



2026:DHC:8513



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IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

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Date of Decision: September 28th, 2026

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CNR No. DLHC010262962026

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W.P.(C) 8271/2026 & CM APPL. 39057/2026**SACHIN CHAUDHARY**

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Arvind Chaudhary, Adv.
(through VC). Petitioner in
person.

versus

DELHI STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY & ANR.

.....Respondents

Through: Ms. Cauveri Birbal, DSLSA,
Mr. Harshit Deshwal, Mr. Yash
Sharma & Ms. Preksha Gaur,
Advs. for R-1
Mr. Shiven Varma, PC, GNCTD
with Mr. Rudransh Gupta, Adv.
for R-2.

CORAM:**HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMIT MAHAJAN****AMIT MAHAJAN, J. (Oral)**

1. By way of the present petition, the petitioner seeks the following prayers:

“a) Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction declaring Clause A(C) of the Notice Ref. No. 315/DSLSA/LAW-II/ Empanelment DLSAs/2026/ 7091 To 7104, dated 01.06.2026 as arbitrary, illegal, unconstitutional, void ab initio and unenforceable to the extent it restricts an eligible candidate from applying to more than one DLSAs panel and provides for summary rejection of multiple applications;

b) Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction permitting the Petitioner and all similarly situated eligible candidates to apply against all eligible districtwise and panel-wise vacancies in accordance with the prescribed eligibility criteria and to be considered on merits;



- c) Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction staying the operation, implementation and effect of the impugned notification Notice Ref. No. 315/DLSA/LAW-II/ Empanelment DLSAs/2026/ 7091 To 7104, dated 01.06.2026, including Clause A(C), during pendency of the present writ petition and till disposal thereof;*
- d) Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction restraining the Respondent from rejecting, ignoring or not considering the Petitioner's candidature or any additional application solely on the basis of Clause A(C) of Notice Ref. No. 315/DLSA/LAW-II/ Empanelment DLSAs/2026/ 7091 To 7104, dated 01.06.2026 till disposal of the main writ petition; and*
- e) Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction to the Respondent No. 1 to reopen the impugned notification for a further period of one week by issuing a fresh or corrigendum notification for all eligible applicants, without incorporating the arbitrary and unconstitutional Clause A(C), so that all eligible candidates may apply afresh against all eligible district-wise and panel-wise vacancies; and*
- f) Pass such other order(s) as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper."*

2. It is the Petitioner's case that Clause A(C) of the Notice dated 01.06.2026, which restricts an eligible Advocate to submitting only one application for one preferred panel and one District Legal Services Authority ('DLSA') and provides for summary rejection of multiple applications, is arbitrary, as the restriction bears no rational nexus with the eligibility, experience or merit of a candidate, particularly when Respondent No.1 itself, under Clause A(D), permits an Advocate already empaneled elsewhere to relinquish one panel upon selection.

3. The Petitioner therefore contends that the blanket prohibition unduly forecloses eligible candidates from being considered against separate district-wise and panel-wise requirements and seeks quashing or reading down of the impugned clause.

4. At the outset, it is pertinent to note that the prescription of qualifications, eligibility conditions, procedure and criteria for selection



falls primarily within the domain of the employer or the authority conducting the selection. The scope of judicial review in such matters is limited, and the Court does not sit in appeal over the decision of the authority as to the manner in which the selection process is to be structured.

5. Clause A(C) of the Notice dated 01.06.2026 provides as under:

“C. A candidate shall submit only one application, clearly specifying one preferred panel and one preferred DLSA. Multiple applications across panels or districts will result in summary rejection.”

6. Thus, Clause A(C) provides that a candidate can submit only one application, specifying one preferred panel and one preferred DLSA, and that submission of multiple applications across panels or districts would result in summary rejection.

7. Clause A(D) of the said Notice provides that a candidate already empaneled in any other District or State Authority, if selected, must relinquish one panel within one month from the notification of results.

8. The contention of the petitioner that Clause A(C) is rendered arbitrary by Clause A(D) of the Notice dated 01.06.2026, is without merit. Clause A(D) operates in the case of an Advocate who is already empaneled with another authority and requires such Advocate, upon selection under the present process, to relinquish the existing panel. The said provision does not confer a right upon a candidate to submit multiple applications in the present empanelment process.

9. The two clauses operate at different stages and in different circumstances. The existence of a mechanism for dealing with an



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existing empanelment, therefore, cannot by itself invalidate the separate condition regulating the number of applications that may be submitted in the present selection process.

10. The condition prescribed under Clause A(C) forms part of the procedure devised by the Respondent for empanelment and is uniformly applicable to all eligible candidates. The prescription of such conditions falls within the domain of the authority responsible for the empanelment process.

11. In the opinion of this Court, the Petitioner has failed to establish that Clause A(C) suffers from any patent illegality or manifest arbitrariness warranting interference in exercise of its extraordinary and discretionary jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India.

12. It is also pertinent to note that the application process pursuant to the Notice dated 01.06.2026 closed on 17.06.2026, and the empanelment process has thereafter progressed in all three DLSAs. The interview process has commenced in South-West DLSA, document verification is underway in South DLSA, and scrutiny is in progress in East DLSA. Thus, no effective relief can be awarded at this stage.

13. The writ petition is, accordingly, dismissed. Pending application(s), if any, also stand disposed of.

AMIT MAHAJAN, J

SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

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