



W.P.No.12439 of 2023

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 19.08.2026

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,
CHIEF JUSTICE

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.ARUL MURUGAN

W.P.No.12439 of 2023

M.T.Arunan, Advocate,
No.162, Additional Lawyers Chambers,
High Court Building, Chennai.

Petitioner(s)

Vs

1. The Secretary,
The Ministry of Energy (Electricity)
Secretariat, St. Fort George,
Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai.
2. The Chairman,
Tamil Nadu Power Distribution
Corporation Limited, Mount Road,
Chennai.
(R2-Cause title amended as per order
dated 30.01.2025)
3. The Registrar General,
High Court, Madras.
4. The Secretary
Public Works Department,
Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai.

Respondent(s)



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PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking issuance of a writ of mandamus directing respondents 1 and 2 to hand over the allotted property back to third respondent for the better use to serve public at large.

For Petitioner(s): Mr.M.T.Arunan
(Appearing in person)

For Respondent(s): Mr.Vijay Narayan,
Advocate General
asst by Mr.D.R.Arunkumar
for R2

Mr.L.Gokulraj
Addl Government Pleader
for R1 and R4

Mr.Karthik Ranganathan
for R3

ORDER

(Order of the Court was made by the Hon'ble Chief Justice)

The petitioner, a practising advocate, filed this writ petition under the umbrella of public interest litigation seeking issuance of a writ of mandamus directing the first and second respondents to hand over the allotted property back to the third respondent.



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2.1. The petitioner, appearing in person, submits that in 1990, the High Court allotted approximately 15 grounds of land to the Electricity Board to install electrical equipment to supply power to the High Court and surrounding areas. The petitioner states that the respondent electricity authorities built structures on only one-third of the land. The rest remains open to the sky. The petitioner pleads that TANGEDCO/TNPDCL is using the premises for commercial bill collection counters (such as Mannadi and Muthialpet) and a legal section office.

2.2. It is further submitted that the space constraints inside the High Court compound are severe and litigants, advocates and court staff are facing major difficulties regarding vehicle parking and infrastructure. He argued that the land should be returned to the High Court to build additional court halls, parking areas and public amenities.

3.1. Learned Advocate General appearing on behalf of the second respondent submitted that the land houses a 110/33/11 KV Sub-station (Esplanade Sub-station) commissioned in 1995 and the



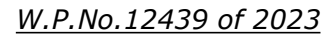
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High Court complex requires a sanctioned load of 5500 KVA. He submitted that the Registry has submitted an indent for an additional load of 2500 KVA for ongoing constructions and renovations. He pointed out that to ensure uninterrupted supply, power is routed from multiple grid sources, including the Basin Bridge Gas Turbine, Seven Wells Sub-station, etc.

3.2. Learned Advocate General further submitted that the open spaces between transformers are mandatory safety clearances and they are required for heavy cranes and trucks during maintenance or equipment replacement.

3.3. It is further submitted that the substation serves not only the High Court, but also critical institutions nearby, including the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Chennai Port Trust and Southern Railway.

4. This court acknowledges the expanding infrastructure needs of the Judiciary. However, public utility services like power distribution infrastructure cannot be disrupted without technical



6. Land allocation and urban planning between government departments are policy matters. Courts will not ordinarily issue a writ of mandamus to relocate critical power infrastructure, especially when the subject property is managed for providing utility services.



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7. The petitioner has failed to establish a legal or constitutional right that warrants the issuance of a writ of mandamus to relocate the sub-station. In our considered opinion, the true spirit of public interest lies in maintaining uninterrupted power supply to both the Judiciary and key public facilities.

For the aforegiven reasons, this writ petition is dismissed, sans costs.

(SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,CJ) (G.ARUL MURUGAN,J)
19.08.2026

Index : Yes/No
Neutral Citation : Yes/No
sasi



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To:

WEB COPY

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THE HON'BLE CHIEF JUSTICE
AND
G.ARUL MURUGAN,J.

(sasi)

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