



IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 13-07-2026

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE HEMANT CHANDANGOUDAR

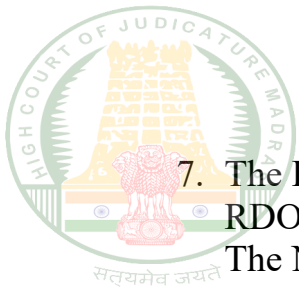
WP No. 10064 of 2025

Gopalakrishnan

..Petitioner(s)

Vs

1. The Union Of India
Rep By Its Secretary
Ministry Of Environment and
Forest Wildlife Division
Paryavaran Bhavan
CGO Complex New Delhi
2. The State Of Tamilnadu
Rep By Its Secretary
Department Of Environment And Forests
Fort St George Chennai
3. The Member Secretary
National Tiger Conservation Authority
Annex No.5 Bikaner House
Shahjahan Road New Delhi
4. Principal Chief Conservator Of Forests
Wildlife Director
Panagal Maligai, Saidapet, Chennai
5. The District Collector
Collectorate, The Nilgiris
6. The Chief Conservator Of Forests
& Field Director
Project Tiger
The Tiger Conservation Authority
Mudumalai Tiger Reserve
Udhagamandalam, The Nilgiris



7. The Revenue Divisional Officer
RDO's Office Gudalur
The Nilgiris

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..Respondent(s)

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking a writ of certiorarified mandamus calling for records of the impugned proceedings of the 7th respondent bearing No.Na.Ka.A 1-6700736/2024 dated 03.07.2024 and quash the same and consequentially direct the 7th respondent to enlist the petitioner as an eligible beneficiary as per the revised guidelines of the project Tiger Scheme dated 25.02.2008.

For Petitioner(s): Ms.Thanga Vadhana Balakrishnan

For Respondent(s): Ms.N.K.Nithilavani CGC for R1
Mr.M.Sivarathan, Govt.Advocate
for R2 to R7

ORDER

The petitioner challenges the proceedings dated 03.07.2024 issued by the seventh respondent.

2. By the said proceedings, the petitioner's claim for grant of compensation under the rehabilitation scheme on account of relocation from Mudumalai Village, which forms part of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, was rejected.

3. The petitioner states that he has been residing at No.2/92, Mudhukuli, Masinagudi Post, Mudumalai, Gudalur, The Nilgiris, since birth. His father owned one acre of agricultural land and a residential house in the said village. In



the year 2008, the Central Government introduced the Project Tiger Scheme for conservation of tigers. As part of the Scheme, persons residing within the Tiger

Reserve were either relocated or paid compensation. The revised guidelines issued in February 2008 provided the following rehabilitation packages:

“Option I: Payment of the entire package amount of Rs.10,00,000/- per family to families opting for monetary compensation without involving the Forest Department in the rehabilitation or relocation process.

Option II: Relocation and rehabilitation of villages from the protected area/Tiger Reserve by the Forest Department.”

4. Under the Scheme, the beneficiary should either be residing in a village within the Tiger Reserve or own agricultural land therein. The original cut-off date was 31.12.2010, which was later revised to 01.01.2014. The beneficiary should also have attained the age of 18 years as on the relevant cut-off date. The petitioner’s claim was rejected on the ground that he was not residing within the limits of the Tiger Reserve as on 31.12.2010.

5. Heard the learned counsel appearing for the parties and perused the materials placed on record.

6. It is not in dispute that the petitioner’s father was granted compensation under the Scheme, as he was residing in the Tiger Reserve and cultivating agricultural land there. It is also not in dispute that the petitioner had

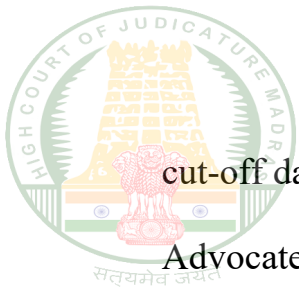


attained the age of 18 years as on the relevant cut-off date. Therefore, if he was residing within the Tiger Reserve on the cut-off date, he would be entitled to the benefit under the Scheme.

7. The seventh respondent considered the petitioner's Family Card, Voter Identity Card, receipt dated 26.09.2010 relating to land survey charges, title deed of the petitioner's father's land, land tax receipts, house tax receipts and the inspection report. On the basis of these materials, the seventh respondent concluded that the petitioner was not residing in Mudumalai Village either on the first cut-off date, namely 31.12.2010, or on the revised cut-off date, namely 01.01.2014, and that he had migrated to another place before both the cut-off dates. On that basis, the petitioner's claim was rejected.

8. The petitioner has produced information obtained under the Right to Information Act from the Office of the Deputy Director, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Udhagamandalam. The said information states that compensation of Rs.10,00,000/- was paid to the petitioner's father; that the petitioner is his only son; and that the petitioner left Mudumalai Village only during December 2011 along with his parents. It further states that the petitioner became ineligible only because he had shifted his residence outside Mudumalai Village at the time of preparation of the master list.

9. The information furnished under the Right to Information Act clearly shows that the petitioner was residing within Mudumalai Tiger Reserve as on the



cut-off date of 31.12.2010. Therefore, the contention of the learned Government Advocate appearing for respondents 2 to 7 that the petitioner was not residing within the Tiger Reserve on the relevant cut-off date cannot be accepted.

10. The stand taken by the State in the counter affidavit is contrary to the information furnished by its own authorities under the Right to Information Act. The said information deserves to be accepted for deciding the petitioner's entitlement. The petitioner satisfies all the eligibility criteria prescribed under the Scheme for grant of compensation on account of relocation. Therefore, rejection of his claim on the ground that he was not residing within the Tiger Reserve as on the cut-off date is arbitrary and unsustainable.

11. Accordingly, the writ petition is allowed. The proceedings dated 03.07.2024 issued by the seventh respondent are set aside. Since the Scheme is sponsored by the Central Government, the first respondent is under an obligation to disburse the compensation. The seventh respondent is directed to forward the proposal to the first respondent for grant of compensation to the petitioner within a period of four (4) weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. On receipt of the proposal, the first respondent shall disburse a sum of Rs.10,00,000/- to the petitioner within a further period of six (6) weeks from thereafter. There shall be no order as to costs.

13-07-2026



Index: Yes/No
Speaking/Non-speaking order
Neutral Citation: Yes/No
ssk

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HEMANT CHANDANGOUDAR, J.

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