

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 28.09.2020

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE M.M.SUNDRESH
and
THE HON'BLE MRS.JUSTICE R.HEMALATHA

W.P.No. 10428 of 2020

Periyanambi Narasimha Gopalan

.. Petitioner

vs

1. The Secretary to Government
Tourism, Culture and Religious
Endowments Department,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat,
Chennai - 600 009.

2. The Commissioner,
HR&CE Department,
119, Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam,
Chennai - 600 034.

.. Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying to issue a writ of mandamus directing the respondents to make public the information sought by the petitioner in his representation dated 25.03.2020 to the respondents about the selected temples trustees, by publishing in the local newspaper, affixing on the main entrance gate of each temple, on the notice board of the Executive Officer of each temple under the control of HR&CE Department and make available a copy of the said information for inspection and further copying at the office of the jurisdictional Assistant Commissioner.

For Petitioner .. Mr.S.Sridharan,
Party-in-person

For Respondents .. Mr.M.Karthikeyan,
Spl. Govt. Pleader (HR&CE)

ORDER

(Order of the Court was made by M.M.SUNDRESH, J.)

The petitioner herein has come forward to file this writ petition seeking transparency with respect to the trustees functioning in the respective Temples by way of publishing the entire particulars pertaining to him or her including the contact number and the number of concerned authority who could furnish the information.

2. Heard the petitioner/party-in-person and the learned Special Government Pleader appearing for the respondents.

3. The petitioner submitted that the particulars of the trustees are not displayed in the notice board of the respective Temples though it has been stated in the counter affidavit. The bare and minimum particulars pertaining to them will have to be made known to the public. The public may be in a position to contact them to address their grievances. Their profession also will have to be published. After all, a member of the general public is entitled to know who is running the affairs of the Temple.

4. Learned Special Government Pleader appearing for the respondents placing reliance upon the counter affidavit filed submitted that the names of the trustees are duly published in the news paper. The information as sought for by the petitioner being private in nature cannot be divulged. If the petitioner is otherwise entitled to, he can seek it under the Right to Information Act.

5. The very object of publishing the names of the trustees in the news paper is to make the public to know of the said fact. Such a publication by way of one time measure certainly will not serve the purpose. The trustees are doing a public duty. They are appointed as trustees of the named temples to take care of the interest of the temples to which they are appointed. Therefore, it is not only logical but also proper that their names along with their profession/avocation will have to be published in such of those temples in which they are appointed and thereafter function as trustees. Their phone numbers also will have to be indicated so that a devotee can have access to them to redress his grievance on the functioning of the temple.

6. The aforesaid will have to be done by the respondents within a period of twelve weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. The information to be displayed in the notice boards of the temples shall also include the appropriate

Officer of the H.R.&C.E. Department along with his phone number who can be contacted by a devotee towards matters pertaining to the temples.

7. The writ petition stands disposed of accordingly. No costs.

-s/d-
Assistant Registrar

True Copy

Sub-Assistant Registrar

mmi/ssm

To

1. The Secretary to Government
Tourism, Culture and Religious
Endowments Department,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat,
Chennai - 600 009.

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+1 CC to Mr.S.Sridharan, Party in Person, sr 32034.

W.P.No. 10428 of 2020

SRA(CO)
SP(16/10/2020)

सत्यमेव जयते

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