

GAHC010032462026



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THE GAUHATI HIGH COURT
(HIGH COURT OF ASSAM, NAGALAND, MIZORAM AND ARUNACHAL PRADESH)

Case No. : WA/56/2026

SAMEER RANJAN DAS
S/O MUKHESWAR DAS, R/O BORBIL NO. 2, P.O. AND P.S. DIGBOI, DIST.
TINSUKIA, ASSAM, PIN 786171

VERSUS

INDIAN OIL CORPORATION LTD. AND 3 ORS.
REPRESENTED BY ITS CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER, GUWAHATI
DIVISIONAL OFFICE, 4TH FLOOR, EAST POINT TOWER, BAMUNIMAIDAN,
GUWAHATI, ASSAM, PIN 781021

2:THE DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER
HUMAN RESOURCE
INDIAN OIL CORPORATION LIMITED
GUWAHATI REFINERY
NOONMATI
GUWAHATI
ASSAM
PIN-781020

3:THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER/DISTRICT MAGISTRATE
KAMRUP (R)
ASSAM

4:KANGKAN JYOTI MALAKAR
S/O DHARMESWAR MALAKAR
R/O HAJO BARCHAPORI
P.O. AND P.S.- HAJO
DIST- KAMRUP (R)
ASSAM
PIN-78110

:::BEFORE:::

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE MICHAEL ZOTHANKHUMA

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RAJESH MAZUMDAR

Advocate for the appellant : Mr. B. Baruah, Adv.

Advocates for the respondent Nos.1 & 2 : Mr. N. Deka, Sr. Adv.

Mr. M. Gogoi, Adv.

Advocate for the respondent Nos.3 : Mr. D. Nath, Sr. Government Adv., Assam .

Advocates for the respondent Nos.4 : Mr. D. Das, Sr. Adv.

Mr. K. Mohammad, Adv.

Date on which judgment is reserved : 18.06.2026

Date of pronouncement of judgment : 23.06.2026.

Whether the pronouncement is of the : No.

operative part of the judgment ?

Whether the full judgment has been : Yes

pronounced?

JUDGMENT & ORDER (CAV)

(M. Zothankhuma, J)

1. Heard Mr. B. Baruah, learned counsel for the appellant. Also heard Mr. N. Deka, learned Senior Counsel assisted by Mr. M. Gogoi, learned counsel appearing for the respondent Nos. 1 & 2; Mr. D. Nath, learned Senior Government Advocate, Assam, appearing for the respondent no.3 and Mr. D. Das, learned Senior Counsel assisted by Mr. K. Mohammed, learned counsel for the respondent no. 4.

2. This is an appeal against the observations and directions made in the impugned Order dated 10.12.2025, passed by the learned Single Judge in WP(C) 62/2025, on the basis of which the writ petitioner, who is the respondent No.4 in this appeal, has been appointed to the post of Junior

Engineering Assistant-IV (Production), pursuant to the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024 issued by the Indian Oil Corporation Limited ('IOCL' in short).

3. The grievance of the appellant is that the Caste Certificate submitted by the respondent No.4 did not specify the caste to which the respondent No.4 had belonged, so as to make him eligible for participating in the selection process. However, due to the directions passed by the learned Single Judge in the impugned order, directing the IOCL to consider whether the respondent No.4 belonged to the 'Mali' community, which is recognized as a Scheduled Caste in the State of Assam, in terms of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, the respondent No.4 has thereafter been found to belong to the said community and has been made eligible for participating in the selection process. As the respondent No.4 had secured better marks in the selection process, the respondent No.4 was selected for appointment to the said post.

4. The basic case of the appellant is that as the respondent No.4 had failed to specify the particular Scheduled Caste category to which he belonged, in the Scheduled Caste Certificate submitted in terms of the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024, the respondent No.4 could not have been allowed to participate in the selection process by the learned Single Judge.

5. The facts of the case in brief are as follows:-

The advertisement for filling up the post of Junior Engineering Assistant-IV (Production) was issued on 20.07.2024 and the terms of the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024 at Clause-13(v), the SC/ST Certificate was to be submitted along with the application for appointment as per the prescribed format. The application of the respondent No.4 was rejected on 29.09.2024 by the IOCL and he was not called for interview, on account of the specific Scheduled Caste name not being mentioned in the Caste Certificate of the respondent No.4. Being aggrieved by the rejection of his candidature for the post of Junior Engineering Assistant-IV (Production) pursuant to the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024, the respondent No.4 filed WP(C) 62/2025.

6. The learned Single Judge vide the impugned Order dated 10.12.2025 disposed of WP(C) 62/2025, by holding that he did not find any error with regard to the decision taken by the IOCL, not to

further consider the case of the respondent No.4 in the recruitment process. The learned Single Judge, however, went a step further and held that the Caste Certificate, as uploaded by the respondent No.4 and issued by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup at Amingaon, had not been disputed by the IOCL to be a fake or a forged one. The certificate submitted by the respondent No.4 disclosed him to be belonging to a Scheduled Caste and as such, in the event of further clarification being required, the IOCL could have sought for such clarification from the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup at Amingaon, from where the Caste Certificate had been issued to the respondent No.4. The learned Single Judge then took into consideration a caste certificate issued to the respondent no. 4 on 30/04/2011 (which was not part of the application of the respondent no. 4 and not made in terms of the prescribed format), issued by the District Commissioner, Kamrup, wherein the respondent no. 4's caste was mentioned as "Mali". The learned Single Judge then held that only on account of an error in not describing the particular caste in caste certificate dated 04/11/2019 of the respondent no. 4, though recognizing him to be belonging to a Scheduled Caste Community by the certificate issuing authority in the prescribed format, the respondent No.4, who had secured more marks than the cut off marks prescribed, could not have been deprived of his due appointment. The learned Single Judge, thereafter, gave the following directions in Para 14 of the impugned Order dated 10.12.2025, which are as follows:-

"14. In view of the above conclusions reached by this Court, the following directions are passed:

(a) The respondent authorities would now consider the petitioner to be belonged to the 'Mali' community which is recognized as a Schedule Caste community in the State of Assam in terms of the Constitution (Schedule Caste) Order, 1950. The petitioner shall furnish before the respondent authorities/ IOCL a certificate issued by the competent authority including the certificate dated 30-04-2011 annexed to the writ petition, as Annexure-3, in support of his claim to belong to a community which is recognized as a Schedule Caste community in the State of Assam. The petitioner shall submit the said certificate along with a representation and a copy of this order within a period of 01 (one) month from today. On receipt of the such representation from the petitioner along with the Caste Certificate it would be open to the respondent authority/ IOCL to have the same verified from the issuing authority.

(b) The authorities of the respondent No. 1/ IOCL on receipt of the representation from the petitioner along with his Caste Certificate shall allow the petitioner to undergo the SPPT component of the selection process and in the event the petitioner qualifies therein, the

petitioner shall be extended with an appointment against the post of Junior Engineering Assistant-IV (Production).

(c) The said exercise shall be completed by the respondent authorities within a period of 03 (three) months from the date of receipt of a certified copy of this order along with the Caste Certificate from the petitioner in terms of the direction passed, hereinabove.

(d) Till completion of the exercise in terms of the directions, passed hereinabove, the interim direction passed by this Court vide order dated 08-01-2025 shall continue to hold the field.”

7. The IOCL, in compliance with the impugned order dated 10.12.2025 passed in WP(C) 62/2025, thereafter found the respondent No.4 to be belonging to the “Mali” Schedule Caste and subsequently appointed the respondent no.4 (writ petitioner) to the post of Junior Engineering Assistant-IV (Production), in pursuance to the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024, as the respondent no.4 had secured more marks than the present appellant, who was not made a party in the writ petition.

8. Being aggrieved, the appellant filed application, i.e. I.A(C) No.549/2026 for leave to prefer an appeal against the impugned order dated 10.12.2025 passed in WP(C) 62/2025, on the ground that the appellant was not made a party in WP(C) 62/2025. As the writ petition was allowed and the post was filled up by the respondent no.4, the appellant contended that he had been condemned without being heard. I.A(C) No.549/2026 was allowed vide order dated 23.02.2026 and that is how the present appeal came into existence.

9. The Caste Certificate to be submitted by the candidates in the prescribed format as per the advertisement, clearly shows that the caste of the candidate has to be stated in the said prescribed format. The extract of the Caste Certificate submitted by the respondent no.4 is reproduced hereinbelow, as follows :

*“This is to certify that Sri/Smt./Kum. KANGKAN JYOTI MALAKAR son/daughter of DHARMESWAR MALAKAR of village/town BARCHAPARI in District-KAMRUP of the State ASSAM belongs to the **SCHEDULE** Caste which is recognized as Scheduled Caste under :*

1. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950”

10. The extract of the Caste Certificate submitted by the appellant is reproduced hereinbelow, as follows :

“This is to certify that Sri/Smt./Kum. SAMEER RANJAN DAS son/daughter of MUKHESWAR DAS of village/town BALIJAN BORBIL in District-TINSUKIA of the State ASSAM belongs to the KAIBARTIA (JALIYA) Caste which is recognized as Scheduled Caste under :”

1. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950”

11. A perusal of the above Caste Certificate submitted by the respondent no.4 shows that the respondent has not mentioned any caste to which he belongs to and has only inserted the word ‘Schedule’, as the name of the caste, to which he belongs to. There is nothing to show that the word ‘Schedule’ can be construed to mean that the respondent no.4 belonged to any particular caste/sub-caste in question and certainly not “Mali”.

12. The learned counsel for the appellant submits that where the prescribed format for submitting a Caste Certificate has been provided in the advertisement, the Caste Certificate has to be submitted as per the format by the candidate. The respondent No.4 not having specified his caste in the prescribed format and the IOCL having correctly rejected his candidature, the learned Single Judge could not have asked the IOCL to seek a clarification with regard to the Caste Certificate of the respondent No.4, after having found no infirmity with the decision of the IOCL, to not consider the case of the respondent No.4 in the recruitment process. He accordingly submits that the subsequent appointment of the respondent No.4 to the post of Junior Engineering Assistant-IV (Production) should be set aside and the appellant, who has secured the next highest marks, should be appointed to the said post.

13. The learned counsel for the appellant also submits that the direction passed by the learned Single Judge to the IOCL, to consider the Caste Certificate 30.04.2011 annexed to the writ petition, to determine whether the respondent No.4 belonged to the ‘Mali’ community was illegal, inasmuch as, the IOCL, in the advertisement, had already provided that the Caste Certificate to be submitted by the candidates was supposed to be in the prescribed format provided therein. The respondent No.4 had accordingly submitted the Caste Certificate dated 04.11.2019, which did not specify the particular caste that he belonged to. The Caste Certificate dated 30.04.2011, which the learned Single Judge had now

directed the IOCL to consider, to determine whether the respondent No.4 belonged to a particular Scheduled Caste, was never a part of the application submitted by the respondent No.4 pursuant to the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024. As such, the Caste Certificate dated 30.04.2011 could not have been considered by the IOCL, which was not in terms of the prescribed format provided in the advertisement. In support of his submissions, the learned counsel for the appellant has relied upon the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *Mohit Kumar Vs. State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors.*, reported in *2025 INSC 704* and the judgment of the Single Bench of this Court in the case of *Sri Hemkanta Lalung Vs. Union of India & Ors., WP(C) 99/2025*, which was disposed of vide Judgement dated 09.09.2025.

14. Mr. D. Das, learned Senior Counsel for the respondent no. 4, on the other hand, submits that there is no infirmity with the decision of the learned Single Judge, inasmuch as, the Caste Certificate submitted by the respondent No.4 had clearly stated that the respondent No.4 belonged to a Scheduled Caste. As the said certificate had been issued by the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup at Amingaon on 04.11.2019, there was no doubt that the respondent No.4 belonged to a Scheduled Caste community. Just because the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup at Amingaon did not specify the caste of the respondent No.4, it cannot be said that the respondent No.4 had not submitted a proper Caste Certificate in the required prescribed format. As such, the direction of the learned Single Judge to the IOCL to seek a clarification on the Caste Certificate, cannot be said to be arbitrary or unreasonable, inasmuch as, the respondent No.4 cannot be condemned only because the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup at Amingaon did not mention the particular caste of the respondent No.4. In support of his submission, the learned Sr. Counsel has relied upon the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *Dolly Chhanda Vs. Chairman, JEE & Ors.*, reported in *(2005) 9 SCC 779*.

15. Mr. N. Deka, learned Senior Counsel for the respondent Nos. 1 & 2/IOCL, submits that pursuant to the directions passed by the learned Single Judge, the IOCL considered the case of the respondent No.4 and the Certificate dated 30.04.2011, which was annexed to the writ petition, which showed the respondent No.4 to be belonging to the 'Mali' community and as such, the respondent No.4 was subsequently allowed to undergo the selection process. As he had secured the highest marks, the respondent No.4 was appointed to the post of Junior Engineering Assistant-IV (Production).

16. We have heard the learned counsels for the parties.

17. The first question that has to be decided is whether the Form of Caste Certificate provided by the IOCL in the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024, required the specific caste of the candidates to be inserted in the Caste Certificate. Para-A, which is an extract of the prescribed Form of Caste Certificate required to be submitted by the candidates in terms of the advertisement, is reproduced hereinbelow as follows:-

“A. This is to certify that Shri./Smt./Kum. _____ son/daughter of _____ of village/town _____ in District/Division _____ of the State/Union Territory of _____ belongs to the _____ caste/ tribe which is recognised as Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe under:

Please Tick Mark:

- 1. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.*
- 2. The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.*
- 3. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951.*
- 4. The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951 (as amended by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956, the Bombay Reorganisation Act, 1960, the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966, the State of Himachal Pradesh Act, 1970, the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 1976).*
- 5. The Constitution (Jammu & Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order, 1956.*
- 6. The Constitution (Jammu & Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989.*
- 7. The Constitution (Andaman & Nicobar Islands) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1959.*
- 8. The Constitution (Dadra & Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Castes Order, 1962.*
- 9. The Constitution (Dadra & Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1962.*
- 10. The Constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Order, 1964.*
- 11. The Constitution Scheduled Tribes (Uttar Pradesh) Order, 1967.*
- 12. The Constitution (Goa, Daman & Diu) Scheduled Castes Order, 1968.*
- 13. The Constitution (Goa, Daman & Diu) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1968.*

14. *The Constitution (Nagaland) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1970.*
15. *The Constitution (Sikkim) Scheduled Castes Order, 1978.*
16. *The Constitution (Sikkim) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1978.*
17. *The Constitution (Jammu & Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989.*
18. *The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 1990.*
19. *The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 1991.*
20. *The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order Second Amendment Act, 1991.”*

A perusal of the above clearly shows that the specific caste of a candidate has to be inserted in Paragraph-A.

18. The next question that arises is as to whether the respondent No.4 should be penalized and not allowed to participate in the selection process, because the mistake in the Caste Certificate of the respondent No.4, in not mentioning the specific caste of the respondent No.4, had been done by the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup at Amingaon. It would have been different if the mistake had been committed by the respondent No.4 himself. The Caste Certificate of the respondent No.4 and the appellant shows that their Caste Certificates have been issued by the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup at Amingaon and the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Margherita respectively.

19. In the case of ***Mohit Kumar(supra)***, the Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board (UPPRPB) issued an advertisement for direct recruitment to the post of Sub-Inspector, Civil Police and Platoon Commander, PAC and Fire Officer. Mohit Kumar applied for the post of Sub-Inspector and submitted an OBC Certificate. The UPPRPB rejected Mohit's application on the ground that he did not submit the OBC Certificate in the prescribed format and as such, he was considered in the General category instead of the OBC category. The OBC Certificate submitted by Mohit had been issued by the Central Government and not by the State Government, which had a different format. The OBC Certificate issued by the State Government, required candidates to show the gross annual income of the parents of the candidates for a continuous period of 3 years, which was not above Rs.8 lakh and that he or she did not possess wealth above the exempted limit under the Wealth Tax Act, 1957. This prescription found no place in the OBC certificate issued by the Central

Government. The advertisement issued by the UPPRPB required the candidates to submit the OBC certificate in terms of the State Government format. The Supreme Court upheld the rejection of the candidature of Mohit Kumar as an OBC candidate and held that the terms of an advertisement issued in connection with the selection process are normally open to challenge, unless the challenge is founded on the ground of breach of Articles 14 & 16 of the Constitution. Once an advertisement is issued inviting applications for public employment, it is the duty of an aspirant to read and note the terms and understand what its requirements are. If any aspirant finds any of the terms ambiguous and there is scope for an inquiry inbuilt in the advertisement or is provided by any rule or regulation, an effort ought to be first made to obtain clarity. If no such scope is available, nothing prevents the aspirant from seeking clarity by making a representation. If no clarity is provided, thereafter, the aspirant may question the terms, if he is not selected after participation. To question a particular term later, even if any of the terms is ambiguous, the Courts should lean in favour of the recruiting authority. Para 19 of the said Judgment is reproduced hereinbelow as follows:-

“19. It is no longer res integra that terms of an advertisement issued in connection with a selection process are normally not open to challenge unless the challenge is founded on the ground of breach of Article 16 of the Constitution or, for that matter, Article 14. Once an advertisement is issued inviting applications for public employment, it is the responsibility, nay duty, of an aspirant to read and note the terms and understand what its requirements are. If any aspirant finds any of the terms ambiguous and there is scope for an inquiry inbuilt in the advertisement or is provided by any rule/regulation, an effort ought to be first made to obtain clarity for understanding the requirements accurately. If no such scope is available, nothing prevents the aspirant from seeking clarity by making a representation. Should such clarity be not provided, the aspirant may participate in the process without prejudice to his rights and may question the term even after he is not selected. However, if the aspirant does not make any such effort and takes a calculated chance of selection based on his own understanding of the disputed term in the advertisement and later, he emerges unsuccessful, ordinarily, it would not be open to him to challenge the selection on the ground that the disputed term is capable of being understood differently. In such cases, the courts should be loath to entertain such plea of ambiguity while preferring to accept the recruiting authority’s understanding of the said term. This is for the simple reason that the recruiting authority is the best judge of what its requirements are and it is such understanding of the recruiting authority that would matter most in cases brought up before the courts; hence, after commencement of the process wherein aspirants have participated without raising any demur as to what a particular terms means, even if any of the terms be ambiguous,

the courts should lean in favour of the recruiting authority.”

20. In the case of **Hemkanta Lalung (supra)**, a learned Single Judge of this Court has held that a candidate cannot claim equitable relief merely because he misunderstood a clause in the advertisement for appointment and that producing a certificate later on during litigation cannot cure the said defect. The learned Single Judge also held that the recruitment process cannot be relaxed on the ground of equity or sympathy, when the notified advertised conditions or rules prescribe otherwise.

21. In the case of **Bedanga Talukdar Vs. Saifudaullah Khan**, reported in **(2011) 12 SSC 84**, the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that the selection process has to be conducted strictly in accordance with the stipulated selection procedure. Consequently, when a particular particular schedule is mentioned in an advertisement, the same has to be scrupulously maintained. There cannot be any relaxation in the terms and conditions of the advertisement unless such a power is specifically reserved. Such a power could be reserved in the relevant statutory rules. Even if power of relaxation is provided in the rules, it must still be mentioned in the advertisement. In the absence of such power in the rules, it could still be provided in the advertisement. However, the power of relaxation, if exercised, has to be given due publicity. This would be necessary to ensure that those candidates who become eligible due to the relaxation, are afforded an equal opportunity to apply and compete. Relaxation of any condition in advertisement without due publication would be contrary to the mandate of equality contained in Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India.

22. Paragraph 32 of the above judgement is reproduced herein below as follows :-

“32. In the face of such conclusions, we have little hesitation in concluding that the conclusion recorded by the High Court is contrary to the facts and materials on the record. It is settled law that there can be no relaxation in the terms and conditions contained in the advertisement unless the power of relaxation is duly reserved in the relevant rules and/or in the advertisement. Even if there is a power of relaxation in the rules, the same would still have to be specifically indicated in the advertisement. In the present case, no such rule has been brought to our notice. In such circumstances, the High Court could not have issued the impugned direction to consider the claim of Respondent 1 on the basis of identity card submitted after the selection process was

over, with the publication of the select list.”

23. In the case of ***Dolly Chhanda (supra)***, the Supreme Court has held that while applying for any post, a person must possess the eligibility qualification on the last date fixed for such purpose either in the admission brochure or in application form and there can be no relaxation in this regard. In order to avail the benefit of reservation or weightage etc, necessary certificates have to be produced proving their entitlement to the benefit of any reservation. It further held that depending upon the facts of a case, there can be some relaxation in the matter of submission of proof and it will not be proper to apply any rigid principle as it pertains in the domain of procedure. The Supreme Court further held that every infraction of the rule relating to submission of proof need not necessarily result in rejection of candidature.

24. In the present case, the format of the Caste Certificate has not been changed and the only issue is whether the mistake made by the Deputy Commissioner’s office, in not mentioning the specific caste of the respondent No.4, which was not noticed or verified or clarified by the respondent No.4, could be reopened.

25. Though, we are of the view that the respondent No.4 should not be penalized for a mistake committed by the Deputy Commissioner’s office, the fact remains that it was the responsibility and duty of the respondent No.4 to read the contents of the Caste Certificate and ensure that the entries in the Caste Certificate were correct. Otherwise, accepting a Caste Certificate, which does not serve its purpose and later crying hoarse over the same can lead to anomalous situation and would be akin to crying over spilt milk, especially when there are thousands candidates. If the Caste Certificate as per the format required a particular caste to be mentioned to show that it was recognized as one of the Scheduled Caste, the respondent No.4 should have verified correctness of the entries made therein. The same not being done, we find that there was fault on the part of the respondent No.4 in not being diligent and in failing to check the correctness of the entries of the Caste Certificate issued to him on 04.11.2010. As such, we are of the view that the respondent no. 4 cannot now cry hoarse that he belongs to the “Mali” Scheduled Caste.

26. The above being said, another issue that has to be decided is as to whether the learned Single Judge could have directed the authorities to determine the caste of the respondent No.4, in terms of the

Caste Certificate issued to the respondent No.4 on 30.04.2011, which was not in the format prescribed in terms of the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024 and which had not been made a part of the application form submitted by the respondent No.4, pursuant to the said advertisement. When the Advertisement dated 20.07.2024 provided a particular manner in which a Caste Certificate was to be submitted and the respondent No.4 has also submitted a Caste Certificate in the said format, without the caste name of the respondent no. 4 being specified, the learned Single Judge erred in directing the IOCL to determine the caste of the respondent No.4 on the basis of the Caste Certificate dated 30.04.2011. This is due to the fact that not only are the candidates bound by the terms and conditions of the advertisement, the advertisement issuing authority is also bound by the said terms and conditions on the basis of which the selection is to be conducted. Further, there is no challenge to the terms and conditions of the advertisement, requiring the Caste Certificate to be submitted in a particular format and in no other format. As such, the learned Single Judge could not have passed a direction to the IOCL to consider the caste of the respondent No.4, which was not in terms of the Caste Certificate format provided in the advertisement.

27. As can be seen from Para-A of the Form of Caste Certificate provided in the advertisement, not only is the specific caste of a candidate to be mentioned, but also the said specific caste is to be made relatable to one or more of the 20 Scheduled Castes and Tribes Orders/Acts mentioned in Para-A.

28. The Caste Certificate dated 04/11/2019 issued to the respondent No.4 cannot be made relatable to any of the 20 Scheduled Castes and Tribes Orders/Acts mentioned in Para-A.

29. Thus, as the learned Single Judge had found no infirmity in the IOCL rejection of the candidature of the respondent No.4 and as the said finding has attained finality as on date, the subsequent direction passed by the learned Single Judge to determine the specific caste of the respondent No.4 in terms of the caste certificate dated 30/04/2011, which is not as per the terms of the advertisement, was wrong.

30. There is another aspect of the matter to be considered, i.e, if in a recruitment process requiring Scheduled Caste/Tribe Certificates in a prescribed form, the specific Scheduled Caste/Tribe names are not given by thousands of applicants for the post advertised, there would be chaos and enormous delay in the selection process, as clarifications would have to be made by the recruiting authority in such

cases from the certificate issuing authority or the candidates themselves, if the decision of the learned Single Judge is to be followed. As stated earlier, candidates have the responsibility and duty to be diligent. They have to check the correctness of the entries in the documents they submit and have to accept the result of their failure to do so. We accordingly hold that as the terms and conditions of the advertisement binds not only the applicants, but also the recruiting authority, the learned Single Judge should not have gone beyond the issue to be decided before him, i.e., whether there was any error with regard to the rejection of the application of the respondent No.4 by the IOCL, not to further consider his case in the recruitment process.

31. In view of the reasons stated above, we hold that the directions passed in Para 14 of the impugned order dated 10.12.2025 are not sustainable in law and the same are accordingly set aside. Any actions taken by the IOCL pursuant to the said directions are also set aside. As the learned Single Judge had held that there was no error with regard to the decision taken by the authorities of the IOCL, not to further consider the case of the respondent No.4, as the Caste/sub-Caste of the respondent No.4 was not disclosed in the Caste Certificate dated 04/11/2019, the matter should end there.

32. Accordingly, the impugned Order dated 10.12.2025, passed by the learned Single Judge in WP(C) 62/2025 is interfered with only to the extent of setting aside the directions passed in Para 14 of the impugned order. Consequently, any subsequent actions taken by the IOCL in respect of the respondent No.4, pursuant to the said directions passed in para 14 of the impugned order dated 10/12/2025, including the appointment of the respondent no. 4 as Junior Engineering Assistant – IV (Production) pursuant to the advertisement dated 20/07/2024, are also set aside. The post that had been filled up by the respondent No.4 would now have to be filled up by the next candidate who has secured the next highest marks in the selection process.

33. The appeal is accordingly allowed.

JUDGE

JUDGE

Comparing Assistant