

W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

WEB COPY

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 24.06.2026

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY

W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

and

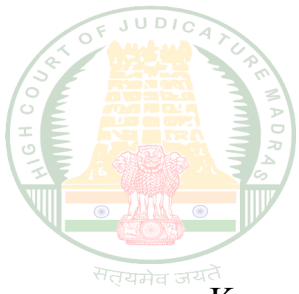
W.M.P.(MD)No.28487 of 2025

Yogeeswarar Samuthaya Sangam,
Through V.Mani, President,
Suchindrum - Akkarai Yogeswarar Samuthaya Sangam,
Office at : Theroor Road Turning,
Mutharamman Temple Campus,
Akkarai, Suchindrum,
Kanyakumari District.

... Petitioner

-VS-

- 1.The State of Tamil Nadu,
Through Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department,
Fort St. George,
Chennai.
- 2.The Commissioner,
Hindu Endowment Board, Hindu Religious and
Charitable Endowments Department,
Uthamar Gandhi Road,
Nungambakkam, Chennai.
- 3.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Endowment Board, Hindu Religious and
Charitable Endowments Department,



W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

Kanyakumari District Temples Head Office,
Suchindrum, Kanyakumari District.

4.The Srikariyam,
Sree Korakanathar Temple,
Panathatu, Theroor,
Suchindrum, Kanyakumari District.

... Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying this Court to,

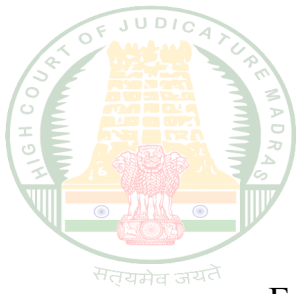
(a) issue a Writ of Certiorari after examining the legality and validity of the order Na.Ka/1860/2025/D3 dated 09.09.2025 issued by the office of the Respondent No.3 and further quash and set aside the impugned order;

(b) issue a Writ of Mandamus directing the respondents 1 and 2 to restore only the original Deities of the Arulmighu Korakanathar Temple as existing as on 15.08.1947 which the Principal District Munsif Court, Nagercoil, has subsequently observed in O.S.No.163 of 2018 under para 23; and

(c) issue a Writ of Mandamus, directing the respondents 1 and 2 ought not to alter the identity, existing traditions and religious character of the temple by installing "Sivalinga Deity" between main entrance of the Arulmighu Koraknathar Temple and Arulmighu Koraknathar Samadhi at which Sripadams (Sacred Feet) are worshipped by the petitioner's ancestors and descendants for the last six centuries.

For Petitioner : Mr.S.Sadasivan

For R1 and R2 : Ms.P.Sudarkodi Nachiar
Standing Counsel



W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

WEB COPY

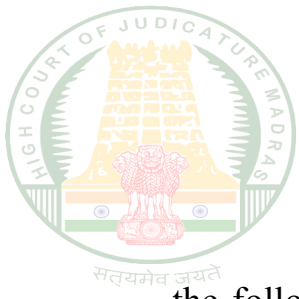
For R3 and R4

: Mr.R.Shankar Ganesh

ORDER

The writ petition has been filed seeking multiple reliefs. Firstly, the petitioner seeks to quash the impugned proceedings dated 09.09.2025, wherein reference has been made to the installation of a Sivalingam in connection with the renovation works of the Temple. Secondly, a Writ of Mandamus is sought directing the respondents to restore only the original deities and objects of worship that existed in the Temple as on 15.08.1947, as observed by the learned Principal District Munsif, Nagercoil, in O.S.No.163 of 2018. Thirdly, the petitioner seeks a direction restraining the respondents from altering the identity, existing traditions and religious character of the Temple by installing a Sivalinga deity between the main entrance of Arulmighu Koraknathar Temple and the Samadhi of Arulmighu Koraknathar, where the Sripadams are presently worshipped.

2. The learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that the petitioner-Sangam represents a distinct sect of worshippers who have been worshipping at Arulmighu Koraknathar Temple for more than seven centuries. According to him,



W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

the followers of the Sangam accept Koraknathar as their Guru and worship the Sripadams located in the Temple. The Temple itself is regarded as a Samadhi Temple and has historically been worshipped as such. It is his contention that, after the respondents assumed administration of the Temple, and after the petitioner failed before the Civil Court in establishing that it constituted a religious denomination, attempts are now being made to alter the very character of the Temple.

3. The learned counsel would contend that there was never a Sivalingam in the Temple and that the Temple has never been recognised or administered as a Shiva Temple. It is pointed out that the institution continues to be recorded as "Arulmighu Koraknathar Temple" in the relevant schedules and records. According to him, the Sripadams alone are there in the sanctum sanctorum and the mode of worship followed therein is unique to the traditions of the Temple. If a Sivalingam is installed either within the sanctum sanctorum or elsewhere in the Temple premises, the nature and character of worship would fundamentally change, thereby affecting centuries-old traditions.

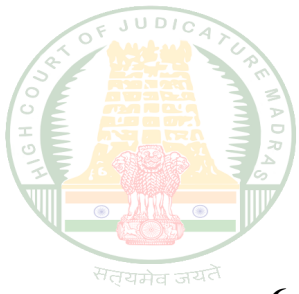


W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

WEB COPY

4. The learned counsel would further submit that the right to preserve and continue religious practices forms part of the protection guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution of India. Even though the petitioner has not succeeded in establishing denominational status before the Civil Court, the worshippers continue to possess the right to preserve the traditional mode of worship followed in the Temple. Therefore, according to the learned counsel, the proposed installation of a Sivalingam and the alterations sought to be made to the sanctum sanctorum, including the creation of an additional opening, are contrary to the established customs and traditions of the Temple and ought not to be permitted.

5. Per contra, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the Department would submit that the renovation works are being undertaken under a donor-sponsored scheme, since the Temple was found to be in a dilapidated condition. It is submitted that the works have been duly approved by the District Level Committee as well as the State Level Committee and are being carried out strictly in accordance with the permissions granted by the competent authorities.



W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

WEB COPY

6. The learned counsel appearing on behalf of the Temple would submit that, having failed to secure a declaration regarding denominational status and administrative rights before the Civil Court, the petitioner is now attempting to achieve the same result indirectly through the present writ proceedings. According to the learned counsel, in view of the judgment rendered in O.S.No. 163 of 2018, the petitioner-Sangam cannot claim any special denominational rights in relation to the Temple. It is further submitted that the Temple is presently being administered under the supervision of the Joint Commissioner, who is personally overseeing the renovation and conservation works.

7. The learned counsel would further submit that certain experts are of the view that Koraknathar was one among the Siddhars and that the Temple may historically have had a connection with the worship of Lord Shiva. According to the experts, a stone structure located in front of the original heritage structure bears certain characteristics which have led some persons to suspect that it may have once formed part of a Sivalingam. However, it is candidly submitted that there is no official determination to that effect. While some persons describe the structure as a remnant of a Sivalingam, the petitioner characterises it as a



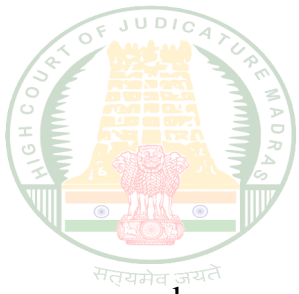
W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

Balipeedam. The Department is not proposing to officially classify the structure as either. The only intention is to preserve the existing stone structure in its present location by constructing a protective Mandapam over it.

8. I have heard the submissions made by the learned counsel on either side and perused the materials available on record.

9. In view of the categorical statement made on behalf of the Joint Commissioner, who presently administers the Temple, the principal apprehension of the petitioner that the Temple is being converted into a Shiva Temple stands substantially allayed. It has been unequivocally stated before this Court that the traditions and character of the Temple will not be altered and that the objective of the renovation project is only to preserve the Temple and protect its heritage value. The works undertaken have been approved by both the District Level Committee and the State Level Committee.

10. Once it is recorded that no Sivalinga deity is proposed to be installed within the original sanctum sanctorum and that the institution shall continue to be

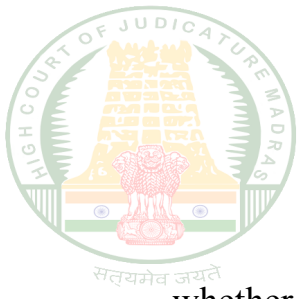


W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

known and administered as Arulmighu Koraknathar Temple, the primary grievance of the petitioner stands redressed. Insofar as the proposal to create an additional access route is concerned, it is submitted that the same is intended solely to facilitate free ingress and egress of devotees.

11. The petitioner contends that such an alteration would be contrary to the Agamic traditions applicable to the Temple, particularly, on the ground that the sanctum sanctorum should not have more than one entrance. However, once the competent expert bodies, namely, the State Level Committee and the District Level Committee, have approved the renovation works, it is not for this Court to substitute its views for that of the experts. If the petitioner seeks to raise objections based on Agamic principles, it is always open to the petitioner to approach the State Level Committee by way of a detailed representation. Upon receipt of such representation, the State Level Committee shall consider the same and pass appropriate orders in accordance with law.

12. This Court cannot undertake an adjudication regarding the precise nature of the deity, the historical character of the stone structure in question, or



W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

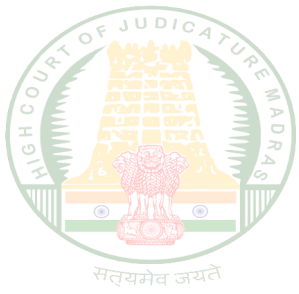
whether the Sripadams presently constitute the sanctum sanctorum or formed part of a larger architectural arrangement. Such questions fall within the domain of experts and not within the scope of judicial review under Article 226 of the Constitution.

13. Accordingly, the writ petition is disposed of on the following terms:

(i) In view of the statements recorded above, no Sivalinga deity shall be newly created or installed within the original heritage structure that is presently regarded as the sanctum sanctorum of Arulmighu Koraknathar Temple.

(ii) The existing Sripadams shall continue to remain in the sanctum sanctorum and shall be restored, preserved and worshipped in the manner in which they have traditionally been worshipped.

(iii) The statement made on behalf of the respondents that the existing circular stone structure shall remain in its present location and that only a protective Mandapam, in the nature of an Arthamandapam, is proposed to be constructed over it, is recorded.



W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

WEB COPY

(iv) Insofar as the proposal relating to the additional access pathway is concerned, it is open to the petitioner to submit a representation before the State Level Committee raising all objections, including those founded on Agamic principles.

(v) Upon receipt of such representation, the State Level Committee shall consider the same on its own merits and pass appropriate orders, after affording an opportunity of hearing to all concerned parties, within a period of eight weeks therefrom.

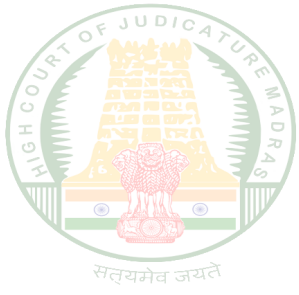
(vi) Pending such consideration, the renovation works already sanctioned by the competent authorities may continue, provided that the heritage value and traditional character of the Temple are not impaired.

(vii) It is made clear that this order shall not be construed as conferring or recognising any denominational status or administrative right in favour of the petitioner-Sangam, which shall continue to be governed by the decree and findings rendered in O.S.No.163 of 2018.

(viii) No costs. Consequently, the connected Miscellaneous Petition is closed.

24.06.2026

NCC : No



W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

WEB COPY

To:-

- 1.The Additional Chief Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu,
Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department,
Fort St. George,
Chennai.
- 2.The Commissioner,
Hindu Endowment Board, Hindu Religious and
Charitable Endowments Department,
Uthamar Gandhi Road,
Nungambakkam, Chennai.
- 3.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Endowment Board, Hindu Religious and
Charitable Endowments Department,
Kanyakumari District Temples Head Office,
Suchindrum, Kanyakumari District.



WEB COPY



W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY, J.

smn2

W.P.(MD)No.35847 of 2025

24.06.2026

Page 12 of 12