



IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 28-07-2026

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THE HON'BLE MR JUSTICE KRISHNAN RAMASAMY

WP No. 32553 of 2025

R.Bakkiyalakshmi

..Petitioner(s)

Vs

1. The Commissioner,
H.R.And C.E Department, No.119,
Nungambakkam High Road, Nungambakkam,
Chennai-60034.

2. The Assistant Commissioner,
H.R. And C.E Department, 4th Floor, District
Collectorate Building, Chengalpattu,
Chengalpattu District-603 001.

..Respondent(s)

Prayer: This Writ Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying to issue a Writ of Mandamus directing the 2nd respondent to appoint the petitioner as a non-hereditary trustee to the Arulmigu Muthalamman Temple (TM003097) in Poonjeri village, Mamallapuram, Chengalpattu District based on the petitioner's representation dated 22.7.2025.

For Petitioner(s): Ms.J.Sobiya

For Respondent(s): Mr.D.Yashwanth Rajan,
Government's Counsel (HR & CE)

ORDER

This writ petition is filed to direct the second respondent to consider the petitioner's representation dated 22.07.2025.



2. Learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that the second respondent issued a notification dated 05.11.2024 to appoint Non-Hereditary Trustees to the Arulmigu Muthalamman Temple. Pursuant to the said notification, five persons applied for the post, and the petitioner was the sole female candidate. Subsequently, on 11.04.2025, the District-Level Committee finalized the candidates and passed a resolution selecting P.N.Rajkumar, Mohan, and the petitioner as Non-Hereditary Trustees of the temple. However, the aforesaid persons have not been appointed to date. Taking advantage of this delay, certain other individuals viz., Mrs.Vijayalakshmi Alavandar Chettiar, Murugan, Kannan, and Narayanan have been collecting donations in the name of the temple, falsely projecting themselves as its trustees. Consequently, the petitioner submitted a representation dated 22.07.2025 to the respondents, requesting to appoint her as a Non-Hereditary Trustee based on the District-Level Committee's resolution. Since the said representation has not been considered to date, the petitioner has approached this Court with the present writ petition.

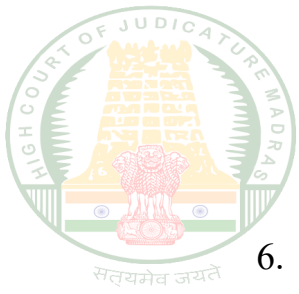
3. Mr.D.Yashwanth Rajan, learned Government's Counsel (HR and CE), accepts notice on behalf of respondents and submitted that owing to the Tamil Nadu State General Election, 2026, the respondents have been unable to formally appoint the petitioner as a Non-Hereditary Trustee, despite the resolution passed by the District-Level Committee on 11.04.2025.



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4. Heard the learned counsel on either side and perused the materials available on record.

5. This Court is not inclined to accept the contention raised by the learned Government's Counsel. The notification inviting applications for the appointment of Non-Hereditary Trustees was issued as early as 05.11.2024. The Tamil Nadu State General Election was conducted nearly fifteen months after the receipt of applications from the five candidates. Therefore, citing the election as a justification for the non-appointment of the Non-Hereditary Trustees is entirely unacceptable. It appears that the delay is not due to any extraordinary circumstance, but rather a deliberate omission on the part of the respondents. Once applications for Non-Hereditary Trustees are called for, the respondents are duty-bound to finalize the process and make the appointments expeditiously. The current delay reflects a lethargic attitude on the part of the respondents. Such delays detrimentally affect the management of the temple. The Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act was enacted specifically to protect temples and their properties; however, the failure to make timely appointments dilutes the very purpose of the Act.



6. In view of the above, the respondents are directed to consider and appoint the petitioner and the two other selected individuals as Non-Hereditary Trustees of the said temple within a period of eight weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. If the formation of any administrative committee is required to facilitate this, the respondents are at liberty to constitute the same, failing which the Commissioner of the HR & CE Department shall be held responsible.

With the aforesaid observation and direction, this writ petition stands disposed of. No costs.

28-07-2026

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

VM

To:

1. The Commissioner,
H.R.And C.E Department, No.119,
Nungambakkam High Road, Nungambakkam,
Chennai-60034.
2. The Assistant Commissioner,
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KRISHNAN RAMASAMY, J.

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