



ORISSA HIGH COURT : CUTTACK

WP(C) No.3988 of 2026

An application under Articles 226 & 227 of the Constitution of India.

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Sri Piyush Agrawal (minor) represented through his father
guardian Sri Pramod Agrawal & Others

...

Petitioners.

-VERSUS-

Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi
represented through its Chairman, CBSE Integrated
Office Complex, New Delhi & Others

...

Opposite Parties.

Counsel appeared for the parties:

For the Petitioners : Mr. Kunal Kumar Swain, Advocate

For the Opposite Parties : Mr. T. Pattanayak, Adv.
(For the CBSE)

P R E S E N T:

**HONOURABLE
MR. JUSTICE ANANDA CHANDRA BEHERA**



Date of Hearing : 11.02.2026 :: Date of Judgment : 26.02.2026

JUDGMENT

ANANDA CHANDRA BEHERA, J.—

1. This writ petition under Articles 226 and 227 of the Constitution of India, 1950 has been filed by the petitioners praying for quashing the impugned memorandum dated 08.10.2025 (Annexure-4) issued by the Under Secretary (Confidential), Central Board of Secondary Education, Regional Office, Bhubaneswar (Opp. Party No.3) and for issuance of necessary directions to the Opp. Parties to publish the result of the petitioners, in respect of their Senior School Certificate Examination (Class-XII) within a stipulated time and to pass such other order/orders or direction/directions as the Courts deems fit and proper in order to give complete relief to the petitioners.

2. The case of the petitioners is that, they (petitioners) were the regular students of Class-XII of Padampur Public School in the District of Bargarh. They (petitioners) appeared their Senior School Certificate Examination, 2025 (Class-XII) under the Central Board of Secondary Education in Odisha Adarsha



Vidyalaya, Bandupali as the regular students on the basis of the admit cards vide Annexure-1 series issued to them by the CBSE (Opp. Party No.1). Though, in the said examination, they (petitioners) had done extremely well, but their results in the website were published on dated 13.05.2025 reflecting UFM (Unfair Means) and no marks have been awarded to them in any paper. Subsequently, the Principal, Padampur Public School, Padampur provided them the Official Order dated 26.05.2025 issued by the Opp. Party No.2 (Regional Director, Central Board of Secondary Education, Regional Office, Bhubaneswar) stating that, subjects i.e. Mathematics (Subject Code: 041), Chemistry (Subject Code: 043), Biology (Subject Code: 044), Economics (Subject Code: 030) & English (Subject Code: 301), the petitioners result in the said subjects have been cancelled for adoption of unfair means (UFM) as the answers in some questions given by them (petitioners) in the subjects i.e. Chemistry and Mathematics are similar with their adjacent students, for which, their entire result of 2025 has been cancelled.

To which, the petitioners challenged the same by filing WPC Nos.15942 & 17272/2025 praying for quashing the



cancellation of their results and to direct the Opp. Parties to publish their results.

The said Writ Petitions vide WPC Nos.15942 & 17272/2025 of the petitioners were decided analogously with other writ petitions by this Court and the Judgment thereof was passed on dated 15.09.2025 as per Annexure-3, wherein the C.B.S.E (Opp. Party No.1) was directed to make an enquiry in terms of Bye-Laws 36 of the CBSE after giving reasonable opportunity of participation to the petitioners stipulating the outer limit of that enquiry within two weeks keeping all the contentions of the parties open.

In pursuance to the said analogous Judgment passed on dated 15.09.2025 in WPC Nos.15942 & 17272/2025 along with other WPCs vide Annexure-3 by this Court, the CBSE (Opp. Party No.1) conducted an enquiry into the matter through its UFM Sub-Committee and during the course of that enquiry, the UFM Sub-Committee of the CBSE supplied a printed format to the petitioners asking them 18 questions each in the form of *yes or no* such as **i)** *whether he/she has adopted unfair means or not*, **ii)** *what is the name of his/her principal* **iii)** *Do you know the invigilators etc.*



Out of the said 18 questions, the above 3 questions were not related to the subjects in question.

3. Thereafter, a copy of the memorandum dated 08.10.2025 vide Annexure-4 series were issued by the Under Secretary (Confidential), Central Board of Secondary Education, Bhubaneswar (Opp. Party No.3) on behalf of Opp. Party No.1 (CBSE) to the petitioners informing them that:

They are found indulged in Unfair Means activity under Rule 36.2(vi) & (viii) of the Examination Bye-Laws.

Accordingly, as per Rule 36.3(v) of the Examination Bye-Laws of the Board, their results of Main Examination 2025 are hereby cancelled in the subject(s), in respect of which they were found indulged in Unfair Means and they will be permitted to appear in the examination next year i.e. 2026 subject to meeting of other eligibility criterias under failure category.

4. As per the writ petition of the petitioners, though, the result of almost all candidates of the same centre has been published, except few like the petitioners and their result has been cancelled by the Opp. Parties clandestinely taking a discriminating attitude towards them (petitioners), for which, the above memorandum dated 08.10.2025 (Annexure-4 series), i.e. the cancellation of their entire result alleging malpractice in some subjects on the ground of giving similar answers with



their adjacent students in that centre cannot be sustainable under law.

Therefore, the petitioners challenged the said Annexure-4 series by filing this Writ Petition under Articles 226 & 227 of the Constitution of India on the ground that,

when the results of other students of the same centre have been published by the Opp. Parties and when no incriminating material has been seized from the petitioners relating to the adoption of any malpractice by them and when neither the Principal, nor the centre superintendent or the invigilators of that centre have made any allegation against the petitioners regarding the adoption of any malpractice and when the answers in the subjects in respect of the allegation of malpractice has been alleged were in Multiple Choice form and when the teachers of the same school have taught all the students similarly in all subjects, then, on the ground of similarity in the answers of the petitioners in some limited subjects reflected in Annexure-4 series with other students cannot be the basis for terming them (petitioners) that, they had adopted malpractice during examination. For which, the



above alleged allegations against the petitioners being baseless, the same are liable to be quashed.

5. The Opp. Party Nos.1 and 2 adopted their counter filed in the similar nature of Writ Petition vide WPC No.31318 of 2025 as their counter in this writ petition and challenged the Writ Petition of the petitioners taking their stands that,

“the CCTV footages of both the Examination Centres was sought by them for confirmation about the alleged Unfair Means, but, the CCTV footage after 11.30 A.M. of the examination centre were not made available in the centres, though, all the examination centres were instructed to install CCTV for the fairness of the examinations and preserve CCTV recordings till two months after the result declaration.

Although the Principals of the Examination Centres, Centre Superintendents, Observers and few Invigilators were called to appear before the UFM Sub-Committee during enquiry, but there was total lack of cooperation by the said officials. So, it is held and considered that the above abnormalities are not possible without the active involvement of the candidates.

As per Clause No. 36.3 (v) of the Examination Bye Laws of the Board, the Board has the right to cancel the result of all subjects of a student, if the Board is satisfied about the use of unfair means in a paper or papers. Rule 36.3 (v) does not compel cancellation of result of all candidates, the Board has discretion to impose proportionate punishment.



In the present matter, keeping in view the findings of the expert which showed abnormal patterns across certain candidates; indicating possible use of UFM, the decision taken by the Board was lawful.

Out of Total 1185 candidates in both the Centres, 885 candidates were considered having used UFM wherein 502 students allowed to appear in Supplementary Examination 2025 and 383 students (44 candidates of Class-X and 339 candidates of Class-XII) were allowed to appear in the Main Examination 2026. Out of 502 candidates (who were placed to appear in Supplementary Exam 2025 in the order), 459 candidates were declared pass either in Main Exam 2025 or Supplementary Exam 2025.

Under the CBSE more than 46 lakh students will be appearing in Class X and Class XII Examinations in 2026 from India and 26 countries abroad and if such activities are left unattended and without apt punishment to all involved, ensuring a fair conduct of examination will only become a dream. Hence, strict action is the need of the hour.

As per Office Order dated 26.05.2025 asked to the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan to initiate disciplinary action against the involved Principal and invigilators of the concerned examination centres. In response thereof, the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan, has informed that an enquiry in the matter is presently being conducted. Copies of the Memorandum, Article of Charges and the Memos of Evidence and List of Witnesses of the Disciplinary Authority of the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan against erring/ delinquent officials are ANNEXURE - D/ 1 Series.



The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), vide Notice dated 12.09.2025, has issued a show cause notice to Padampur Public School, Bargarh, Odisha about its disaffiliation.

So, for the above reasons, the writ petition filed by the petitioners is to be dismissed against them (Opp. Parties)."

6. I have already heard from the learned counsel for the petitioners and learned counsel Mr. T. Pattanayak for the Opp. Party Nos.1 & 2.

7. In support of the averments made in the Writ Petition, the learned counsel for the petitioners relied upon the following decisions:

I. Board of Secondary Education, Odisha and Another Vs.

Gayatri Hota and Others:2001(I) OLR 398

II. Rajesh Kumar and Another Vs. The Institute of Engineers

(India): C.A. No.5057 of 1997 decided on 25.07.1997

III. Vanshika Yadav Vs. Union of India & Others: (2024)

9 SCC 743

8. As per the rival submissions of the learned counsels of both the sides on the basis of the writ petition, counter and rejoinder, the crux of this writ petition is that,

"whether the impugned memorandum dated 08.10.2025 Annexure-4 series issued by the C.B.S.E.



(Opp. Party No.3) regarding the cancellation of the results of Senior School Certificate Examination, 2025 (Class-XII) of the petitioners alleging their indulgence in adopting unfair means during examination in two or more than two subjects indicated in Annexure-4 series given similar answers in some questions thereof with other students in the same centre is sustainable under law?”

9. It is the undisputed case of the parties that,

“neither the centre, in which the petitioners were appearing examination was scratched on the ground of mal practice nor there was any report from the principal, centre superintendent, invigilators or any flying squad about any mal practice by any students including the petitioners in the said centre or any incriminating material was found from the possession of the petitioners or from the examination hall.

The result of Senior School Certificate Examination, 2025 (Class-XII) of the said centre, in which the petitioners were appearing has not been cancelled except the petitioners along with some other few students, but the result of all other students were duly published. Much after the evaluation of the answer sheets of the petitioners, the final result of the petitioners were published reflecting as UFM (Unfair Means) and subsequently, their results were cancelled stating about the similarity in answers in some multiple choice questions in two to three subjects of each petitioners indicated in Annexure-4 series.



As per the report of the UFM Sub-Committee of the CBSE, as the petitioners could not answer some of the questions put to them during enquiry by the members of that UFM Sub-Committee, then, on application of Rule 36.2 (vi) & (viii) of the examination Bye-Laws of the CBSE, their results of 2025 have been cancelled.”

10. It is the specific/definite plea of the Opp. Party Nos.1 and 2 in Para No.9 of their counter which was filed in WPC No.31318 of 2025 and which was adopted in this Writ Petition that,

“all the examination centres were instructed by the CBSE (Opp. Party No.1) to install CCTV for the fairness of the examinations and to preserve the CCTV recording till two months after the declaration of the result, but the same has not been followed. The principals of the examination centres, centre superintendents and invigilators, those were called to appear before the UFM Sub-Committee, they did not cooperate the UFM Sub-Committee.”

11. The above pleas of the Opp. Party Nos.1 and 2 in their counter supported with an affidavit is going to show that, the principals of the examination centres, centre superintendents and invigilators being the agents of the Opp. Party No.1 (CBSE), they have not acted as per the directions of their principal i.e. Opp. Party No.1 (CBSE) for conducting the examinations, in the manner, they were instructed to conduct.



12. When the CBSE (Opp. Party No.1) published the final result of all the students of the same examination centre except the petitioners and some other few students forgiving/condoning the negligent acts of their agents i.e. principals, centre superintendents and invigilators of the said centre in conducting the examination, then, at this juncture, the Opp. Party Nos.1 and 2 should not have cancelled the result of the petitioners alleging adoption of malpractice against them in respect of two to three subjects by each petitioners indicated in Annexure-4 series on the basis of inference, surmises and conjectures without any direct evidence/material.

So, the above conduct of the Opp. Party Nos.1 and 2 i.e. the adoption of pick and choose method in publishing the final result of all the students except the petitioners along with some other few students without any direct evidence or material is not free from discrimination, which is ultimately affecting the right to equality guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution of India, 1950.

When there is no authentic/concrete legal proof before the UFM Sub-Committee to reach in a definite conclusion that,



the petitioners had adopted malpractice during examination in respect of some answers in two to three subjects indicated in Annexure-4 series, then, at this juncture, the cancellation of the result of the petitioners as per Annexure-4 series on the basis of asking some questions to the petitioners during enquiry by UFM Sub-Committee Members cannot be sustainable under law. Because, the aforesaid decision of the Members of the UFM-Sub-Committee is on presumption, conjectures and surmises without any legal basis.

On this aspect, the propositions of law has already been clarified in the ratio of the following decisions:

(A) In a case between ***Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, Cuttack Vs. Gayatri Hota and Others reported in 2001 (I) OLR 398*** that, malpractice in examination and cancellation of results—Results of some examinees were withheld for taking recourse of malpractice in examination—Out of them some were exonerated and the result of the petitioners were cancelled as decided by the examination committee—Neither the centre superintendent nor or from any other quarter, there was complaint of malpractice. There was possibility of some similarity in answers as the questions were objective in nature and those were short questions. On the basis of suspicion, a positive decision cannot be arrived at.

(B) In a case between ***Rajesh Kumar and Another Vs. The Institute of Engineers (India) decided in Civil Appeal No.5057 of 1997 (SC) on 25.07.1997*** that, results of some candidates withheld for adopting unfair means



and malpractices in the examinations. Explanations of examinees not accepted-Results of the said examinees cancelled-Suit by two of the said examinees before Civil Court-When the matter came before the High Court, it directed the Institute to redecide the matter-This time the Institute adopted a new technique to test the ability of the examinees and decided the matter against them-Held, the orders of the Institute in cancelling the results of the appellants' examinations and disqualifying them for two succeeding examinations were in excess of jurisdiction and are quashed. The Institute should declare the result of the examinees forthwith.

(C) In a case between **Chairman, J & K State Board of Education Vrs. Feyaz Ahmed Malik & Others reported in AIR 2000 SC 1039** that, matters concerning campus discipline of educational institutions and conduct of examinations, the duty is primarily vested in the authorities in-charge of the institution, and in such matters Court should not try to substitute its own views in place of the concerned authorities nor thrust its views on them.

(D) In a case between **Harish Chandra Tewari & others Vs. The Board of H.S. & Another reported in AIR 1981 (All.) 144** that, the Hon'ble Division Bench did not accept the charge of copying solely on the ground that, the answers of the true translation given by the examinees remarkably tallied with one another and also held that, similarity in some of the answers in the two answer books in question was not proper, there being no direct evidence that, any one observed the petitioner using unfair means during the course of the examination. Cancellation of result quashed.

(E) In the cases between **Basanta Kumar Pradhan & Others Vs. State of Orissa & Others reported in 2011 (1) OJR 868** that, there was allegation of malpractice—which was



challenged before the High Court—Held, the examination committee should have sufficient materials to come to a conclusion that, there was malpractice and it cannot base their decisions on presumption, conjectures and surmises, as no incriminating materials were found from the possession of any particular student nor were found from the examination halls as would be from the report of the flying squad. Held, the decisions of the Examination Committee to award '00' marks to the petitioner in History Paper-1 of Higher Secondary +2 Examination, 2009 cannot be sustained. (Para Nos.5 to 7)

13. Here in this matter at hand, when the result of the examination of all the students of the same centre, in which the petitioners had appeared has already been published in due time, but when the result of the petitioners along with some other few students have been cancelled on the ground of their indulgence in malpractice in some questions in two to three subjects indicated in Annexure-4 series during examination alleging similar answers with other students and when neither the principal nor the centre superintendent or the invigilators of the examination centre had alleged any allegation regarding adoption of any malpractice by the petitioners during examination and when as per law, the conduct of examinations is primarily vested in the authorities in charge of the institution at the time of conducting



examination and when there was no allegation regarding the adoption of any malpractice by the petitioners during examination by the in-charge of the examination centre, who was vested with all powers and authorities to conduct the examination and when the results of the petitioners have been cancelled due to giving incorrect answers in some questions of the members of the UFM Sub-Committee, then, at this juncture, by applying the principles of law enunciated in the ratio of the aforesaid decisions, the cancellation of result of the Senior School Certificate Examination (Class-XII), 2025 of the petitioners on the basis of inference, presumptions, conjectures and surmises without any direct evidence or material is not sustainable under law.

Therefore, there is justification under law for making interference with the impugned memorandum dated 08.10.2025 (Annexure-4 series) issued by the Under Secretary (Confidential), Central Board of Secondary Education, Regional Office, Bhubaneswar (Opp. Party No.3) through this writ petition filed by the petitioners. For which, the Annexure-4 series are liable to be quashed.



14. As such, there is merit in the writ petition filed by the petitioners. The same is to be allowed.

The impugned memorandum dated 08.10.2025 (Annexure-4 series) issued by the Opp. Party No.3 are quashed.

15. All the Opp. Parties are jointly and severally directed to publish the result of the Senior School Certificate Examination (Class-XII) of the petitioners 2025 within a week from the date of this Judgment and to communicate the result of the petitioners as well as its consequential certificates and mark sheets as per the rules immediately after publication of their results.

16. As such, this writ petition filed by the petitioners is disposed of finally.

(ANANDA CHANDRA BEHERA)
JUDGE

High Court of Orissa, Cuttack
The 26.02.2026// Rati Ranjan Nayak
Sr. Stenographer