

**HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA AT HYDERABAD
(Special Original Jurisdiction)**

FRIDAY, THE NINTH DAY OF JANUARY
TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY SIX

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE PULLA KARTHIK

WRIT PETITION NO: 30211 OF 2024

Between:

Laxmidevi Ajay, S/o Thirupathi, Age 27 years, Occ Unemployed, R/o. H.No.18-695, Ramnagar, Mancherial-504208, Asst. Foreman Trainee Electrical Hall ticket: 221228500011,

...PETITIONER

AND

1. The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), Represented by its Chairman and Managing Director, Singareni Bhavan Red Hills, Hyderabad
2. The General Manager, Personal Welfare and RC the SCCL Recruitment Cell, Kothagudem, Bhadravati Kothagudem.

...RESPONDENTS

Petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed therewith, the High Court may be pleased to issue an appropriate Writ, Order, or Direction, particularly in the nature of a WRIT OF MANDAMUS, declare that the action of the 2nd Respondent in changing the correct options from Preliminary Key/ Response sheet to Final Key/Question Paper Preview for Question Nos. 26 (Question Id 630680217894), Question No. 27 (Question Id 630680217921), Question No. 63 (Question Id 630680380422), Question No. 64 (Question Id 630680380429), and Not considering objection raised for Question No. 65 (Question Id 630680389642) in the respondent company SCCL for the post of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical) examination conducted on 06. 08. 2024 pursuant to the Notification 02/2024 dated 15. 05. 2024 is illegal, arbitrary, discriminatory, and in violation of Articles 14, 19, and 21 of the Constitution of India consequently direct the 2nd Respondent to refer the Question Nos. Question No. 26 (Question Id 630680217894), Question No. 27 (Question Id 630680217921),

Question No. 63 (Question Id 630680380422), Question No. 64 (Question Id 630680380429), and Question No. 65 (Question Id 630680380424).

IA NO: 1 OF 2024

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to direct the 2nd Respondent to refer the Question Nos. Question No. 26 (Question Id 630680217894), Question No. 27 (Question Id 630680217921), Question No. 63 (Question Id 630680380422), Question No. 64 (Question Id 630680380429), and Question No. 65 (Question Id 630680389642) pursuant to the Notification 02/2024 dated 15.05.2024, pending disposal of the Main Writ Petition.

IA NO: 2 OF 2024

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to STAY the further process of selection to the extent of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical) pursuant to the Notification 02/2024 dated 15.05.2024 until the independent subject matter expert committee submits its report, pending disposal of the Main Writ Petition.

Counsel for the Petitioner: SRI RAMESH CHILLA

Counsel for the Respondents: SRI P.SRI HARSHA REDDY, SC FOR SCCL

The Court made the following: ORDER

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

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE PULLA KARTHIK

WRIT PETITION No.30211 OF 2024

Date : 09.01.2026

Between :

Laxmidevi Ajay.

...Petitioner

AND

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited,
Represented by its Chairman and Managing Director,
Singareni Bhavan Red Hills, Hyderabad and another.

...Respondents

O R D E R :

This Writ Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking to declare the action of respondent No.2 in changing the correct options from the preliminary key/response sheet to the final key/question paper preview for Question Nos.26 (Question I.D. No.630680217894), 27 (Question I.D. No.630680217921), 63 (Question I.D. No.630680380422) and 64 (Question I.D. No.630680380429) and in not considering the objection raised with respect to Question No.65 (Question I.D.

No.630680389642) in the examination conducted by the respondent company for the post of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical) on 06.08.2024 pursuant to Notification No.02/2024 dated 15.05.2024, as illegal, arbitrary and violative of Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India and to consequently direct respondent No.2 to refer and re-evaluate Question Nos.26, 27, 63, 64 and 65 (bearing Question I.D. Nos. 630680217894, 630680217921, 630680380422, 630680380429 and 630680389642 respectively) through an independent and competent expert committee.

2. Heard Sri Ramesh Chilla, learned counsel for the petitioner and Sri P.Sri Harsha Reddy, learned Standing Counsel for Singareni Collieries Company Limited, appearing for the respondents.

3. The case of the petitioner is as follows:

The petitioner belongs to the BC-A community and, in response to Employment Notification No.02/2024 dated 15.05.2024 issued by respondent No.1, inviting applications for the post of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical) comprising a

total of 24 posts, he applied for the said post and appeared for the written examination conducted on 06.08.2024. Subsequently, the preliminary key was made available on the website on 13.08.2024 and the candidates were allowed to submit objections to the same from 13.08.2024 to 15.08.2024 by uploading supporting documents or material in PDF/JPEG format as attachments. The petitioner's responses for Question Nos.26 (Question I.D. No.630680217894), 27 (Question I.D. No.630680217921), 63 (Question I.D. No.630680380422), and 64 (Question I.D. No.630680380429) were tallying with the preliminary key, and therefore, no objections were required to be filed in respect of these questions. However, the petitioner raised an objection in respect of Question No.65 (Question I.D. No.630680389642). Thereafter, the final key/question paper preview was made available on 26.09.2024, wherein the petitioner noticed that the respondents had altered the options from the preliminary key for Question Nos.26, 27, 63 and 64, while the objection raised by the petitioner in respect of Question No.65 was not considered. Hence, the petitioner filed the present Writ Petition.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the petitioner secured 81 marks and holds 47th rank and if the additional marks for those questions were counted, the petitioner would rank among the top candidates in the BC-A community, thereby securing one of the two posts reserved for that category. Further, the petitioner raised an objection to only one question, as the remaining questions reflected correct answers in the preliminary key and therefore did not warrant any objections. It is further submitted that in similar circumstances this Court, in W.P. Nos. 11810 and 18335 of 2020, *vide* order dated 03.03.2021, disposed of the said Writ Petitions by directing the respondents to refer the disputed question therein to an expert committee within a reasonable period and the said order was subsequently confirmed by a Division Bench of this Court *vide* judgment dated 29.10.2021 in W.A. Nos. 126, 133 and 406 of 2021. Further, in the case of **Bihar Staff Selection Commission v. Arun Kumar¹**, the Hon'ble Supreme Court laid down the law regarding the referral of erroneous questions to an expert committee. Therefore, learned counsel prays this Court to direct the respondents to refer

¹ (2020) 6 SCC 362

the disputed questions in the present case to an expert committee on similar lines. In support of his contentions, learned counsel for the petitioner relied upon the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Manish Ujwal and Others v. Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati University and others***² and ***Madhyamam Broadcasting Limited v. Union of India***³ and also on the judgment of the High Court of Delhi in ***Om Prakash Verma v. National Testing Agency & another***⁴.

5. *Per contra*, learned Standing Counsel appearing for the respondents submits that the respondents issued Employment Notification No.02/2024 dated 15.05.2024 for filling up vacancies in various Executive and NCWA cadre posts, including 24 vacancies for the post of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical), T&S Grade-C (External). The petitioner herein submitted Online Application No.SCCL02240012937 for the said post and was issued Call Letter No.221228500011 to appear for the Computer Based Test, which was conducted on 06.08.2024 at various

² (2005) 13 SCC 744

³ (2023) 13 SCC 401

⁴ W.P.(C) No.11380 of 2023 and CM APP No.52064 and 52065 of 2023 dated 09.02.2024

centers located in Hyderabad, Khammam, Karimnagar, Warangal, Siddipet, Sathupalli and Kothagudem. The preliminary key was displayed on 13.08.2024 and objections from the candidates were accepted up to 15.08.2024. Accordingly, a total of 222 objections were received for the post of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical), T&S Grade-C (External).

(b) The entire recruitment process, including the design and development of the software application form, receipt of online applications and preparation of the provisional merit list, was entrusted to M/s. Educational Consultants India Limited (EdCIL), a Mini Ratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise, Government of India, pursuant to the MoU dated 23.03.2024. It is further submitted that after receiving the objections on preliminary key, M/s. EdCIL constituted a Subject Expert Committee comprising the following members to examine the objections received from candidates:

Sl. No.	Designation	Experience	Highest Qualification	Institution
1.	Lecturer	9 years	Post Graduate	Government Polytechnic College, Perakad, Kerala.
2.	Assistant Professor	14 years	Doctorate	SIM Institute of Science &

				Technology, Modinagar, Uttar Pradesh.
3.	Assistant Professor	20 years	Doctorate	ITS Engineering College, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
4.	Assistant Professor	10 years	Post Doctorate	SGI Engineering College, affiliated to Bikaner Technical University, Sikar, Rajasthan.

The committee examined in detail and reviewed all objections by referring to relevant literature, textbooks and study materials to ensure accuracy and after making the necessary corrections to the preliminary key, the final key was displayed on 26.09.2024 by specifying the questions on which objections were raised along with the valid reasons for the answers. Regarding the questions in dispute, the answer keys for Question Nos. 26, 27, 63, and 64 were modified, as the committee opined that the objections were valid and required correction. For Question No.65 (Question I.D. No. 630680389642), the committee opined that no correction was necessary. As per the final key, the petitioner secured 81 marks in the Computer Based Test and obtained 47th rank in the provisional merit list.

(c) It is further submitted that the judgments relied upon by the petitioner pertain to the referral of disputed or erroneous questions to an expert committee. Whereas, in the present case, the objections raised were duly referred to the subject expert committee and final key was issued on 26.09.2024. Further, the selection list for the post of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical), T&S Grade-C (External) was displayed on the website on 26.10.2024 and candidates within the zone of selection were intimated to attend the original certificate verification scheduled on 07.11.2024. Accordingly, the verification of original certificates of the selected candidates was completed and the entire recruitment/selection process for the aforesaid post has been concluded. Therefore, there are no merits in the Writ Petition and the same is liable to be dismissed in *limine*.

6. This Court has taken note of the submissions made by learned counsel for the respective parties and perused the material available on record.

7. A perusal of the record discloses that the petitioner applied for the post of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical), T&S

Grade-C (External), pursuant to Employment Notification No.02/2024 dated 15.05.2024, he was subsequently issued Call Letter No.221228500011 and appeared for the Computer Based Test conducted on 06.08.2024. The response sheets for the said test were displayed on 13.08.2024 and the candidates were given an opportunity to submit objections regarding the preliminary key up to 15.08.2024. A total of 222 objections were received for the said post.

8. In this regard, M/s. EdCIL, a Mini Ratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise, Government of India, was entrusted with conducting the entire recruitment process pursuant to the MoU dated 23.03.2024. The record discloses that after receiving the objections from the candidates on preliminary key, it had constituted a Subject Expert Committee to examine the objections raised by the candidates. The Expert Committee was provided with the preliminary answer key and all the objections received from the candidates. The Committee undertook a detailed examination and review of the objections, referring to relevant literature, textbooks and study materials to ensure accuracy.

Based on its thorough analysis, the Committee suggested necessary corrections to the valid objections identified in the preliminary key. The details of the objections received on the preliminary key and the action taken in respect of Question Nos.26, 27, 63, 64 and 65 are as follows:

Question No.	Question ID	Answer in Preliminary Key	Action Taken	Objections received	Answer in Final Key	Reference
26	630680217894	630680845484 (2)	5	Answer key changed	630680845486 (4)	Book : 'Electrical and Electronic Measurements and Instrumentation' Author : A.K. Sawhney Edition : Look for the most recent edition or a standard edition used in your course or field pages 200 to 300
27	630680217921	630680217921 (1)	4	Answer key changed	630680845594 (4)	Book : "Power Electronics: Converters, Applications and Design" by Ned Mohan Tore M.Undeland and William P.Robbins Relevant Chapter : Look in the chapter on "Current Source Inverters" or Inverter Operation and Control". These sections typically cover the principles of current source inverters, their operational characteristics and how they interact with load impedance. Specific Pages : In the 3 rd edition, you might refer to Pages 599-620
63	630680380422	6306801482685 (3)	2	Answer key changed	630680845594 (4)	Book: "Electric Drives: Concepts and Applications" by Gautam Shroff Relevant Chapter: Look in the chapter of "AC Drives and Control Methods" or "Control of AC Motors". These chapters typically cover various control strategies for AC drives, including stator current control. Specific
64	630680380429	6306801482713 (2)	1	Answer key changed	6306801482712 (2)	

						Pages: In the 2012 edition, you might refer to Pages 142-158
65	630680389642	6306801519028 (3)	18	No action required	6306801519028 (3)	Book: "Electric Machinery and Power System Fundamentals" by Stephen J. Chapman Relevant Chapter : Look in the chapter on "Motor Characteristics of Motors". These chapters typically cover the various graphs used to represent motor performance, including speed-torque characteristics. Specific pages: In the 2011 edition, you can refer to pages 292-310.

9. Thereafter, the final key incorporating the corrections recommended by the Expert Committee was published on 26.09.2024. As per the final key, the petitioner secured 81 marks in the Computer Based Test and obtained 47th rank in the provisional merit list. Following the final key, the selection list for the post of Assistant Foreman Trainee (Electrical), T&S Grade-C (External) was displayed on the website on 26.10.2024. However, the petitioner was not selected because of his lower merit. Subsequently, the candidates within the zone of selection were intimated to attend the original certificate verification scheduled on 07.11.2024 and the entire recruitment/selection process for the aforesaid post has been concluded.

10. Before advertiring to the settled principles laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, this Court finds it necessary to deal with the judgments relied upon by the learned counsel for the petitioner. The reliance placed on the judgments of **Manish Ujwal** (1 supra), **Madhyamam Broadcasting Limited** (2 supra), **Om Prakash Verma** (3 supra), as well as the orders of this Court in W.P. Nos.11810 and 18335 of 2020, is inapposite. In all the said cases, the grievance pertained either to the absence of consideration of objections, lack of reference to any expert body, or demonstrable errors apparent on the face of the record. In the present case, however, the objections raised by the candidates were admittedly referred to a duly constituted Subject Expert Committee, which examined all objections with reference to standard textbooks and study materials. The answers were modified wherever the objections were found to be valid and retained where no correction was warranted. Therefore, the factual matrix in the present case is materially different and does not warrant interference.

11. Here, this Court deems it appropriate to refer to certain judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court laying down the law on the role of Expert Committees in examination and recruitment matters.

12. In ***Ran Vijay Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh***⁵, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held as under:

30. The law on the subject is therefore, quite clear and we only propose to highlight a few significant conclusions. They are:

30.1. If a statute, Rule or Regulation governing an examination permits the re-evaluation of an answer sheet or scrutiny of an answer sheet as a matter of right, then the authority conducting the examination may permit it;

30.2. If a statute, Rule or Regulation governing an examination does not permit re-evaluation or scrutiny of an answer sheet (as distinct from prohibiting it) then the court may permit re-evaluation or scrutiny only if it is demonstrated very clearly, without any "inferential process of reasoning or by a process of rationalisation" and only in rare or exceptional cases that a material error has been committed;

30.3. The court should not at all re-evaluate or scrutinise the answer sheets of a candidate – it has no

⁵ (2018) 2 SCC 357

expertise in the matter and academic matters are best left to academics;

30.4. The court should presume the correctness of the key answers and proceed on that assumption; and

30.5. In the event of a doubt, the benefit should go to the examination authority rather than to the candidate.

(emphasis supplied)

(ii) In *Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission v. Rahul Singh*⁶,

the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held as under:

“12. The law is well settled that the onus is on the candidate to not only demonstrate that the key answer is incorrect but also that it is a glaring mistake which is totally apparent and no inferential process or reasoning is required to show that the key answer is wrong. The constitutional courts must exercise great restraint in such matters and should be reluctant to entertain a plea challenging the correctness of the key answers. In *Kanpur University case (supra)*, the Court recommended a system of:

(1) moderation;

(2) avoiding ambiguity in the questions;

(3) prompt decisions be taken to exclude suspected questions and no marks be assigned to such questions.

13. As far as the present case is concerned, even before publishing the first list of key answers the Commissioner had got the key answers moderated by two Expert Committees. Thereafter,

⁶ (2018) 7 SCC 254

objections were invited and a 26-member Committee was constituted to verify the objections and after this exercise the Committee recommended that 5 questions be deleted and in 2 questions, key answers be changed. It can be presumed that these Committees consisted of experts in various subjects for which the examinees were tested. Judges cannot take on the role of experts in academic matters. Unless, the candidate demonstrates that the key answers are patently wrong on the face of it, the courts cannot enter into the academic field, weigh the pros and cons of the arguments given by both sides and then come to the conclusion as to which of the answers is better or more correct.

14. In the present case, we find that all the three questions needed a long process of reasoning and the High Court itself has noticed that the stand of the Commission is also supported by certain textbooks. When there are conflicting views, then the court must bow down to the opinion of the experts. ***Judges are not and cannot be experts in all fields and, therefore, they must exercise great restraint and should not overstep their jurisdiction to upset the opinion of the experts.***

(emphasis supplied)

(iii) In ***Richal v. Rajasthan Public Service Commission***⁷, the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that the Expert Committee, constituted for validation of the answer key, had examined all the objections raised by the appellants and had provided satisfactory clarifications. The Commission accepted the Report of the Expert

⁷ (2018) 8 SCC 81

Committee and revised the results accordingly. The Court held that the recommendations of the Expert Committee once accepted by the Commission, are to be implemented.

13. In view of the foregoing discussion, in the instant case, it is evident that the issues raised in respect of Quest on Nos. 26, 27, 63, 64 and 65 (bearing Question I.D. Nos. 630680217894, 630680217921, 630680380422, 630680330429, and 630680389642 respectively) were thoroughly examined and addressed by the Expert Committee constituted for the purpose. The final key was published only after careful scrutiny and correction by the experts, strictly in accordance with the Rules, regulations and procedures governing the examination. Therefore, this Court is of the view that the recruitment process was conducted following all the prescribed procedures and under expert scrutiny, ensuring fairness and transparency.

14. As consistently held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Ran Vijay Singh's case** (5 supra), **Rahul Singh's case** (6 supra), and **Richal's case** (7 supra), the Courts must exercise restraint in interfering with expert opinion in academic matters and should

intervene only in cases of patent, glaring or material errors, which are not present in the instant case. In view of the above discussion, this Court is of the opinion that there are no merits in the Writ Petition and is liable to be dismissed.

15. Accordingly, this Writ Petition stands dismissed.

16. At this juncture, learned counsel for the petitioner prays this Court to direct the respondents to furnish the petitioner the relevant material as to on which basis the final key was finalized in respect of the disputed questions.

17. Considering the above made submission, it is made clear that this order shall not preclude the petitioner from seeking relevant information, if he so desires, by filing an appropriate application before the competent authority. In such an event, the same shall be considered, in accordance with law.

Miscellaneous petitions, if any, pending shall stand closed.

There shall be no order as to costs.

SD/-A.H.S. GOWRI SHANKAR
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR
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SECTION OFFICER

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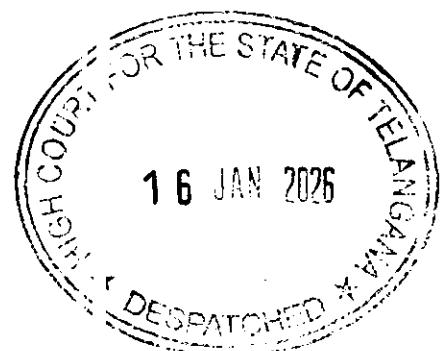
1. The Chairman and Managing Director, Singareni Collieries Company Limited(SCCL), Singareni Bhavan Red Hills, Hyderabad
2. The General Manager, Personal Welfare and RC the SCCL Recruitment Cell, Kothagudem, Bhadrak Kothagudem.
3. One CC to SRI RAMESH CHILLA, Advocate [OPUC]
4. One CC to SRI P.SRI HARSHA REDDY, SC FOR SCCL [OPUC]
5. Two CD Copies

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CC TODAY

HIGH COURT

DATED:09/01/2026



ORDER

WP.No.30211 of 2024

**DISMISSING THE WRIT PETITION,
WITHOUT COSTS**

(7)

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16/1/26