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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ **W.P.(C) 16359/2025**

VIPIN KUMAR

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Utsav Jain, Adv.

versus

UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajendra Sahu, SPC with
Mr. Vinod Sawant, Law Officer CRPF, Insp.
Athurv, CRPF, Mr. Inderpal and Mr.
Ramniwas Yadav, CRPF.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE C. HARI SHANKAR

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE OM PRAKASH SHUKLA

ORDER

% **29.10.2025**

1. The petitioner has been disqualified for recruitment to the post of Motor Mechanic Vehicle owing to a tattoo on his right forearm. The petitioner has gone to the extent of stating that if he is allowed, he is even willing to undergo surgery to remove the tattoo.

2. *Prima facie*, we do not understand how the mere presence of a tattoo on the right forearm of a candidate can disqualify him for recruitment to the Forces. We may note the guideline to this effect, as issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which reads thus:

“Tattoo : The practice of engraving / tattooing in India is prevalent since time immemorial, but has been limited to depict the name or a religious figure, invariably on inner aspect of forearm and usually on left side. On the other hand the present young generation is considerably under the influence of western culture and thus the number of potential recruits bearing skin art had grown enormously over the years, which is not only distasteful but



distract from good order and discipline in the force.

Following criteria are to be used to determine permissibility of tattoo:

- a) Content-being a secular country, the religious sentiments of our countrymen are to be respected and thus tattoos depicting religious symbol or figure and the name, as followed in Indian army, are to be permitted.
- b) Location- tattoos marked on traditional sites of the body like inner aspect of forearm, but only LEFT forearm, being non saluting limb or dorsum of the hands are to be allowed.
- c) Size- size must be less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the particular part (Elbow or Hand) of the body.”

3. A reading of the aforesaid guideline indicates that the respondents do not find anything amiss if the tattoo is on “traditional sites of the body like inner aspect of the forearm” but are agreeable to the tattoo being only on the left forearm and not on the right forearm. This appears to be because of “the present young generation is considerably under the influence of western culture” and engraving of skin art.

4. We have queried of Mr. Rajendra Sahu, learned SPC for the respondents as to whether such a guideline is at all sustainable in law.

5. As, *prima facie*, we are of the view that the basis for disqualifying the petitioner may be questionable, issue notice to show cause as to why rule *nisi* be not issued.

6. Notice is accepted on behalf of the respondents by Mr. Rajendra Sahu.

7. Counter affidavit, if any, be positively filed within one week and no further. No extension of time for filing counter-affidavit would



be granted.

8. Rejoinder may be filed within one week.
9. List on 17 November 2025 for disposal in the Supplementary List.

C. HARI SHANKAR, J

OM PRAKASH SHUKLA, J

OCTOBER 29, 2025/gunn