



BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

Dated : 30.01.2020

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THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA

WEB COPY

W.P.(MD) No.1806 of 2020

L.Mupidathi

... Petitioner

Vs.

1.The Superintendent of Police
Tirunelveli District.

2.The Tahsildar,
Nanguneri Taluk, Tirunelveli District.

3.The Inspector of Police,
Kalakkadu Police Station,
Tirunelveli District.

... Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Mandamus, forbearing the respondents from interfering with the peaceful conducting of prayer in the house of the Petitioner along with her family members and relatives, situated in S.No.691/14 in Padmanery Village, Nanguneri Taluk, Tirunelveli District on the basis of the representation given by the Petitioner dated 11.01.2019.

For Petitioner : Mr.K.Samidurai

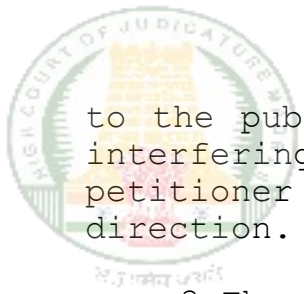
For Respondents : Mrs.Bharathi

Government Advocate (Crl. side)

O R D E R

This petition has been filed seeking for a direction to the respondents from forbearing the respondents from interfering with the peaceful conducting of prayer in the house of the Petitioner along with her family members and relatives, situated in S.No.691/14, in Padmanery Village, Nanguneri Taluk, Tirunelveli District, on the basis of the representation given by the Petitioner dated 11.01.2019.

2.The case of the petitioner is that she is a widow and senior citizen and she is the owner of the residential property bearing S.No.691/14, in Padmanery Village, Nanguneri Taluk, Tirunelveli District. The said property was purchased from one Murugan and the same was executed on 02.11.1995 and she had constructed a house after obtaining approval from the Panchayat. The petitioner is conducting prayer in the said house without causing any disturbance



to the public for the past 18 years and that the 3rd respondent is interfering with the conduct of prayer at the house of the petitioner and thereby the petition is filed seeking for a direction.

3.The learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that a false complaint has been given by unknown persons to the third respondent, as if, there is a law and order problem due to conducting prayer in her house. He would further submit that the petitioner has given a petition to permit her to construct a new Church or prayer house in the said property, which has been rejected and passed an impugned order in Na.Ka.No.5683/2015 dated 13.04.2015 by the District Collector, Tirunelveli. Therefore, the petitioner filed a Writ Petition in W.P.(MD)No.7254 of 2015 before this Court challenging the above said impugned order and same is still pending. However, the petitioner is not conducting the prayer in the church. In the meantime, she has been conducting prayer in her residence along with her family members, friends and relatives without causing disturbance to anybody. Whereas, the third respondent is compelling the petitioner to get permission from the authorities even for conducting prayer in her residence. He would further submit that this Court, in several writ petitions, have permitted the respective petitioners to conduct prayers in the residence/houses without causing nuisance or disturbance to others and to general public, using speaker and sound system within the permissible limits. He would further submit that the petitioner has also ready to give an undertaking to the third respondent stating that she will not use any speaker or sound system or create any disturbance to the general public.

4.The learned Government Advocate (Crl. side) would submit that if prayers are conducted within the residence of the petitioner without causing disturbance to the general public and without using any speaker or sound system, the police will not have any objection in permitting such prayers. However, if the petitioner in the name of prayer, tries to spoil the peace and harmony in the place, then certainly the police will have to interfere to restore normalcy.

5.The learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that the Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights and mandates that all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and to exercise their right to freely profess practice and propagate religion and therefore, the petitioner and her brethren belonging to the Christian community are also having such fundamental right and the same cannot be interfered by the respondent police.

6.The learned counsel for the petitioner would in support of her contention rely on the earlier orders of the Principal Bench of this Court and this Court in W.P.No.2149 of 2018, dated 14.06.2019, W.P.(MD).No.18955 of 2018, dated 31.08.2018 and W.P.(MD)No.710 of 2019, dated 11.01.2019 and would reiterate that the petitioner is not to be interfered from conducting prayers in her residence/house.



7. Heard the learned counsel for the petitioner and the learned Government Advocate (criminal side) for the respondents.

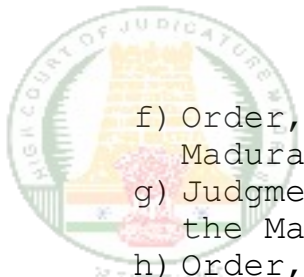
8. The specific case of the petitioner is that the prayer is being conducted at her residence and the same is being attended by the petitioner and her relatives and friends belonging to the same community. Further case of the petitioner is that these prayers are not going to cause any nuisance or hindrance to the others living in the locality and no loud speaker or sound system is being used for conducting the said prayers, whereas on the basis of unfounded complaints the petitioner is prevented from conducting prayers.

9. In W.P.(MD)No.710 of 2019, dated 11.01.2019 filed by a person, similarly placed as that of the petitioner this Court has held as follows:

"14. Following the above decisions and the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India to the citizens, in the opinion of this Court, there is no need to get prior permission from any authority for assembling and conducting prayers in a dwelling place without causing nuisance or disturbance to others and without causing hindrance to the general public. It is the duty of the authorities to safeguard the protection of every citizen of this Country to practise constitutional rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India. However, in a civilized Society in the name of religion, activities, which disturb others, in any manner and for bona fide reasons, cannot be permitted and hence, if there is any nuisance caused due to noise pollution or for any other bona fide reasons, it is always open to the authorities to take necessary action under the provisions of the relevant statutes. But, before resorting to any action, the authorities, on the basis of concrete evidence, should arrive at a subjective satisfaction that there exists infringement of a right of others, under the Constitution of India, to enforce public order."

10. In the above order, this court had referred to earlier orders of this court passed in similar circumstances.

- a) CDJ 2007 MHC 5279 (Sadhu C.Selvaraj Vs. The Collector, Kanyakumari)
- b) 2005 4 CTC 171 (Albert Raj Vs. The District Collector, Kanyakumari District at Nagercoil)
- c) Order, dated 14.08.2012, made in WP(MD)No.10782 of 2006, of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.
- d) Order, dated 13.08.2007, made in WP(MD)No.6732 of 2007, of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.
- e) Order, dated 30.04.2008, made in WP.No.4151 of 2008, of the Madras High Court.



- f) Order, dated 14.12.2012, made in WP(MD)No.13336 of 2007, of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.
g) Judgment, dated 03.01.2017, made in WA(MD)No.1349 of 2013, of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.
h) Order, dated 28.11.2011, made in CrI.OP(MD)No.15462 of 2011, of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.
i) Order, dated 31.08.2018, made in WP(MD)No.18955 of 2018, of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.
j) Order, dated 09.03.2018, made in CrI.OP(MD)No.3039 of 2018, of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.

11. In view of the above and under such circumstances, this Court does not find any reason as to why the petitioner should not be permitted to conduct such prayers in her own residence.

12. This writ petition is disposed of with the direction to the respondents not to interfere with the right of the petitioner, conducting prayer along with relatives and friends at the residence of the petitioner situated at S.No.691/14, in Padmanery Village, Nanguneri Taluk, Tirunelveli District. The petitioner shall ensure that this prayer does not in any way cause any hindrance to the general public and does not in any way give rise to any law and order problem. If any law and order problem is created, then certainly, the respondent police is at liberty to take appropriate action. No costs.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (Records)

// True Copy //

/ /2020

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

To

1. The Superintendent of Police, Tirunelveli District.
 2. The Tahsildar, Nanguneri Taluk, Tirunelveli District.
 3. The Inspector of Police,
Kalakkadu Police Station, Tirunelveli District.
 4. The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, Madurai.
- +1 CC to M/s.K.SAMIDURAI, Advocate (SR-3990[F] dated 30/01/2020)

WP. (MD)No.1806 of 2020
30.01.2020

Ls

<https://hcmis.courts.go.in/Case/4P-6C>