

W.P.(MD).No.8551 of 2020

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BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 23.07.2026

CORAM

**THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE C.V. KARTHIKEYAN
AND
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE R.SAKTHIVEL**

W.P(MD) No.8551 of 2020

Periyanambi Narasimha Gopalan

..... Petitioner

Vs.

- 1.The Chief Secretary to Government,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat, Chennai-09.
- 2.The Chief Secretary to Government,
Government of Kerala, Secretariat,
Thiruvananthapuram-001.
- 3.The District Collector,
Collectorate, Nagercoil-629 001,
Kanyakumari District.
- 4.Additional Chief Secretary and Commissioner
for Land Administration,
Land Administration Department,
Government of Tamil Nadu, 2nd Floor
Ezhilagam Chepauk, Chennai-005.
- 5.The Additional Chief Secretary And
Commissioner For Land Reforms,
Commissionerate of Land Reforms
Government of Tamil Nadu, Ezhilagam
Chepauk, Chennai-005.

..... Respondents



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Prayer : Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India for issuance of Writ of Mandamus, directing the Respondent No.3 to scan the Pre-settlement Records including Devaswoms Land Settlements Records as received in 1960 from the Public Department (Central Records) Trivandrum relating to all the temples in the Kanyakumari District and Shencottah Taluk in Tirunelveli District and furnish such digitallized copy to each temple in the Kanyakumari District and Shencottah Taluk in Tirunelveli District within the time frame as may be fixed by this Court.

For Petitioner : Mr.K.Gokul
For R1, R3 to R5 : Mr.K.K.Udayakumar
Counsel for State of TN
For R2 : No appearance

ORDER

[Order of the Court was made by C.V. KARTHIKEYAN, J.]

This Writ Petition has been filed in the nature of Mandamus, seeking a direction to the 3rd respondent/District Collector, Nagercoil at Kanniyakumari District to scan the Pre-settlement Records including Devaswoms Land Settlements Records as received in 1960 from the Public Department (Central Records) Trivandrum relating to all the temples in the Kanyakumari District and Shencottah Taluk in Tirunelveli District. The



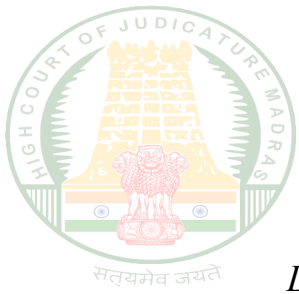
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petitioner also seeks digitallized copy to be given to each temple in Kanyakumari District and Shencottah Taluk in Tirunelveli District.

2. We had requested the District Collector at Kanyakumari District to file a report. A report had been filed and we would extract the material portions:

3). It is humbly submitted that the kanniyakumari District had been merged with Tamil Nadu state from the Kerala State while bifurcating states as languages wise on 01.11.1956. In respect of kanniyakumari District 1958-1978 Re Survey was conducted and its some records (via. Settlement Land Records) are available in the records rooms of District Collectorate, Kannivakumari. But the Pre- settlement and Settlement records including Devaswoms Land Settlement Records are said to be received in 1960 from the Public Department (Central Records), Trivandrum relating to all the temples in the Kanniyakumari District records are not available in this records rooms. Also we have been receiving several Right to Information petitions requesting these Old Settlement Records. Since we do not have these records in our record room, we are unable to provide records to these Right to Information requests and also the RTI Commission Chennai gave instructions to find a possible solution for this issue whenever they conducted their enquiry.



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Due to this, the 3rd respondent has been sent a letter to Central Archives of Kerala State with regard to provide the copy of old settlement registers and records of the entire kanniyakumari District vide Ir. No. G1/E-3570622/2025, Dated:26.07.2025.

4) It is humbly submitted that if the Pre-settlement and Settlement records including Devaswoms Land Settlement Records are available the Kerala Archives in 1960, and copy of the old settlement registers are given to Kanniyakumari District then steps will be taken to scan the settlement records based on the government funding allocation.

5). It is humbly submitted that the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department has maintained the all-temple land records based on the re survey settlement records in respect of Kanniyakumari District. As of now, the Special Tahsildar post has been created by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department so as to identify the temple lands, survey the land and avoid illegal encroachment in such land.

6) It is humbly submitted that there were 81 villages before bifurcation of villages in Kanniyakumari district. There are 56753 survey numbers in it and each survey number has an average of 15 subdivisions. Accordingly, approximately 8,51,295 documents have to be scanned. As this is a huge task and will require a large amount of manpower, time period and funds the digitization of all these old records are not immediately possible.



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3. It is thus seen that if the copies of the old pre-settlement and settlement records as stated are given, then steps will be taken to scan them on the basis of government funding allocation. It had also been stated that there are 56753 survey numbers and approximately 8,51,295 documents have to be scanned. This is an enormous task. We appreciate the stand taken by the District Collector.

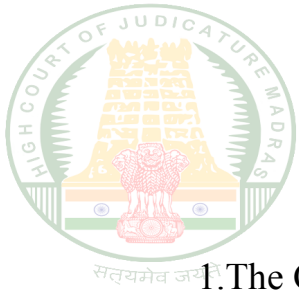
4. Recording the above report of the District Collector, this Writ Petition stands closed. We are not inclined to issue any direction to give copies of the scanned documents to the temples in Kanniyakumari District or in Shencottah Taluk in Tirunelveli District.

[C.V.K., J.] & [R.S.V., J.]
23.07.2026

NCC : Yes / No
Index : Yes / No

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R.SAKTHIVEL, J.

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