Commission has already decided to comply with the same.As a recruiting agency, Public Service Commission is keen in preparing notifications as per the amendments of Special Rules/Board Orders of the concerned departments/ Authorities.

10. The Apex Court in A K Bhatnagar v. Union of India [1991 (1) SCC 544] held that the rules framed in exercise of powers conferred under the proviso to Article 309 is binding on the Government and acting contrary to the rules will create problem and dislocation and must be regulated by the rules.

11.Further, in Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission Vs. Dr. Narinder Mohan & Ors. [AIR 1994 SC 1808], the Hon'ble Apex Court held that it is settled law that once

statutory rules have been made, the appointment shall be made only in accordance with the rules. The executive power could be exercised only to fill in the gaps but the instructions cannot and should not supplant the law, but would only supplement the law.

12. Section 2 of the Kerala Public Services Act, 1968 empowers the State Government to make rules either prospectively or retrospectively to regulate the recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the State of Kerala. The Division Bench of the Hon'ble High Court itself upheld the power of the rule-making authorities while deciding WA.No. 1066/2006 & connected cases.

13. In Abdul Rasheed Vs. Kerala Public Service Commission (2002 (3) KLT 405) & Public Service Commission Vs Abdul Rasheed (2007 (3) KLT 881), the Hon High Court has observed that PSC has no power to go beyond qualification prescribed by the rule. As per the Full Bench judgment of Hon High Court in Udayan v. Kerala Agro Machinery Corporation Ltd, [2011 (3) KLT 952(F.B.)], there can be no controversy that a recruiting agency like Union/State Public Service Commission is not vested with any power to deviate from the qualifications prescribed in the notification for the purpose of recruitment. Once certain norms are indicated in the notification for selection, those norms should be strictly followed.

14.The Commission can only conduct selection to a post

> going by the Special Rules concerned. Commission is duty bound to follow the rules and orders issued from time to time. There is no arbitrariness or illegality in the action taken by the Commission as averred by the applicant. Therefore, the OA is devoid of any merit and is liable to be dismissed as such."

2.6. On 13.06.2025, when the original application came up for consideration, the Tribunal admitted the same on file and granted an interim stay of Annexures A-6, A-6(a), A-6(b), Annexures A-7 and A-7(a). The Tribunal further directed the 3rd respondent to permit the applicants to participate in the further selection process pursuant to the notification, provisionally and subject to further orders.

O.P.(KAT)No.291 of 2026

3. The petitioner in this original petition is the applicant in O.A.No.1004 of 2025 on the file of the Tribunal. Going by the averments in the original application, the applicant is now working as Assistant District Planning Officer at District Planning Office, Pathanamthitta. The Applicant submitted an application to the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) in the Kerala State Planning Board in response to the notification of the PSC and

attended the descriptive tests conducted by the KPSC on 13.07.2023 and 14.07.2023 as a part of the selection process. He had performed well in those two tests, and he is very confident that he would be short-listed for the further course of selection. But to his surprise, he was not short-listed for the interview to be conducted. On verification of the PSC site, it is understood that he was debarred only on the ground that he does not have sufficient qualifications for the post. As per clause (ii) under the Note, of the qualifications prescribed for the above post, he has sufficient qualifications for the post. Even though he submitted a representation before the Government, establishing the qualifications required for the post, the 1st respondent rejected the same, overruling his contentions. The applicant is fully qualified for the above post under Clause (ii) of the said Note mentioned in the Notification, whereby it is specifically relaxed the qualification of the departmental hands to the effect that "only a pass in the Master's Degree in the concerned subject is necessary in the case of candidate already in the department". The denial of his right under the above-mentioned provision is illegal and untenable.

With these pleadings, the petitioner-applicant filed O.A.No.1004 of 2025 under Section 19 of the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985 seeking the following reliefs:

> "i. Issue necessary directions/orders declaring that the applicant is eligible and legally entitled to for consideration of his application to the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) in view of the specific clause (ii) under Note of the "Qualifications" prescribed in the Annexure A1 notification, considering his qualifications in tune with the said clause(ii) under "Note" specified above.
>
> ii. Issue necessary orders/directions to the 1st respondent to revise the short list published in Annexure A5 by cancelling Annexure A5 notification and to include the applicant in the selection process on due consideration of his merits in the descriptive tests conducted by the 1st respondent."

3.1. In the original application, on behalf of the 1st respondent, Ext.P2 reply statement dated 23.02.2026 was filed opposing the reliefs sought for and producing therewith Annexure R1(a) document. Apart from the contentions taken in O.A.No.1023 of 2025, it is further contended by the 1st respondent in Ext.P2 reply statement that the contention of the applicant that Note (ii)

of the notification exempts him from all other requirements, except a pass in Master's Degree, being a candidate already in the department, is not correct. The said note cannot be read in isolation, but has to be harmoniously construed with the main qualifications prescribed. The "concerned subject" in the Note refers to the subjects specifically mentioned in the notification (Economics/ Mathematics/ Statistics/ Econometrics with the required specialisation), and does not dispense with the need for relevance of qualification or prescribed specialisation. The Public Service Commission has interpreted the Rule correctly and excluded the applicant.

3.2. Similarly, on behalf of the 2nd respondent, Ext.P3 reply statement was filed in a similar line as that of the reply statement filed in O.A.No.1023 of 2025. However, apart from the contentions taken in O.A.No.1023 of 2025, it is further contended in Ext.P3 reply statement as under:

> "7. The applicant is contending that as per Note (ii) under the 'Qualifications' in the notification 'Only a pass in Masters Degree in the Concerned subject is necessary in the case of candidates already in the Department', and

therefore he is eligible for the post.

8. It is submitted that the applicant possesses M Sc in Mathematics which accounts for the first part in the required qualification (C) noted above. But other than M Sc in Mathematics, he does not possess any of the other prescribed qualifications viz., 'Dip|oma or Training in Statistics with Specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution and seven years experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Economic Methods in Macro and Micro Level Planning'. The applicant is contending that this part of the qualification is not applicable to him as he is employed with the Planning Board and thus shall get the benefit of Note (ii) under 'Qualifications', in the notification for the post.

9. It is submitted that under Qualifications, Note (ii) says "Only a pass in Masters Degree in the concerned subject is necessary in the case of candidates already in the Department.'. The explanation is that first class/high second class in Masters degree is not needed for the candidates who are already working in Kerala State Planning Board, but only a pass in the Masters Degree is sufficient. All other conditions, including training, Diploma, Experience etc mentioned in the notification are applicable to them. It is pertinent to note that no relaxation has been provided for departmental candidates on the prescribed conditions of experience,

> Diploma and training given in the notification, The application of the applicant was rejected for the reason that he did not possess the compulsory qualifications as per the gazette notification for the post."

3.3. On 11.06.2025, when the original application came up for admission, the Tribunal issued Ext.P4 order directing the PSC to admit the applicant to participate in the further proceedings of selection pursuant to the notification, provisionally and subject to further orders.

O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026

4. The petitioner herein is the applicant in O.A.No.1104 of 2025. Going by the averments in the original application, the applicant is holding a PhD in Economics with over seven years of relevant experience in the field of economic planning and research, applied for the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) in the Kerala State Planning Board pursuant to Notification No.657/2022 issued by the Kerala Public Service Commission (KPSC). The applicant meets all the eligibility requirements specified in the notification, including a first-class Master's degree in Economics, specialised training in econometrics

and economic forecasting, and substantial professional experience with both government and international agencies. Despite this, the applicant was excluded from the shortlist published on 22.04.2025, on the grounds of not possessing the requisite qualification and experience. The reasons cited by the respondents are baseless and reflect a mechanical rejection without proper application of mind. The rejection of his candidature is contrary to Rule 10(a)(ii) of Part II of the Kerala State and Subordinate Service Rules, 1958 ('the KS&SSR' for short), which recognises higher qualifications as sufficient where they presuppose the acquisition of the prescribed lower qualification. Furthermore, the applicant's experience clearly satisfies the seven-year requirement as specified in the notification. The present application is filed challenging the illegal and arbitrary exclusion of the applicant from the selection process and seeking a direction to include the applicant in the further stages of recruitment, as the rejection amounts to a violation of statutory provisions, natural justice, and constitutional guarantees of fairness and equality. With these pleadings, the applicant filed O.A.No.1104 of

2025 under Section 19 of the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985, seeking the following reliefs:

> "i. Declare that the applicant is duly qualified and experienced for consideration to the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) as per Category No. 657/2022.
>
> ii. Direct the 1st respondent to include the name of the applicant in the shortlist published as Annexure A4 and permit participation in the remaining selection process.

4.1. On 01.07.2025, when the original application came up for admission, the Tribunal granted an interim order to the effect that if any further steps of selection take place, the applicant shall also participate on a provisional basis.

4.2. Thereafter, on behalf of the 3rd respondent, Ext.P3 reply statement dated 23.07.2025 was filed in the original application opposing the reliefs sought for. Paragraphs 3 to 5 of that reply statement, which contained the additional contentions taken by the PSC in respect of the claim raised in this original application, apart from those contentions taken in the remaining original applications, read thus:

> "3) The applicant, as per the claims in his application for the

impugned post, possesses MA (Economics), PhD-Arts (Economics with Development Economics and NET-Arts (Economics). The applicant was awarded PhD on 18.02.2022 and thus on considering the qualification listed as (a) in para 1, his application cannot be considered, and thus does not have four year post Ph D experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Econometric methods in macro and micro level planning as on the last date of application, i.e., 01.02.2023. Thus, the eligibility of the applicant was examined against the qualification (c) in para 1, and there it is seen that the applicant possesses only a Master's degree in Economics but no Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution and seven years' experience in Economic planning and Models and in the application of Economic Methods in Macro and Micro Level Planning.

4) Details of experience provided in PSC registration profile of applicant is summarised below;

Institution/ Dept	From	To	Details	Experience
Private Sector	01.11.2013	30.06.2016	Faculty in Economics	2 Years, 7 Months, 29 Days
State Government	16.08.2021	31.05.2022	State Scientific Coordinator Climate Change Planning	9 Months, 15 Days
State Government	16.06.2022	30.11.2022	State Scientific Coordinator Climate Change Planning	5 Months, 14 Days

Public Sector	06.08.2019	05.08.2020	Project Associate	11 Months, 30 Days
State Government	13.07.2016	01.09.2018	Development Economist	2 Years, 1 Month, 19 Days

While considering the total experience he claimed, he has 2 year plus experience as faculty in Economics which cannot be considered as the practical experience that the requisite qualification insists. Without counting the teaching experience the applicant possesses only an experience of 4 years 4 months and 18 days. Hence his application was rejected on the grounds of non-possession of required qualification.

5) Furthermore the applicant has averred that his Doctorate was not considered as a higher qualification to Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution as Rule 10a(ii) of KS&SSR is applicable for selection to the impugned post. In the notification itself note (v) in para 1 states that the qualifications recognized by executive orders or standing orders of the Government as equivalent to a qualification specified for a post, in the special Rules and such of those qualifications which pre-suppose the acquisition of the lower qualification prescribed for the post, shall also be sufficient for the post. But the PhD (Economics) qualification possessed by the applicant does not pre-suppose the acquisition of the qualification of Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized

University or Institution. Hence his Doctorate Degree cannot be treated as higher to Diploma or Training in Statistics `with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting Therefore, his contention in para 'm' is not tenable."

4.3. To Ext.P3 reply statement, the applicant filed Ext.P4 rejoinder dated 06.08.2025, producing therewith Annexures A16 to A19 documents. It is contended in the rejoinder that Ph.D is a higher degree than a diploma or training, and since the applicant has been awarded the Ph.D with relevant endorsements on his credibility in statistics, econometrics and econometric forecasting, he has sufficient educational qualifications suitable for the post.

4.4. On behalf of the 1st respondent Ext.P5 reply statement dated 24.03.2026 was filed in the original application, in a similar line as that of the reply statements filed in the remaining original applications. However, it is further contended that para 1 of note (v) of the notification states that the qualifications recognised by executive orders or standing orders of the Government as equivalent to a qualification specified for a post in the Special Rules and such of those qualifications which presuppose the

acquisition of the lower qualification prescribed for the post, shall also be sufficient for the post. But the Ph.D (Economics) qualification possessed by the applicant does not presuppose the acquisition of the qualification of Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialisation in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognised University or Institution. Hence, his Doctorate Degree cannot be treated as higher than a Diploma. The applicant is not qualified for selection to the impugned post as per any of the qualification criteria mentioned in Rule 2(g)(1)(a), 2(g)(1)(b) or 2(g)(1)(c) of the Special Rules. The applicant is attempting to quote and apply the Special Rules inconsistently to spread confusion and thereby obtain undue advantage. This is an example of "Cherry Picking" of rules.

4.5. To the reply statement filed on behalf of the 1st respondent, the applicant filed Ext.P6 rejoinder dated 09.06.2026, producing therewith Annexures A20 to A22 documents. Thereafter, along with Ext.P7 miscellaneous application dated 16.09.2026, the applicant has produced Annexures A23 and A24 documents.

5. Later, by the impugned common order dated 25.09.2026, the Tribunal dismissed all three original applications, accepting the contentions of the contesting respondents that the applicants do not possess the required qualifications for the post as stipulated in the Special Rules as well as in the notification. Being aggrieved, the respective petitioners are before this Court with these original petitions.

6. On 08.10.2026, we heard detailed arguments of the learned Senior Counsel for the petitioners in O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026, the learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.291 of 2026, the learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P(KAT)No.292 of 2026, the learned Senior Government Pleader for the 1st respondent State in O.P.(KAT)No.291 of 2026, the learned Government Pleader for respondents 1 and 2 in O.P.(KAT)Nos.290 of 2026 and 292 of 2026, and the learned Standing Counsel for the Kerala Public Service Commission, on admission. After hearing the detailed arguments, we reserved the original petitions for judgment. Considering the nature of the reliefs to be granted and also considering the fact that the 4th respondent in

O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026 is a co-applicant in the original application, who did not join as a petitioner in that original petition, issuance of notice to the said respondent is dispensed. Considering the fact that the interview for the selected candidate in the short-list was scheduled to be held on 09.10.2026, we passed an interim order on 08.10.2026, making it clear that the interview to be held on 09.10.2026 will be subject to the result of these original petitions.

7. On 16.10.2026, when these original petitions were listed for pronouncing the judgment, we noticed that though these original petitions were heard and reserved for judgment by the order dated 08.10.2026, the learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026 thereafter relinquished vakalath. The petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026 appeared in person on 16.10.2026 requested for hearing. Accordingly, the matter was ordered to be listed on 23.10.2026.

7.1. On 23.10.2026, we heard detailed arguments of the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026, who appeared in person. We also heard arguments of the learned Government Pleader for

the 1st respondent and also the learned Standing Counsel for the Kerala Public Service Commission.

8. The learned Senior Counsel appearing for the petitioners in O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026 argued that as per Rule 2(g) of the Special Rules, the petitioners-applicants in that original petition fall under the first limb of Clause 1(c) of Rule 2(g) of the Special Rules. It is argued by the learned Senior Counsel that as per Clause 1(c) of Rule 2(g) of the Special Rules, the qualification prescribed for the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) is a First Class or High Second Class Master's Degree in Economics/Mathematics with Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialisation in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognised University or Institution and 7 years' experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Economic methods in macro and micro level planning. According to the learned Senior Counsel, when there is a 'stroke', i.e., '/' is there after the first limb, i.e., 'First Class or High Second Class Master's Degree in Economics', then it has to be read separately and the specialisation mentioned after the word "with" is not applicable to

the first limb. The stroke has to be read as 'or', and therefore, the Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialisation in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognised University or Institution mentioned in the qualifications is not necessary for a person having First Class or High Second Class Master's Degree in Economics, and that qualification is needed only for the person holding Mathematics as the qualification. In support of his aforesaid argument, the learned Senior Counsel relied on Ext.P7 and P8 judgments of the Apex Court in **Ashish Kumar v. State of Uttar Pradesh [(2018) 3 SCC 55]** and **Delhi Development Authority v. Durga Chand Kaushish [(1973) 2 SCC 825]**. According to the learned Senior Counsel, as per Annexure A-8 result sheet dated 27.07.2005 of MA Economics Degree Program for the year 2003-2005 of the 1st petitioner, it can be seen that he had studied Mathematical methods, Statistical methods and Econometric methods as subjects at the postgraduate level. It is also highlighted by the learned Senior Counsel that, as per Note (iii) of Rule 2 of the Special Rules, only a pass in Master's Degree in the concerned

subject is necessary in the case of candidates already in the Department.

9. The learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.291 of 2026 argued that as per Note (ii) of the qualifications mentioned under Clause 7(1)(c) in the gazette notification issued by the PSC for selection of the post on 31.12.2022, it is mentioned that only a pass in Master's Degree in the concerned subject is necessary in the case of candidates already in the Department. Since the petitioner-applicant in his case is holding a postgraduate degree in Mathematics with first class, by virtue of the exemption granted to the Department candidates under Note (ii), he has sufficient qualification mentioned in Clause 7(1)(c) of the notification. It is further argued by the learned counsel that the application submitted by the petitioner-applicant was accepted by the PSC and, as per Rule 4(iii) of the Kerala Public Service Commission Rules of Procedure, it is the duty of the PSC to make arrangements for conduct of the examination by permitting the petitioner to participate in the interview, as his application was found in order.

10. The learned counsel for the petitioner-applicant in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026 argued that the petitioner-applicant has a Ph.D which presupposes the qualification mentioned in Clause 7 (1)(c) of the notification, on the strength of Rule 10 (a)(ii) of Part II KS&SSR, being a higher qualification. According to the learned counsel, the petitioner-applicant has sufficient work experience also, as evident from Annexure A-9 and other documents produced in the original application.

11. On the other hand, the learned Standing Counsel for PSC submitted that the wording in Rule 2(g) of the Special Rules as well as Clause 7 of the notification are clear and unambiguous. The entire Rules have to be read as a whole, and the assessment of the intent of the rule would show that such an interpretation of the rule as attempted by the petitioners is not possible. In support of his argument regarding the interpretation of the Rules, the learned Standing Counsel relied on the judgment of the Apex Court in **Santhosh B. Naik v. State of Goa [2026 KHC OnLine 6771]** and **Shifana P. S. v. State of Kerala [(2024) 8 SCC 309]**. According to the learned Standing Counsel, the

independent reading of some portions of the Rule may sometimes give an indication that a first-class Post Graduation in Economics is sufficient for the post, as contended by the learned Senior Counsel for the petitioners in O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026. But such an interpretation cannot be given in the instant case, while going through the qualifications mentioned in Clauses 7.1(a) and 7.1(b) of the Notification.

11.1. As far as the contention raised by the learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.291 of 2026, the learned Standing Counsel argued that the exemption granted to the Department candidates in Note (ii) under Clause 7 of the Notification pertains only to the class to be obtained in the Master's Degree. It cannot be accepted to contend that no other qualification is necessary for a department candidate, which will create an absurd situation. The learned Standing Counsel highlighted the qualifications mentioned in Clause 7.1(a) and 7.1(b) of the notification to contend that such an interpretation cannot be given to Note (ii) under Clause 7 of the notification. It is further submitted by the learned Standing Counsel that Rule 4

of the Rules of Procedure of PSC is applicable only in the case of qualified candidates.

11.2. In reply to the argument of the learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026, the learned Standing Counsel for PSC submitted that as per Note (iii) to Clause 7, the qualification of experience prescribed for the post shall be one acquired after the acquisition of the academic qualification prescribed for the post. The Ph.D claimed by the petitioner therein was acquired on 18.02.2022, and thereafter, there will be no sufficient time to acquire the experience prescribed in the notification and the Special Rules and for that sole reason the petitioner is liable to be non-suited.

12. The learned Senior Government Pleader and the learned Government Pleader argued that it is key post to which the notification was issued and apart from academic qualification, the practical experience notified is also necessary for the post. These facts are clearly considered by the Tribunal in the impugned order and therefore no interference is needed on the impugned order by exercising the supervisory jurisdiction.

13. The petitioner-applicant in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026, who appeared in person, addressed arguments reiterating his contentions in the original application, and also filed an argument note, which was received by the Registry on 24.10.2026. The petitioner argued that he falls under Clause 7(1)(c) of the notification issued by the PSC for selection to the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) in the Kerala State Planning Board. According to him, his Ph.D in Economics is a sufficient qualification at the place of the educational qualification stipulated under Clause 7(1)(c) of the notification, in view of Note (i) under the said clause. Though he has Ph.D in Economics, he is not relying on Clause 7(1)(a) of the notification, since he did not possess 4 years' post-Ph. D experience as required under Note (iii) under Clause 7 of the notification. According to the petitioner, the additional qualifications attached to Clauses 7(1)(a) to 7(1)(c) of the notification are not expressed identically, and it varies with the primary academic qualification. The Tribunal recognised this structure in paragraph No.23 in the impugned Ext.P8 order by observing that a person having a Ph.D in Economics or

Econometrics need only have the basic foundational qualification. Therefore, the petitioner does not claim presupposition merely because a Ph.D is academically higher, but the structure of the Special Rules itself is the relevant circumstance for his claim based on Rule 10(a)(ii) of the KS&SSR. According to the petitioner, there is inconsistency in the reasoning of the Tribunal in Ext.P8 order, since in Paragraph 30, the Tribunal held that it cannot be assumed that a person having Ph.D presupposes the other qualifications which are prescribed in the Rules, which is contrary to the observation in Paragraph 23 of Ext.P8 order that a person having Ph.D in Economics or Econometrics need only have a basic Degree/Diploma/Training in Mathematics/Statistics/Economics from a recognised University or Institution. The petitioner argued that the PSC departed from the principles stated in the judgment of a Division Bench of this Court in **Kerala Public Service Commission v. Krishnaprasad P. S. [2025 (6) KHC 189]**, wherein this Court held that the enquiry that to be undertaken by the PSC should be in the context of the specific post and the Rules governing it. According to the petitioner, in the reply given to an

information sought by the petitioner from the PSC under the Right to Information Act, it was stated that, in the previous selection, the selected candidate possessed a Doctorate in Economics and four years' experience alone and not a Degree/Diploma/Training qualification separately prescribed. It is the argument of the petitioner that, by relying on Section 2 of the Kerala Public Services Act, 1968, PSC is not empowered to introduce, through an internal administrative decision the expression "practical experience" when that expression does not occur in the Special Rules or recruitment notification. According to the petitioner, he possesses the required 7 years' experience since the academic qualification he possesses is sufficient in view of the administrative post to which the notification was issued. A categorical administrative proposition that academic work is inherently "non-practical" and therefore unsuitable for the post requires a clear statutory foundation and a demonstrated rational nexus with the duties of the post and the scheme of the notification. According to the petitioner, PSC ought to have undertaken a study regarding the subject included in the Ph.D obtained by the petitioner, which

covers the subjects in which 7 years' experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Econometric Methods in Macro and Micro Planning.

14. On the other hand, the learned Standing Counsel for PSC again stuck to his arguments previously addressed on 08.10.2026 and further submitted that the petitioner was informed by Annexure A6 communication dated 28.05.2025 issued by the Secretary of the PSC that his application was rejected. The said communication was not challenged in the original application. The declaration sought by the petitioner in the original application can only be as a further relief after challenging Annexure A6, which is not done in this case. The reason for rejection of the claim of the petitioner that he has sufficient educational qualification and work experience was stated in Ext.P3 reply statement dated 23.07.2025 filed by the PSC in O.A.No.1104 of 2025. The learned Standing Counsel further submitted that PSC cannot undertake a roving and fishing enquiry as to what are the subjects studied by the petitioner in his Ph.D. Some of the documents relied on by the petitioner to prove his educational

qualification were produced subsequently before the Tribunal by filing a miscellaneous application, which was not accepted by the Tribunal, as evident from the fact that they did not find a place in the Appendix of Ext.P8 order.

15. The learned Government Pleader submitted that after the acquisition of Ph.D, the work experience claimed as acquired by the petitioner is only for a period of 4 and odd years, which is against Note (iii) under Clause 7 of the notification. From the impugned Ext.P8 order itself, it can be seen that the Tribunal had taken note of the fact that in the rejoinder, the petitioner stated that he, being a person having Ph.D in Economics, is not supposed to satisfy the basic foundational qualifications together with prescribed experience. The Tribunal correctly appreciated the contentions of the petitioner, and there is no ground to interfere with the same.

16. Article 227 of the Constitution of India deals with the power of superintendence over all courts by the High Court. Under clause (1) of Article 227 of the Constitution, every High Court shall have superintendence over all courts and tribunals throughout the

territories in relation to which it exercises jurisdiction.

17. In **Shalini Shyam Shetty v. Rajendra Shankar Patil [(2010) 8 SCC 329]** the Apex Court, while analysing the scope and ambit of the power of superintendence under Article 227 of the Constitution, held that the object of superintendence, both administrative and judicial, is to maintain efficiency, smooth and orderly functioning of the entire machinery of justice in such a way as it does not bring it into any disrepute. The power of interference under Article 227 is to be kept to the minimum to ensure that the wheel of justice does not come to a halt and the fountain of justice remains pure and unpolluted in order to maintain public confidence in the functioning of the tribunals and courts subordinate to the High Court.

18. In **Jai Singh v. Municipal Corporation of Delhi [(2010) 9 SCC 385]**, while considering the nature and scope of the powers under Article 227 of the Constitution of India, the Apex Court held that, undoubtedly, the High Court, under Article 227 of the Constitution, has the jurisdiction to ensure that all subordinate courts, as well as statutory or quasi-judicial tribunals, exercise the

powers vested in them within the bounds of their authority. The High Court has the power and the jurisdiction to ensure that they act in accordance with the well-established principles of law. The exercise of jurisdiction must be within the well-recognised constraints. It cannot be exercised like a 'bull in a china shop', to correct all errors of the judgment of a court or tribunal, acting within the limits of its jurisdiction. This correctional jurisdiction can be exercised in cases where orders have been passed in grave dereliction of duty or in flagrant abuse of fundamental principles of law or justice.

19. In **K.V.S. Ram v. Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation [(2015) 12 SCC 39]** the Apex Court held that, in exercise of the power of superintendence under Article 227 of the Constitution of India, the High Court can interfere with the order of the court or tribunal only when there has been a patent perversity in the orders of the tribunal and courts subordinate to it or where there has been gross and manifest failure of justice or the basic principles of natural justice have been flouted.

20. In **Sobhana Nair K.N. v. Shaji S.G. Nair [2016 (1) KHC 1]**, a Division Bench of this Court held that the law is well settled by a catena of decisions of the Apex Court that in proceedings under Article 227 of the Constitution of India, this Court cannot sit in appeal over the findings recorded by the lower court or tribunal and the jurisdiction of this Court is only supervisory in nature and not that of an appellate court. Therefore, no interference under Article 227 of the Constitution is called for, unless this Court finds that the lower court or tribunal has committed manifest error, or the reasoning is palpably perverse or patently unreasonable, or the decision of the lower court or tribunal is in direct conflict with settled principles of law.

21. In view of the law laid down in the decisions referred to supra, the High Court, in exercise of its supervisory jurisdiction under Article 227 of the Constitution of India, cannot sit in appeal over the findings recorded by a lower court or tribunal. The supervisory jurisdiction cannot be exercised to correct all errors of the order or judgment of a lower court or tribunal, acting within the limits of its jurisdiction. The correctional jurisdiction under

Article 227 can be exercised only in a case where the order or judgment of a lower court or tribunal has been passed in grave dereliction of duty or in flagrant abuse of fundamental principles of law or justice. Therefore, no interference under Article 227 is called for, unless the High Court finds that the lower court or tribunal has committed manifest error, or the reasoning is palpably perverse or patently unreasonable, or the decision of the lower court or tribunal is in direct conflict with settled principles of law or where there has been gross and manifest failure of justice or the basic principles of natural justice have been flouted.

22. As already noticed hereinabove, the arguments of the learned Senior Counsel/Counsel appearing for the applicants as well as the learned Standing Counsel for the PSC and also the learned Senior Government Pleader/Government Pleader are entirely based on the interpretation of the qualification for the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) in the Kerala State Planning Board as provided in Rule 2(g) of the Special Rules, which was notified by the PSC under Clause 7 of the General Recruitment Notification dated 31.12.2022 as category No.657/2022.

23. Rule 2(g) of the Special Rules, which prescribes the qualifications for Chief (Perspective Planning Division) by direct recruitment, is as under:

Category (1)	Method of appointment (2)	Qualifications (3)
xxxxx	xxxxxx	xxxxx
2(g) Chief (Perspective Planning Division)	By direct recruitment	1.(a) Doctorate in Economics or Econometrics with a basic Degree/ Diploma/ Training in Mathematics/Statistics/Economics from a recognized University or Institution and four years, experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Econometric methods in macro and micro level planning. OR b) A First Class or High Second Class Masters Degree in Econometrics/Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution and seven years experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Econometric Methods in Macro and Micro Planning OR

		c) A First Class or High Second Class Masters Degree in Economics/ Mathematics with Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognised University or Institution and seven years experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Economic Methods in Macro and Micro Level Planning

24. Note (iii) under Rule 2 of the Special Rules states that only a pass in Master's Degree in the concerned subject is necessary in the case of candidates already in the department.

25. Clause 7 of the General Recruitment Notification dated 31.12.2022 issued by the PSC for the aforesaid post notified as Category No.657/2022 is as under:

"Qualifications	1.(a) Doctorate in Economics or Econometrics with a basic Degree/ Diploma/ Training in Mathematics/ Statistics/Economics from a recognized University or Institution and four years experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Econometric methods in macro and micro level planning

	OR b) A First Class or High Second Class Masters Degree in Econometrics/ Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution and seven years experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Econometric Methods in Macro and Micro Planning OR c) A First Class or High Second Class Masters Degree in Economics/Mathematics with Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognized University or Institution and seven years experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Economic Methods in Macro and Micro Level Planning Desirable: a) Experience in the application of Econometric methods to Planning problems either in Government Institutions or in recognized Universities or other Institution; b) Published work in Economic Planning involving the use of quantitative methods.

Note. i) Rule 10(a) (ii) of Part II of KS&SSR is applicable.

ii) Only a pass in Masters Degree in the concerned subject is necessary in the case of candidates already in the Department.

iii) The qualification of experience prescribed for the post shall

be one acquired after the acquisition of academic qualification prescribed for the post

iv) Candidates belonging to SC/ST Communities need not possess the qualification of experience prescribed for the post

v) In addition to the qualifications prescribed in the notification, the qualifications recognized by executive orders or standing orders of the Government as equivalent to a qualification specified for a post, in the Special Rules and such of those qualifications which pre-suppose the acquisition of the lower qualification prescribed for the post, shall also be sufficient or the post. The copy of the Government orders declaring equivalent/higher qualifications shall be produced as and when required by the Commission.

vi) The Degrees/Diplomas awarded by UGC approved Universities or Institutions established through an act passed by Parliament/State Legislative Assembly in accordance with the conditions laid down in G.O.(MS)No.526/PD dated 17.07.1965 are acceptable for appointment in Government Services."

26. Rule 10(a)(ii) of KS & SSR relied by the learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.291 of 2026 reads thus:

"(ii) Notwithstanding anything contained in these rules or in the Special Rules, the qualifications recognised by executive orders or standing orders of Government as equivalent to a qualification specified for a post, in the Special Rules or found acceptable by the Commission as per rule 13(b)(i) of the said rules in cases where acceptance of equivalent qualifications is provided for in

> the rules and such of those qualifications which pre-suppose the acquisition of the lower qualification prescribed for the post, shall also be sufficient for the post."

27. Similarly, Rule 4 of the Kerala Public Service Commission Rules of Procedure relied by the learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.291 of 2026 reads thus:

> "Where a written examination and/or a practical test is conducted by the Commission for recruitment to a service or post, the Commission shall-
>
> (i) announce:
>
> (a) the qualifications required of the candidates for the examination;
>
> (b) the conditions of admission to the examination including the fees;
>
> (c) the subjects, scheme or syllabus of the examination; and
>
> (d) the number of vacancies to be filled from among the candidates for the examination:
>
> Provided that where the exact number of vacancies to be filled is not ascertainable, the Commission may either announce the approximate number of vacancies to be filled or state that the number of vacancies has not been estimated;
>
> (ii) invite applications and consider all the applications so received;

(iii) make all arrangements for the conduct of the examination for the candidates whose applications are found to be in order; and

(iv) prepare a list in the order of merit of such number of candidates as the Commission may determine from time to time:

Provided that the Commission may also prepare separate ranked lists in the order of merit of candidates coming under separate groups in accordance with the qualifications or other conditions as stipulated in the notification:

Provided further that for the purpose of satisfying the rules of reservation of appointment to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and any other reserved categories identified by the Government from time to time also the Commission may prepare such supplementary lists, separate lists as found necessary from time to time in the order of merit of the candidates belonging to such classes." (Underline supplied)

28. While coming to the judgments relied by the learned counsel for the petitioner in O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026, in **Ashish Kumar [(2018) 3 SCC 55]**, the appellant therein belonged to Other Backward Caste who has passed graduation (BA) with Psychology and has also done postgraduation in Psychology from Kanpur University. The appellant has also obtained Masters degree

in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations from Lucknow University in the year 1997. An advertisement dated 30.08.2001 was issued by the Director, Social Welfare Department, U.P., advertising various posts under Director, Social Welfare Department and other department of State. Advertisement also contained recruitment for post of Psychologist (03 posts). The appellant submitted the application for the post of "Psychologist". The appellant was issued admit card for appearing in the written examination. The appellant appeared in the written examination and was declared successful and included in the merit list. A letter dated 02.05.2003 was issued to the appellant asking the appellant to appear along with original certificates for verification of documents. The appellant appeared along with all the documents on 12.05.2003. When the appellant appeared on 12th May, he was informed that he is not eligible and his appointment for the post of "Psychologist" cannot be made. The appellant submitted a representation on 02.06.2003 to the respondent. The appellant having not been given appointment filed the writ petition before the High Court of Judicature at

Allahabad (Lucknow Bench), Lucknow. In the writ petition, the learned Single Judge directed for filing a counter-affidavit and also bringing on record the copy of the order passed on the representation of the appellant dated 02.06.2003. The appellant also filed Contempt Application No. 182 of 2004 in which the Director, Social Welfare was directed to appear in person. An order dated 19.04.2004 was passed by the respondent rejecting the representation of the appellant. The appellant prayed for amendment of the writ petition, praying for quashing the order dated 19.04.2004 which prayer was allowed to be added. The learned Single Judge by its judgment dated 18.05.2006 dismissed the writ petition. The learned Single Judge accepted the case taken up by the respondent in the counter-affidavit that the appellant is not qualified for the post since he does not have training qualification i.e. LT/BT/BEd. The appellant filed special appeal which too was dismissed. Review application filed thereafter was also rejected. The appellant then approached the Apex Court assailing those judgments.

29. In **Ashish Kumar [(2018) 3 SCC 55]**, while

considering two appeals filed against the judgment of the High Court dismissing the special leave appeal of the appellant as well as the judgment dismissing the review application filed by the appellant, the Apex Court held thus:

> "8. The parties are at variance with regard to correct import of the advertisement. The appellant's case was that as per the advertisement the graduation in Psychology was the minimum qualification and qualification of L.T./B.T. B.Ed. were independent qualification on fulfilling of which candidate was qualified. Advertisement does not require graduate with Psychology with L.T./B.T. B.Ed. to make candidate eligible. Whereas the respondent's case is that the candidate shall be qualified only when he is both graduate with Psychology and possesses L.T./B.T. B.Ed. The case of the respondent is that although the appellant was issued admit card and called to appear in the written and in interview but his appointment was not issued since it was realized that he does not have L.T./B.T. B.Ed. qualification. In paragraph 4(Xiii) of the counter affidavit it has been reiterated that even if there is some ambiguity in the advertisement, the appointment has to be made as per the recruitment rules which in this case is 1991 Rules. It is useful to extract following as stated in paragraph 4(Xiii) of the counter affidavit:

"4.(Xiii) That is further respectfully submitted that arguendo, even if it is conceded that there was some ambiguity in the advertisement, the petitioner herein cannot be allowed to misinterpret the same in his favour as it is trite that the appointment has to be made in accordance with the recruitment rules which in this case is the Janjatiya Vikas Sikchan Aur Kermchariverg Sewa Niyamawali, 1991. It is also humbly submitted that if there was any ambiguity in the requirements mentioned in the advertisement, it has to be read in consonance with the recruitment rules.

xxxx xxxx xxxx

Therefore, keeping the abovesaid settled position of law in mind, it is most respectfully submitted by the respondent herein that though the petitioner herein was inadvertently issued the admit card for appearing in the written examination as well as called for the interview, the respondent authorities, on discovering that the petitioner herein was not eligible as per the requirements of the recruitment rules as he did not possess the requisite L.T./ B.T./B.Ed as prescribed, rightly corrected the mistake on their part by not going any further with the appointment of the petitioner herein and rejected his candidature as such an appointment would be void."

xxxx xxxx xxxx

13. The English translation of the advertisement at Page 6 of Annexure A1 with regard to the post of Psychologist

is as follows:

1.	Psychologist03	18-35 years	4500-7000	Graduation in Psychology/L.T./B.T.B.Ed in the subject of Psychology. Preferential Qualification: 1.Diploma in guidance psychology from Bureau of Psychology, Allahabad or Government of India or from other recognized institutions, 2.Working experience in Hindi

14. The careful reading of original advertisement which is in vernacular language indicate that what was prescribed was, "In Psychology subject graduate / L.T. / B.T. B.Ed.". Use of Stroke between graduate and L.T. / B.T. B.Ed. indicates that all were alternate qualification. The advertisement cannot be read to mean providing for graduate in Psychology with L.T. / B.T. B.Ed. as has been read by the High Court and contended by the respondent.

15. The words graduate / L.T. / B.T. B.Ed. are all alternative qualification which are prefixed with word "In subject of Psychology". A harmonious reading may mean that a person graduate in subject of Psychology or L.T. / B.T. B.Ed. with Psychology is eligible. When the post is of Psychologist, both graduation with Psychology and training certification i.e. L.T. / B.T. B.Ed. have also to be with Psychology. The respondents have wrongly interpreted the advertisement to mean that the person should possess both graduate with Psychology as well as L.T./B.T. B.Ed. which on the face of it does not appear to be correct.

16. Present is a case where appellant was called to appear in written examination and interview and his name was included in the merit list. It was only at the

time of verification of the certificate he was denied the appointment on the ground that he does not fulfill the qualification as advertised, whereas he fulfilled the advertised qualification.

17. There is one more reason to accept the meaning of advertisement as noticed above. In advertisement, with regard to various qualifications, words "ya" (or) "sath" (with), "athva" (either) and stroke '(/)' have been used. The appointing authority is well aware of the meaning of stroke '(/)', word "or", "either" and "with" which has been frequently used in the qualifications which is apparent from the advertisement i.e. Annexure A1. The Appointing Authority used word 'with'(sath), when it wanted both the qualifications together. Wherever stroke '(/)' has been used it was used when either of the qualifications were indicated. The advertisement Annexure A1 contains qualifications for various posts and in several qualifications stroke (/) has been used. A look into those qualifications clearly indicate that stroke (/) was used in the other qualifications denoting one or either qualification. It is useful to extract some qualifications where stroke (/) was used apart from qualification prescribed for the post of Psychologist. The use of stroke (/) in the qualifications at Item No. 5 Grah Mother, Item No. 6 - Karamshalal Prashikshak Foundary Shop/ Black Smith Shop, Item No.11 - Sewing Trainer, Item No. 16-Music Teacher and Item No. 17-Stitching Trainer are

extracted as below:

5.	Grah Mother 02	18-35 years	3200-4900	Intermediate examination passed along with Home Science. Essential Qualification: two years practical experience of Grah Mother in any Institute/ Committee
6.	Karamshalal Prashikshak Foundary Shop / Black Smith Shop – 02	-do-	450-07 250	Intermediate examination passed from U.P. Madhyamik Education Council or a Institution recognized by the Government equivalent thereto. Certificate of G.S.T.S. for three years from the concerned branch or Certificate of G.I.T.I./ I.T.I. from concerned branch or Diploma of Polytechnic. Essential Qualification: Three Years Industrial experience after the Certificate.
11.	Sewing Trainer (National Baggers Home) 01	-do-	3050-4 590	Passed Intermediate or equivalent thereto and I.T.I. in concerned Trade/ Apprentice Certificate or Diploma.
16.	Music Teacher03	-do-	4000-6 000	Intermediate passed from Music College or a Certificate/ Diploma recognized by the Government.
17.	Stitching Trainer01	-do-	-do-	Intermediate passed or equivalent thereto and ITI in concerned Trade, Apprentice/ Certificate or Diploma. Examination Fees:General Category 60/Other Backward Class 40/, Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe 25/

A perusal of the above qualifications clearly indicated that stroke (/) was used regarding qualifications, in alternative, i.e., one or either. In above view of the matter, we are of the view that the use of stroke (/) between Graduate/L.T./B.T. B.Ed. were in the same line meaning thereby one or either. It is relevant to notice that before the aforesaid qualifications, the words "in Psychology subject" has been used as prefix, which clearly means that all the alternative qualifications were required to have with Psychology subject i.e. Graduation with Psychology/ L.T./ B.T. B.Ed. in the subject of Psychology. Hence, all the three i.e. Graduation, L.T., B.T. B.Ed. has to be in Psychology subject. Those persons who have done L.T./B.T. B.Ed. with Psychology subject

> are eligible like person graduated with Psychology, which is the plain and simple meaning of the advertisement which has been missed by the State as well as the High Court." (Underline supplied)

30. In **Durga Chand Kaushish [(1973) 2 SCC 825]**, the plaintiff - respondent had sued for a declaration that the annual rent of Rs. 365/- payable on a piece of land situated in Basti Ara Kashan, Paharganj, New Delhi, leased to him from 1-4-31 for a period of 90 years on behalf of the Secretary of State for India could not be enhanced during the subsistence of the lease for the grant of which he had paid a premium of Rs. 18,054/-. The plot of land leased was entrusted for management on behalf of the Government of India to the Delhi Improvement Trust, and, thereafter, after the abolition of the Delhi Improvement Trust in 1957, to the Delhi Development Authority under S.60 of the Delhi Development Act of 1957. The plaintiff also claimed refund of Rs. 5,935.25 ps., which had been retrospectively demanded and realised from him as arrears of enhanced rent from 1-1-52 to 30-6-63 after issuing a warrant of arrest dated 2-6-64 against him. Furthermore, the plaintiff prayed for an injunction to restrain the

appellant, acting on behalf of the lessor, from realising an annual rent in excess of Rs. 365/- for the duration of the lease claimed to be for 90 years. The defendant-appellant pleaded, inter alia, that the suit was barred by the provisions of S.453(b)(2) of the Delhi Development Act. Want of notice under S.80 C.P.C., upon the Union of India, a co-defendant, was also pleaded. These questions were decided against the defendants by a learned Judge of the Delhi High Court, who tried the case and dismissed the suit on merits, as well as by the Division Bench which had allowed the plaintiff's appeal and decreed the suit on merits. In the defendants appeal, the only question argued before the apex Court was whether the interpretation of the lease deed dated 17-9-31, between the Secretary of State for India and the appellant, by the learned Judge who tried the case and held that rent could be enhanced within the period of 90 years, was correct or the interpretation adopted by the Division Bench, which allowed plaintiff's appeal after holding that the enhancement clause could only operate upon the grant of a fresh lease, after the expiry of the first period of 90 years under the lease, was correct. In the

appeal judgment at paragraph 17, the Apex Court held thus:

> "17. The meaning of the word "with" is generally gathered from the context and has to be considered in conjunction with words which precede and those which follow it. It is the exact meaning of the words "original term", as used in the proviso, which is far more important. It is not unlikely that the draftsman, due to an imperfect knowledge of a foreign language, which English is for us, used the expression in some special sense of his own. Its meaning could not, as pointed out above, be the initial term of ninety years, because, if that is added on to the periods of renewal of leases the total must obviously and necessarily exceed ninety years. Hence, we are compelled to resort to guesswork to make some sense out of the expression "original term" as used in the proviso. It may be that the draftsman described the period of the first renewal as the "original term". Or, perhaps he used it to describe the actual period of a renewal as contrasted with subsequent or previous renewals. It is quite natural to restrict this expression used in the context of renewals to a term of a renewal. This would be a logical course to adopt as the whole of Covenant 9 deals with renewal of leases. In any case, this is the only way in which we can make the proviso intelligible, and, therefore, unless the expression is discarded as incomprehensible or meaningless in the context, we have to read it in that sense."

(Underline supplied)

31. While coming to the judgments relied by the learned Standing Counsel for the PSC in **Shifana P.S. [(2024) 8 SCC 309]**, while considering the appeal by special leave directed against the judgment rendered by the Division Bench of this Court whereby the original petition preferred by the appellant therein was dismissed by this Court affirming the order of the Tribunal, the Apex Court held thus:

> "12. Discussion and Conclusion: -
>
> We have given thoughtful consideration to the submissions advanced at bar and have gone through the impugned judgment and the material placed on record.
>
> 13. Indisputably, the qualifying criteria prescribed for the post advertised *vide* notification dated 30th April, 2008 was a degree in B.Sc (Chemistry). Admittedly, the appellant does not hold such a degree. It is the case of the appellant that B.Sc (Polymer Chemistry) degree acquired by her is required to be treated as equivalent to a degree in B.Sc (Chemistry). However, the said argument does not hold water and is misconceived.
>
> 14. This Court in the case of **Zahoor Ahmad Rather and Others v. Sheikh Imtiyaz Ahmad [2019 (2) SCC 404]** held that judicial review can neither expand the ambit of the prescribed qualifications nor decide the

> equivalence of the prescribed qualifications with any other given qualification. Therefore, the equivalence of a qualification is not a matter that can be determined in the exercise of the power of judicial review. Whether a particular qualification should or should not be regarded as equivalent is a matter for the State, as the recruiting authority, to determine. (emphasis supplied)
>
> 15. In **Unnikrishnan CV and Others v. Union of India [2023 SCC OnLine SC 343]**, a three Judge Bench of this Court, while relying upon the earlier judgment in the case of **Guru Nanak Dev University v. Sanjay Kumar Katwal [2009 (1) SCC 610]** held that equivalence is a technical academic matter, it cannot be implied or assumed. Any decision of the academic body of the University relating to equivalence should be by specific order or resolution, duly published".

32. In **Santhosh B. Naik [2026 KHC Online 6771]**, in an appeal directed against the judgment and order dated 11.01.2024 of the High Court of Bombay at Goa in a writ petition, whereby the High Court allowed the writ petition filed by the 3rd respondent therein and quashed the minutes of the meeting issued by the Departmental Selection Committee as well as the communication and directed the concerned authorities to consider the case of the 3rd respondent therein for recruitment to the post

of Vocational Instructor (Practical) in the trade of plumber, in the light of the marks secured by him in the written examination, held thus:

> "8. Having heard learned counsel appearing for the parties at length and having carefully perused the material on record, it emerges that the relevant facts are not in dispute. It is not in dispute that Respondent No. 3 possesses a Secondary School Certificate obtained through NIOS. It is also not in dispute that Respondent No. 3 secured 96 marks in the written examination, whereas the Appellant secured 94 marks. However, as noted above, selection on the basis of merit was subject to the candidate satisfying the essential eligibility criteria prescribed for the post. The question of comparative merit would, therefore, arise only after a candidate is found to satisfy the prescribed eligibility criteria.
>
> 9. The question which arises for our consideration is: Whether a candidate possessing the Secondary School Certificate obtained through NIOS satisfies the specific requirement prescribed under the Recruitment Rules and the advertisement of having 'passed 10th standard under 10+2 system of education', for appointment to the post of Vocational Instructor (Practical) in the trade of Plumber?
>
> 10. The answer to the question posed before us would depend upon the interpretation of the qualification

prescribed under the Recruitment Rules and incorporated in the advertisement dated 05.11.2021. The relevant qualification reads: "Passed 10th standard under 10+2 system of education." The words employed in the said qualification assume significance.

11. It is well-settled that the qualifications prescribed by the recruiting authority for a particular post are required to be satisfied in the manner in which they have been prescribed. The Court, while exercising judicial review, ordinarily cannot add to or alter the essential qualifications prescribed under the Recruitment Rules. The question as to whether a qualification possessed by a candidate is equivalent to the qualification prescribed is ordinarily within the domain of the employer or the competent expert body. This principle has been reiterated by this Court in **Zahoor Ahmad Rather & Ors. v. Sheikh Imtiyaz Ahmad [(2019) 2 SCC 404], Unnikrishnan C. V. v. Union of India** [(2023) 18 SCC 546] and **Shifana P. S. v. State of Kerala** [(2024) 8 SCC 309].

12. At the same time, the qualification prescribed under the Recruitment Rules has to be understood in the context in which it occurs. The words used by the rule-making authority cannot be ignored. As observed by this Court in **Reserve Bank of India v. Peerless General Finance & Investment Co. Ltd.**, **[(1987) 1 SCC 424]** interpretation must depend upon the text as well as the

context.

13. In the present case, the requirement is not merely that the candidate should have passed the 10th standard. The requirement is that the candidate should have "passed 10th standard under 10+2 system of education." In our considered view, the words "under 10+2 system of education" cannot be ignored. They form part of the qualification prescribed for the post and have to be given their due meaning.

14. The question, therefore, is not whether the Secondary School Certificate issued by NIOS is a recognised qualification in general. The question is whether such qualification satisfies the specific eligibility condition prescribed under the Recruitment Rules for the post in question. The distinction is significant as the Recruitment Rules do not contain any provision treating a qualification recognised as equivalent to the 10th standard as satisfying the requirement of having passed 10th standard under the 10+2 system of education.

15. In **Zahoor Ahmad Rather (supra)**, this Court has held that the qualifications prescribed for a post have to be considered having regard to the duties and responsibilities attached to the post and that the Court cannot substitute its own view for that of the recruiting authority. Likewise, in **Unnikrishnan C. V. (supra)** and **Shifana P. S. (supra)**, this Court has reiterated that judicial review cannot be used to expand the prescribed

eligibility conditions or to treat a qualification not prescribed under the Rules as equivalent to the prescribed qualification.

16. Further, in **Maharashtra Public Service Commission v. Sandeep Shriram Warade**, **[(2019) 6 SCC 362]** this Court held that the prescription of essential qualifications is within the domain of the employer and that the Court cannot substitute its own view where the language of the advertisement and the Rules is clear.

17. The nature of the post is also relevant. The post in question is that of Vocational Instructor (Practical) in the trade of Plumber. The Recruitment Rules prescribe, apart from the academic qualification, a National Trade Certificate/National Apprenticeship Certificate in the relevant trade and practical experience in the industry. The qualifications prescribed under the Rules are, therefore, part of the eligibility framework for a technical teaching post and have to be considered in that context."

(Underline supplied)

33. From the principles stated in the aforementioned judgments relied by the learned Standing Counsel for the PSC, it is clear that the equivalence of a qualification is not a matter that can be determined in the exercise of the power of judicial review. Whether a particular qualification should or should not be

regarded as equivalent is a matter for the State, as the recruiting authority, to determine. The qualifications prescribed by the recruiting authority for a particular post are required to be satisfied in the manner in which they have been prescribed. The Court, while exercising judicial review, ordinarily cannot add to or alter the essential qualifications prescribed under the Recruitment Rules. The question as to whether a qualification possessed by a candidate is equivalent to the qualification prescribed is ordinarily within the domain of the employer or the competent expert body which they decide in the context of duties and responsibilities of the post concerned. When the qualification prescribed by the statute or the recruiting authority is clear and unambiguous, the meaning assigned in the statute has to be taken as such and the court cannot give a meaning to the words therein which were not intended by the employer or the competent expert body.

34. Then the question is how the qualifications prescribed in the Special Rules have to be interpreted for selection to the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) in the Kerala State Planning Board. At this juncture, it is appropriate to extract how

the Tribunal has interpreted the said qualifications in the impugned order dated 25.09.2026 and what is the reasoning of the Tribunal to disallow the contentions raised by the applicants. Paragraphs 23 to 30 and the last paragraph of that order read thus:

> "23. A person having PhD in Economics or Econometrics need only have a basic Degree/Diploma/Training in Mathematics/Statistics/Economics from a recognized University or Institution. A person having Master's Degree in Econometrics/Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting is also entitled to apply provided they have acquired the Post Graduation with prescribed class and they satisfy experience criterion. A Post Graduate in Economics/Mathematics with Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting is also sufficient qualification, provided they have the required experience. The applicants have relied on the "Rule of last antecedent" to contend that the specialization qualifies only the last antecedent. According to them, the qualifying phrase applies only to the word immediately preceding the same. If that is the case, a person having a doctorate need only have the required experience of four years to become eligible. Clause (a) of the Special Rules under

Rule 2(g) refers to persons who have Doctorate in Economics and Doctorate in Econometrics, otherwise it will have to be read as if the phrase starting from "with" qualifies only Econometrics". That will result in an absurd interpretation, as what is contemplated is not simple Econometrics but a "Doctorate in Econometrics". It is also clear from the Rules that a deep knowledge in Econometrics, Statistics and Economics is treated as essential for a candidate for getting appointment to the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division). Even if one is having a Doctorate in Economics or Econometrics, then also one should have Degree/Diploma/ Training in Mathematics/ Statistics/ Economics from a recognised University or Institution. When (b) and (c) are interpreted in the light of (a), it can be seen that separate knowledge in Statistics is insisted even for persons having Post Graduation in Mathematics. Diploma or Training in Statistics is not separately insisted for persons having Post Graduation in Econometrics but even for such person's specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting is insisted. In the case of those persons who have Post Graduation in Economics and who do not claim to have a Degree in Statistics, a separate Diploma or Training in statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting is insisted. Separate Degree, Diploma or Training in Statistics is not insisted in the case of those having

Econometrics but for persons having Post Graduation in Economics or Mathematics knowledge in Diploma or Training in Statistics is insisted. Specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting is a mandatory qualification for those who are governed by Clauses (b) and (c). This is the plain and simple understanding of the Special Rules.

24. The applicants had relied on extracts from the "Interpretation of Statutes" by Mr. G. P. Singh. There also, in unequivocal terms, it has Been stated that the Rule is subordinate to the context and it has to be interpreted in a way that makes sense with the context.

25. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Harbhajan Singh v. Press Council of India** reported in **2002 (3) SCC 722** had occasion to consider the techniques of interpretation to be adopted and the importance of the golden Rule of construction, that is, reading the statutory language grammatically and terminologically in the ordinary and primary sense which it bears in its context, without Omission or addition. The Hon'ble Supreme Court was interpreting relevant clauses of the Press Council Act 1978. The question addressed was whether a person who had already been a member of the Council for two terms earlier was eligible for being nominated, though such nomination did not amount to re-nomination, that is to say, at the time of being nominated, he was not a retiring member. Subsection (7) of the Press Council Act

had provided that a retiring member shall be eligible for renomination for not more than one term. The learned Single Judge allowed the Writ Petition filed by the petitioner, quashing the decision of the Press Council of India rejecting the nomination of the petitioner. The learned Single Judge formed an opinion that the language of the Statute was plain, admitting of no ambiguity, and therefore deserves to be assigned the plain meaning which naturally flows from such a reading. 26. According to the learned single Judge, the disqualification in the relevant section was attached to the member retiring in praesentia and was sought to be renominated, but it did not apply to a person who had retired sometime in the past though having held 2 consecutive terms as member of the Council and was now being only nominated and not re-nominated. In appeal, Division Bench set aside the Judgment of the learned Single Judge. The Division Bench found that the petitioner was not eligible for nomination to membership. The Hon'ble Supreme Court found that the language of the statute was plain and Simple. The Hon’ble Supreme Court found that it could be interpreted as referring to a person who has just retired it was found by the Hon'ble Supreme Court that no other meaning could be assigned except by doing violence to the language employed. It was held as follows :

"Ordinary, grammatical and full meaning is to be assigned to the words used while interpreting a provision to honour the rule-Legislature chooses appropriate words to express what it intends, and therefore, must be attributed with such intention as is conveyed by the words employed so long as this does not result in absurdity or anomaly or unless material- intrinsic or external-is available to permit a departure from the rule."

27. In Paragraph 9, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has referred to "Cross in Statutory Interpretation"

"9. Cross in Statutory Interpretation (Third Edition, 1995) states: "The governing idea here is that if a statutory provision is intelligible in the context of ordinary language, it ought, without more, to be interpreted in accordance with the meaning an ordinary speaker of the language would ascribe to it as its obvious meaning, unless there is sufficient reason for a different interpretation. Thus, an 'ordinary meaning' or 'grammatical meaning' does not imply that the Judge attributes a meaning to the words of a statute independently of their context or of the purpose of the statute, but rather that he adopts a meaning which is appropriate in relation to the immediately obvious and unresearched context and purpose in and for which they are used. By enabling citizens (and their advisers) to rely on ordinary meanings unless notice is given to the contrary, the legislature

contributes to legal certainty and predictability for citizens and to greater transparency in its own decisions, both of which are important values in a democratic society" (p. 32 ibid). The learned author cites three quotations from speeches of Lord Reid in House of Lords cases, the gist whereof is; (i) in determining the meaning of any word or phrase in a statute ask for the natural or ordinary meaning of that word or phrase in its context in the statute and follow the same unless that meaning leads to some result which cannot reasonably be supposed to have been the legislative intent; (ii) rules of construction are our servants and not masters; and (iii) a statutory provision cannot be assigned a meaning which it cannot reasonably bear; if more than one meaning are capable you can choose one but beyond that you must not go (p. 40, ibid). Justice G. P, Singh in his celebrated work-Principles of Statutory interpretation (Eighth Edition, 2001) states (at page 54) - "The intention of the Legislature is primarily to be gathered from the language used, which means that attention should be paid to what has been said as also to what has not been said. As a consequence a construction which requires for its support addition or substitution of words or which results in rejection of words as meaningless has to be avoided." The learned author states at another place (at page 74, ibid) that the rule of literal construction whereby

the words have to be assigned their natural and grammatical meaning can be departed from but subject to caution. The golden rule is that the words of statute must prima facie be given their ordinary meaning. A departure is permissible if it can be shown that the legal context in which the words are used or the object of the statute in which they occur requires a different meaning. To quote, "such a meaning cannot be departed from by the Judges 'in the light of their own views as to policy' although they can 'adopt a purposive interpretation if they can find in the statute read as a whole or in material to which they are permitted by law to refer as aids to interpretation an expression of Parliament's purpose or policy.' A modern statement of the rule is to be found in the speech of Lord Simon of Glaisdale in Suthendran v. Immigration Appeal Tribunal (1976 (3) AII ER 611, 616) to the effect- 'Parliament is prima facie to be credited with meaning what is said in an Act of Parliament. The drafting of statutes, so important to a people who hope to live under the rule of law, will never be satisfactory unless Courts seek whenever possible to apply `the golden rule' of construction, that is to read the statutory language, grammatically and terminologically, in the ordinary and primary sense which it bears in its context, without omission or addition. Of course, Parliament is to be credited with good sense; so that when such an approach

> produces injustice, absurdity, contradiction or stultification or statutory objective the language may be modified Sufficiently to avoid such disadvantage, though no further."

28. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has in umpteen number of decisions held that it is within the power of the appointing authority to determine the qualification required for its service. In Maharashtra Public Service Commission through its Secretary v. Sandeep Shriram Warade and Others reported in 2019 KHC 6529, the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that it is for the appointing authority to decide what is best for the employer, the Court cannot sit in the chair of the appointing authority and interpret the advertisement contrary to the plain language of the Same. Paragraph 10 reads as follows;

> "10. The essential qualifications for appointment to a post are for the employer to decide. The employer may prescribe additional or desirable qualifications, including any grant of preference. It is the employer who is best suited to decide the requirements a candidate must possess according to the needs of the employer and the nature of work. The court cannot lay down the conditions of eligibility, much less can it delve into the issue with regard to desirable qualifications being at par with the essential eligibility by an interpretive re writing of the advertisement. Questions of equivalence will also fall outside the domain of judicial review. If the

> language of the advertisement and the rules are clear, the Court cannot sit in judgment over the same. If there is an ambiguity in the advertisement or it is contrary to any rules or law the matter has to go back to the appointing authority after appropriate orders, to proceed in accordance with law. In no case can the Court, in the garb of judicial review, sit in the chair of the appointing authority to decide what is best for the employer and interpret the conditions of the advertisement contrary to the plain language of the same."

29. When these principles are applied to the present dispute it could be seen that the specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting is insisted by the employer for those persons having Post Graduation in Econometrics also. For persons with Economics and Mathematics, Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting is provided as an essential qualification.

30. In the reply statements filed, the respondents have explained the context of the Rule and the requirement of the post and also as to how the qualifications in the Special Rules would satisfy the requirements of the post. The claim of the applicant in O.A No.1004 of 2025 with regard to the Note in Annexure A1 which gives special protection for inside candidates, is also without any merit. As a plain reading would show, that the exception is only from acquiring a particular "class". The 1st

respondent has clarified that a pass in Master's Degree in the concerned subjects shall be enough for candidates already in the department if is having the other qualification and a particular class such as first or high second class for pass Graduation is not insisted for candidates already in the department. There is nothing to doubt the above interpretation adopted by the appointing authority, as a relaxation is given to those candidates who are already in the department in the matter of the class required for Post Graduation. If the interpretation suggested by the applicant is accepted, it would lead to an absurd result that a person with a simple Post Graduation could be considered for such a key post as Chief (Perspective Planning Division). The Contention of the applicant in O.A No.1104 of 2025 with regard to seven years' experience is also not supported by any documents, as the respondents have well explained the reasons for not reckoning his experience as a teaching faculty. The legislature has prescribed the specific qualifications which are required as additional qualifications to those persons who are having PhD and Post Graduation, and in the above context, it cannot be assumed that a person having PhD presupposes the other qualifications which are prescribed in the Rules. Had it been the position, there was no need to prescribe such additional qualifications in addition to PhD, as is done in clause (a). Upon careful consideration of the rival

contentions, this Tribunal is of the considered view that the Special Rules cannot be given the meaning and interpretation suggested by the applicants. The applicants do not satisfy the qualifications for the post of Chief (Perspective Planning Division) and there are no grounds which warrant interference with the impugned proceedings.

Accordingly, the Original Applications are dismissed."

35. There is no dispute between the parties of the fact that all the applicants in these three original petitions fall under the category of persons mentioned in Clause 1(c) of Rule 2(g) of the Special Rules, which was the required qualification notified under Clause 7(1)(c) of the notification. When we go through the qualification prescribed in the aforesaid Rule as well as in Clause 7(1)(c) of the notification, it can be seen that the essential qualifications prescribed in the said Rule as well as the notification can be divided into three:

1. The candidate must possess either;

(i) A First Class or High Second Class Master's Degree in Economics from a recognised University or Institution.

Or

(ii) A First Class or High Second Class Master's Degree in Mathematics from a recognised University or Institution.

2. A Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from recognised University or Institution

3. Seven years' experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Economic methods in macro and micro level planning.

36. The plain reading of the aforesaid qualification mentioned in the Special Rules and the notification makes it clear that a candidate who is not a candidate employed in the State Planning Board who desires to participate in the selection process must possess all the aforesaid three qualifications. Therefore, it is clear that a person possessing First Class or High Second Class Master’s Degree in Economics or Mathematics shall also possess Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialisation in Economics and Economic forecasting from a recognised University or Institution and also seven years’ experience in economic planning and models and in the application of economic methods in macro and micro level planning. The words used in the Special Rules as well as the notification are plain and unambiguous. A meaning as that claimed by the petitioners-applicants in O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026 by separating the first limb, i.e., a First Class or High Second

Class Master's Degree in Economics from the second part of the qualification is not possible by giving a different meaning to the 'stroke' '(/)' in between the words economics and mathematics in the Special Rules as well as in the notification, not contemplated by the employer or the expert body.

37. The qualifications mentioned in sub clause 1(a) which are the qualifications mentioned in Clause 7 of the notification also shows that the aforesaid interpretation given by the petitioners-applicants in O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026 is not possible. Clause 1(a) of the Special Rules under Rule 2(g) refers to persons who have a doctorate in Economics or Econometrics with a basic Degree/ Diploma/ Training in Mathematics/ Statistics/ Economics from a recognised University or Institution and four years' experience in Economic Planning and Models and in the application of Econometric methods in the macro and micro level planning. If the interpretation as contended by the petitioners-applicants in O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026 is accepted, as rightly observed by the Tribunal, when a doctorate in Economics with four years' experience alone is sufficient for one set of candidates, a candidate

possessing doctorate in econometrics needs to have a basic degree/Diploma/Training in Mathematics/Statistics/Economics from a recognised University or Institution, apart from the experience. Therefore, neither the judgment in **Ashish Kumar [(2018) 3 SCC 55]** nor in **Durga Chand Kaushish [(1973) 2 SCC 825]** will aid the petitioners-applicants in O.P.(KAT)No.290 of 2026.

38. While coming to the argument raised by the learned counsel for the petitioner-applicant in O.P.(KAT)No.291 of 2026, as rightly found by the Tribunal, the Note (ii) under Clause 7 of the notification, which is Note (iii) under Rule 2 of the Special Rules, the pass in Master's Degree in the concerned subject for departmental candidates mentioned can be treated only as the class to be obtained for the post-graduation mentioned as the basic qualification. That means the First Class or High Second Class Master's Degree in Economics or Mathematics mentioned in the Special Rules as well as in the notification has to be read as a pass in those Master's Degrees for departmental candidates. A meaning to the 'Note' by giving it elasticity to the extent of

contending that no other qualifications are required for the departmental candidates cannot be assigned, since the 'Note' is intended only for the purpose of giving some relaxation and not for substituting the entire qualifications needed for the post. So also, as rightly argued by the learned Standing Counsel for the PSC, Rule 4 of the Kerala Public Service Commission Rules of Procedure is applicable only to the case of applications submitted by qualified candidates and it cannot be said that merely because the applications are accepted, the PSC is legally bound to make arrangements for completion of the examinations by the said candidate, even in the midway it was found that the applicants were not qualified.

39. As far as the argument of the learned counsel for the petitioner-applicant addressed on 08.10.2026 and thereafter by the petitioner-applicant himself in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026 on 23.10.2026, the point to be decided is whether by relying on Rule 10(a)(ii) of Part II of KS&SSR, the petitioner-applicant can contend that his Ph.D in Economics is the sufficient education qualification mentioned in Clause 7(1)(c) of the notification in view

of Note (i) under the said clause. In this regard, the judgment in **Krishnaprasad P. S. [2025 (6) KHC 189]**, relied on by the petitioner-applicant in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026 is a case wherein the disputes raised in three batches of petitions for acceptance of higher educational qualifications for Government posts in Kerala, where recruitment notifications prescribed lower qualifications like ITI Certificates, but candidates possess higher qualifications such as Diploma, B.Tech Degrees. In Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the said judgment, a Division Bench of this Court held thus:

> "15. The test for determining how satisfaction as to sufficiency of a higher qualification that presupposes the acquisition of the lower qualification has been enunciated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Jyoti K. K. v. Kerala Public Service Commission, 2010 (15) SCC 596**, wherein two key tests were laid down:
>
> 1. If a person has acquired a higher qualification in the same faculty, it is presumed that such a qualification includes the lower qualification, unless proven otherwise.
>
> 2. If for higher posts, a higher qualification is prescribed than for lower posts, and the recruitment is through direct entry, it necessarily implies that the higher qualification required for the higher post is deemed to be a higher qualification compared to that prescribed for the lower post.

16. Thus, R.10(a)(ii) of KS&SSR operates not as a source of equivalency, but as a means to recognise higher qualifications that logically and academically presuppose the acquisition of the prescribed lower qualification. The power of both the Government and the PSC in this context is limited to conducting an enquiry to assess sufficiency, not to arbitrarily deny the applicability of a qualification that satisfies the rule's standard."

40. While going through the contentions raised by the petitioner-applicant in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026, it is relevant to note the reason for rejection of the claim raised by the petitioner-applicant by the PSC stated in Annexure A6 communication, which is detailed in Paragraphs 3 to 5 of Ext.P3 reply statement dated 23.07.2025 filed by the PSC which we have already extracted in paragraph No.4.2. of this judgment. As far as the contention of the petitioner regarding the authority of the PSC under Section 2 of the Kerala Public Services Act, 1968, is concerned, in paragraphs 9 to 11 of Ext.P3 reply statement it is stated as under;

"9) Section 2 of the Kerala Public Services Act,1968 empowers the State Government to make rules either prospectively or retrospectively to regulate the recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the State

of Kerala. The Division Bench of Hon'ble High Court itself upheld the power of the rule making authorities while deciding W.A.No. 1066 of 2006 & connected cases.

10) ln Abdul Rasheed Vs. Kerala Public Service Commission (2002 (3) KLT 405) & Public Service Commission Vs Abdul Rasheed (2007 (3) KLT 881), the Hon High Court has observed that PSC has no power to go beyond qualification prescribed by the rule. As per the Full Bench judgment of Hon High Court in Udayan v. Kerala Agro Machinery Corporation Ltd. [2011 (3) KLT 952 (F.B.)], there can be no controversy that the recruiting agency like Union/State Public Service Commission is not vested with any power to deviate from the qualifications prescribed in the notification for the purpose of recruitment. Once certain norms are indicated in the notification for selection, those norms should be strictly followed.

11) The Commission can only conduct selection to a post going by the Special Rules concerned and is duty bound to follow the rules and orders issued from time to time. There is no arbitrariness or illegality in the action taken by the Commission as averred by the applicant. Therefore, the OA is devoid of any merit and is liable to be dismissed as such."

41. From the contentions raised by the PSC it is clear that the PSC is of the stand that in the notification it is stated in Note (v) under Clause 7 that the qualifications recognised by the Executive orders or standing orders of the Government as

equivalent to a qualification specified for a post, in the Special Rules and such of those qualifications which presuppose the acquisition of the lower qualification prescribed for the post, shall also be sufficient for the post. But, a roving or fishing enquiry cannot be conducted by the PSC to accept the contention of the petitioner-applicant that his Ph.D covers the subjects mentioned in Clause 7(1)(c), which presupposes the academic qualification prescribed in the notification. The experience claimed by the petitioner-applicant is in the field of teaching, for a considerable period. Moreover, as rightly argued by the learned Standing Counsel for PSC, the experience that has to be gained as prescribed in the Special Rules and in the notification is to be acquired after the acquisition of the academic qualification. But, as far as the case of the petitioner-applicant in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026 is concerned, only four years and odd have elapsed after the acquisition of Ph.D by him and therefore he cannot claim seven years experience after the acquisition of the academic qualification.

42. In **Krishnaprasad P. S. [2025 (6) KHC 189]**, the

Division Bench of this Court restated the tests for determining presupposition of higher qualification stated by the Apex Court in **Jyoti K. K. [2010 (15) SCC 596]**, that if a person has acquired a higher qualification in the same faculty, it is presumed that such a qualification includes the lower qualification, unless proven otherwise. Similarly, if for higher posts, a higher qualification is prescribed than for lower posts, and the recruitment is through direct entry, it necessarily implies that the higher qualification required for the higher post is deemed to be a higher qualification compared to that prescribed for the lower post. But, in the instant case the petitioner-applicant in O.P.(KAT)No. 292 of 2026 admittedly has no Diploma or Training in Statistics with specialization in Econometrics and Economic forecasting from a recognised University or Institution, which we already found as a necessary qualification under Clause 7(1)(c) of the notification. Therefore, the tests started in **Jyoti K. K. [2010 (15) SCC 596]**, as extracted in **Krishnaprasad P. S. [2025 (6) KHC 189]**, will not help petitioner-applicant to claim that his Ph.D in Economics is a sufficient academic qualification under Clause 7(1)(c) of the

notification. So also we find no merit in the contention of the petitioner-applicant that there is contradiction in the observation of the Tribunal in paragraph 23 and the reasoning in paragraph 30 of the impugned order. In paragraph 23, the Tribunal has only described the qualification needed for a person to fall under Clause 7(1)(a) of the notification, and whereas in paragraph 30 of the order the Tribunal gave its finding on the claim of the petitioner-applicant regarding presupposition of Ph.D on the qualifications prescribed in the Special Rules and the notification. Therefore, we find no merit in the contentions of the petitioner-applicant in O.P.(KAT)No.292 of 2026 also.

43. On appreciating the reasoning of the Tribunal in the impugned order dated 25.09.2026, we find that the Tribunal correctly appreciated the rival contentions raised by the parties to the original applications and passed a reasoned order. On reappreciating the pleadings and materials, we find no ground to hold that the impugned order is suffering from any patent illegality or impropriety or in other words, we find no ground to hold that the Tribunal grossly erred in reaching to a right finding. Therefore,

these original petitions are liable to be dismissed.

In the result, these original petitions are dismissed.

Sd/-

ANIL K. NARENDRAN, **JUDGE**

Sd/-

MURALEE KRISHNA S., **JUDGE**

MSA/nak

APPENDIX OF OP(KAT) NO. 290 OF 2026

PETITIONER ANNEXURES

Annexure A1	**TRUE COPY OF THE SPECIAL RULES OF KERALA STATE PLANNING SERVICE ISSUED AS PER G.O.(P) NO. 57/74/PLG. DATED 13.12.1974 OF GOVERNMENT OF KERALA.**
Annexure A2	**TRUE COPY OF THE NOTIFICATION DATED 31.12.2022 UNDER CATEGORY NO. 657/2022 ISSUED BY KPSC.**
Annexure A3	**TRUE COPY OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE WITH REGISTER NO. ECO 030511/2005 DATED 29.03.2007 ISSUED TO THE 1ST APPLICANT FORM UNIVERSITY OF KERALA**
Annexure A3(a)	**TRUE COPY OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE WITH REGISTER NO. 16301 DATED 04.07.1998 ISSUED TO THE 2ND APPLICANT FROM UNIVERSITY OF KERALA**
Annexure A3(b)	**TRUE COPY OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE NO. 0300 DATED 12.07.2000 ISSUED TO THE 3RD APPLICANT FROM UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**
Annexure A4	**TRUE COPY OF THE HALL TICKET WITH REGISTER NO. Z 500070 GENERATED BY KPSC IN THE WEB PROFILE OF THE 1ST APPLICANT**
Annexure A4(a)	**TRUE COPY OF THE HALL TICKET WITH REGISTER NO. Z 500148 GENERATED BY KPSC IN THE WEB PROFILE OF THE 2ND APPLICANT.**
Annexure A4(b)	**TRUE COPY OF THE HALL TICKET WITH REGISTER NO. Z 500131 GENERATED BY KPSC IN THE WEB PROFILE OF THE 3RD APPLICANT.**
Annexure A5	**TRUE COPY OF THE SHORT LIST PUBLISHED AS PER SL. NO. 90/2025/OLE II DATED 22.04.2025 BY THE KPSC.**
Annexure A6	**TRUE COPY OF THE PRINTOUT OF THE STATUS OF**

	THE APPLICATIONS AS DISPOSED APPEARED IN THE PROFILE OF THE 1ST APPLICANT
Annexure A6(a)	**TRUE COPY OF THE PRINTOUT OF THE STATUS OF THE APPLICATIONS AS DISPOSED APPEARED IN THE PROFILE OF THE 2ND APPLICANT**
Annexure A6(b)	**TRUE COPY OF THE PRINTOUT OF THE STATUS OF THE APPLICATIONS AS DISPOSED APPEARED IN THE PROFILE OF THE 3RD APPLICANT**
Annexure A7	**TRUE COPY OF THE LETTER NO. OLE2-3/4/2025-KPSC DATED 28.05.2025 ISSUED BY THE KPSC TO THE 1ST APPLICANT.**
Annexure A7(a)	**TRUE COPY OF THE LETTER NO. OLE2-3/4/2025-KPSC DATED 28.05.2025 ISSUED BY THE KPSC TO THE 3RD APPLICANT.**
Annexure A8	**TRUE COPY OF THE RESULT SHEET DATED 27.07.2025 OF M.A. ECONOMICS DEGREE PROGRAM FOR THE YEAR 2003-2005 OF THE 1ST APPLICANT.**
Annexure A9	**TRUE COPY OF THE SYLLABUS OF THE M.SC. PROGRAMME IN MATHEMATICS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KERALA.**
Annexure A10	**TRUE COPY OF THE SYLLABUS OF THE M.SC. PROGRAMME STATISTICS COURSES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KERALA.**
Exhibit P1	**TRUE COPY OF THE O.A NO. 1023/2025 IN THE FILE OF THE KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, PRINCIPAL BENCH, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DATED 12.06.2025.**
Exhibit P2	**TRUE COPY OF THE REPLY STATEMENT DATED 12.12.2025 FILED BY THE 2ND RESPONDENT IN O.A. NO.1023/2025.**
Exhibit P3	**TRUE COPY OF THE REPLY STATEMENT DATED 25.02.2026 FILED BY THE 1ST RESPONDENT IN O.A. NO. 1023/2025.**

Exhibit P4	**TRUE COPY OF THE REJOINDER FILED BY THE PETITIONERS DATED 29.07.2026**
Exhibit P5	**TRUE COPY OF THE REPLY STATEMENT FILED BY THE 13RD RESPONDENT DATED 18.07.2025 IN O.A. NO. 1023/2025**
Exhibit P6	**TRUE COPY OF THE INTERIM ORDER DATED 13.06.2025 IN O.A. NO. 1023/2025 OF THE KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**
Exhibit P7	**TRUE COPY OF THE DECISION REPORTED IN (2018) 3 SCC 55 DATED 31.01.2018**
Exhibit P8	**TRUE COPY OF THE DECISION REPORTED IN (1973) 2 SCC 825 DATED 28.08.1963 OF THE HON'BLE SUPREME COURT.**
Exhibit P9	**TRUE COPY OF THE ORDER DATED 25.09.2026 IN O.A. NO. 1023/2025 OF THE HON'BLE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

APPENDIX OF OP(KAT) NO. 291 OF 2026

PETITIONER ANNEXURES

Annexure A1	**TRUE COPY OF THE GAZETTE NOTIFICATION DT.31-12-2022 OF THE KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION INVITING APPLICATION TO THE POST OF CHIEF (PERSPECTIVE PLANNING DIVISION) IN KERALA STATE PLANNING BOARD CAT. NO. 657/2022**
Annexure A2	**TRUE COPY OF THE APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT TO THE KPSC ON ONLINE CAT.NO.657/2022**
Annexure A3	**TRUE COPY OF THE ADMISSION TICKET OF APPLICANT DATED 13-07-2023**
Annexure A4	**TRUE COPY OF THE ADMISSION TICKET OF APPLICANT DATED 14-7-2023**
Annexure A5	**TRUE COPY OF THE NOTIFICATION OF SHORT LIST PUBLISHED BY THE KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION CAT NO. 657/2022 SL. NO. 90/2025/OLE II DATE 22/4/2025**
Annexure A6	**TRUE COPY OF REPRESENTATION DATED 23-4-2025 OF THE APPLICANT SUBMITTED TO THE CHAIRMAN, KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.**
Annexure A7	**TRUE COPY OF REPRESENTATION DATED 25-4-2025 OF THE APPLICANT SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY, KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.**
Annexure A8	**TRUE COPY OF THE LETTER NO. OLE2-3/4/2025-KPSC DATED 28-5-2025 OF THE SECRETARY ,KPSC ,PATTOM, TVPM ADDRESSED TO THE APPLICANT**
Annexure R1 (a)	**TRUE COPY OF THE SPECIAL RULES FOR THE KERALA STATE PLANNING SERVICE (G.O (P) NO.57/74/PLG DATED 13.12.1974)**
EXHIBIT P1	**A TRUE COPY OF THE O.A.NO.1004/2025 IN THE KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL PRINCIPAL BENCH THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.**

EXHIBIT P2	**TRUE COPY OF A REPLY STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY THE 1ST RESPONDENT DATED 23/02/2026**
EXHIBIT P3	**TRUE COPY OF THE REPLY STATEMENT IN THE O.A 1004/2025 SUBMITTED BY 2ND RESPONDENT DATED 17/07/2025**
EXHIBIT P4	**TRUE COPY OF THE ORDER DATED 11/06/2025 OF THE HON'BLE KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL IN O.A.NO.1004/2025**
EXHIBIT P5	**A TRUE COPY OF THE ORDER DATED 25/09/2026 IN O.A. NO. 1004/2025 OF THE HON'BLE KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL**
EXHIBIT P6	**A TRUE COPY OF THE APPLICATION DATED 23/04/2026 SUBMITTED BY ONE DR. JIKKU KURIEN TO THE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER, INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE KOLKATA UNDER RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT**
EXHIBIT P7	**A TRUE COPY OF REPLY DATED 23/06/2026 ISSUED FROM INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE KOLKATA TO DR. JIKKU KURIEN**
EXHIBIT P8	**A TRUE COPY OF THE TRAINING CERTIFICATE DATED 23/07/2014 ISSUED FROM ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE OF INDIA, HYDERABAD TO THE PETITIONER**
EXHIBIT P8(a)	**A TRUE COPY OF THE TRAINING CERTIFICATE DATED 05/09/2012 ISSUED FROM ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE OF INDIA, HYDERABAD TO THE PETITIONER**
EXHIBIT P9	**A TRUE COPY OF THE NOTICE OF THE INTERVIEW FOR THE SOLE CANDIDATE IN THE SHORT LIST TO BE HELD ON 09/10/2026 TO THE POST OF CHIEF (PERSPECTIVE AND INFRASTRUCTURE DIVISION), PLANNING BOARD.**
EXHIBIT P10	**TRUE COPY OF AN F.I.R. NO.1505 OF 2026 IS REGISTERED ON 29/07/2026 ALLEGING OFFENCE U/S.316(5) OF BNSS 2023 AND SECTION 7, 131(A) OF PREVENTION ACT 1988 AGAINST OFFICIALS OF K.P.S.C**

APPENDIX OF OP(KAT) NO. 292 OF 2026

PETITIONER ANNEXURES

Annexure-A1	**THE TRUE COPY OF THE GAZETTE NOTIFICATION DATED 31.12.2022 IN CATEGORY NO. 657/2022**
Annexure-A2	**THE TRUE COPY OF THE HALL TICKET ISSUED TO THE PETITIONER IN CATEGORY NO. 657/2022**
Annexure-A3	**THE TRUE COPY OF THE SHORT LIST PUBLISHED ON 22.4.2025 BY THE KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**
Annexure-A4	**THE TRUE COPY OF THE PROFILE STATUS PAGE REFLECTING THE REJECTION IN CATEGORY NO. 657.2022**
Annexure-A5	**THE TRUE COPY OF THE REPRESENTATION DATED 29.04.2025 GIVEN TO THE 3RD RESPONDENT**
Annexure-A6	**A TRUE COPY OF THE LETTER ISSUED BY THE 1ST RESPONDENT DATED 28.5.2025**
Annexure-A7	**TRUE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE DATED 30.7.2009 ISSUED BY THE MG UNIVERSITY AWARDING MASTER'S DEGREE**
Annexure-A8	**TRUE COPY OF THE PHD CERTIFICATE DATED 17-12-2022 ISSUED BY THE MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY**
Annexure-A9	**A TRUE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE NO. 174/2018 DATED 24.02.2018 ISSUED BY NORMA SCHOOL**
Annexure-A10	**TRUE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE OF EXPERIENCE BEARING NUMBER BC258/18 ISSUED BY BETHANY COLLEGE, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DATED 24.2.2025**
Annexure-A11	**TRUE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE NO. PTCF/60-2016 ISSUED BY PERIYAR TIGER CONSERVATION FOUNDATION (KERALA FORESTS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT) DATED 14.11.2018 TO THE APPLICANT**
Annexure-A12	**TRUE COPY OF THE EXPERIENCE CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY UNDP DELHI TO THE PETITIONER DATED 30.05.2025**
Annexure-A13	**TRUE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY THE DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FUR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ) GMBH INDIA/ DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE DATED 23.01.2023 TO THE APPLICANT**
Annexure-A14	**TRUE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY THE DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GOVERNMENT**

	OF KERALA DATED 23.01.2023 TO THE APPLICANT
Annexure-A15	**TRUE COPY OF THE INTERIM ORDER IN OA NO. 1023/2025 DATED 13.6.2025 PASSED BY THE KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**
Annexure-A16	**TRUE COPY OF THE RTI APPLICATION DATED 3.7.2025 SUBMITTED BY THE PETITIONER BEFORE THE 3RD RESPONDENT AND THE TRUE COPY OF THE RTI REPLY DATED 29.7.2025 ISSUED BY THE 3RD RESPONDENT TO THE PETITIONER**
Annexure-A17	**THE TRUE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE OF PHD COURSEWORK IN RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ISSUED BY THE MG UNIVERSITY DATED 3.6.2016**
Annexure-A18	**THE TRUE COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE IN SPECIALIZED TRAINING IN ECONOMETRIC MODELLING AND ANALYSIS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR, NORMA SCHOOL DATED 24.2.2018 ALONG WITH THE ADMISSION LETTER AND COURSE CURRICULUM**
Annexure-A19	**TRUE COPY OF THE RTI APPLICATION AND THE PHD ADJUDICATION REPORT OF THE PETITIONER RECEIVED FROM MG UNIVERSITY THROUGH RTI NO - 7312/AC A15-1/2025/AC A15 DATED 1.8.2025**
Annexure-A20	**TRUE COPY OF THE RTI APPLICATION BY THE PETITIONER AND THE REPLY NO.-119125/AC A10-4/2025/AD A12 OF MG UNIVERSITY DATED 5.12.2025 SHOWING THE SYLLABUS OF PHD COURSEWORK, COURSE-1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**
Annexure-A21	**TRUE COPY OF THE TRAINING CERTIFICATE IN TIME SERIES ECONOMETRICS HELD FROM 30TH APRIL TO 5TH MAY, 2014 ISSUED BY SB COLLEGE, BEARING NO. ECO/204/14 ALONG WITH THE COURSE CURRICULUM**
Annexure-A22	**TRUE COPY OF THE RTI APPLICATION BY THE PETITIONER AND THE REPLY NO.- B2/163/2025-PLGEA OF THE 1ST RESPONDENT DATED 6.1.2026 SHOWING THE SYLLABUS OF PHD COURSEWORK, COURSE-1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**
Annexure-A23	**TRUE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL HAND WRITTEN NOTE ALONG WITH REPLY FURNISHED BY THE MEMBER SECRETARY, PLANNING BOARD FROM ARCHIVED FILE NO. GO(P) NO. 70/85/PLG DATED 27.9.1985 AND THE TYPED TRANSCRIPTION OF NOTE/LETTER**
Annexure-A24	**TRUE COPY OF THE RTI QUESTIONNAIRE DATED 25.4.2026 SUBMITTED BY THE PETITIONER BEFORE THE SECRETARY/SPIO, KERALA PSC AND THE REPLY**

	DATED 20.5.2026
Exhibit-P1	**THE TRUE COPY OF THE MEMORANDUM IN OA NO. 1104/2025 FILED BEFORE THE KERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ON 23.6.2024**
Exhibit-P2	**TRUE COPY OF THE INTERIM ORDER IN OA NO. 1104/2025 PASSED BY THEKERALA ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DATED 1.7.2025**
Exhibit-P3	**TRUE COPY OF THE REPLY STATEMENT FILED BY THE 3RD RESPONDENT ON 23.7.2025**
Exhibit-P4	**TRUE COPY OF THE MEMORANDUM OF THE REJOINDER FILED ON 6.8.2025**
Exhibit-P5	**TRUE COPY OF THE REPLY FILED BY THE 1ST RESPONDENT ON 27.3.2026**
Exhibit-P6	**TRUE COPY OF THE REJOINDER FILED ON 12.6.2026**
Exhibit-P7	**TRUE COPY OF THE MEMORANDUM OF MA NO. 1790/2026 FILED IN OA 1104/2025 DATED 16.9.2026**
Exhibit-P8	**CERTIFIED COPY OF THE FINAL ORDER IN OA NO. OA NO. 1104/2025 DATED 25.9.2026 PASSED BY THE KAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**
Exhibit-P9	**TRUE COPY OF THE NOTICE ISSUED BY THE 3RD RESPONDENT DATED 25.9.2026**