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WP No. 16551 of 2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 02-06-2025

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE N. ANAND VENKATESH

WP No. 16551 of 2025

and

WMP No. 18713 OF 2025

T.P.Bakthavachalam
S/o. T.S. Padmanaban
No.35, Pradakshana Battai Street,
Nalavar Koil Pettai, Tirukazhukundram,
Chengalpattu District - 603109.

Petitioner(s)

Vs

1.Hindu Religious Charitable Endowments Department
No.119, Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam, Chennai - 600 034.

2.Executive Officer
Vedagireeswarar Temple, Tirukazhukundram,
Chengalpattu District - 603109.

Respondent(s)

PRAYER

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India for issuance of Writ of Mandamus to call for the records of the 2nd Respondent pertaining to the impugned letter dated 22.03.2025 directing the Petitioner to hand over the key



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of the vault locker within 15 days, and quash the same as being illegal, arbitrary, and violative of the Petitioner's fundamental and hereditary rights and consequently directing the Respondents to restore the traditional procedure of handling and securing the temple jewels during the annual festival, as per the long-standing custom followed for over 200 years, thereby recognising the petitioner's hereditary rights in the administration of the temple endowment.

For Petitioner: Mr.Leelesh Sundaram.B
for Mr.Nathan and Associates
For Respondent: Mr.N.R.R.Arun Natarajan (for R1)
Special Government Pleader
Mr.R.Bharanidharan (for R2)

ORDER

This writ petition has been filed challenging the impugned communication of the 2nd respondent dated 22.03.2025 and for a consequential direction to the respondents to hand over one key of the vault locker and restore the traditional procedure

2. Mr.Leelesh Sundaram.B for Mr.Nathan and Associates, learned counsel for the petitioner and Mr.N.R.R.Arun Natarajan, learned Special Government Pleader for 1st respondent and Mr.R.Bharanidharan, learned counsel for 2nd respondent.

3. The case of the petitioner is that he is the hereditary trustee of the 2nd respondent temple and his family has been managing the endowment for



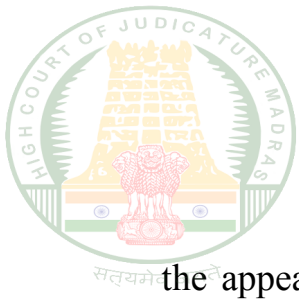
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over 200 years. The temple jewels are kept in vault by the hereditary trustee. According to the petitioner, during the festival the jewels are taken out of the vault and the deity is adorned with the jewels till the festival concludes. Thereafter, it is entrusted with the family and it is kept inside the vault.

4. The grievance of the petitioner is that all of a sudden in the year 2024, the petitioner was asked to give both the keys and the tradition that was followed for nearly two centuries was stopped abruptly. When a representation was made in this regard, the impugned communication dated 22.03.2025 came to be issued by the 2nd respondent which has been put to challenge in the present writ petition.

5. On carefully considering the submissions made on either side and the materials available on record, it is seen that during the life time of the petitioner's father, the Assistant Commissioner of HR&CE initiated proceedings dated 30.10.1992 and the Executive officer was appointed as the fit person. The petitioner's father filed OA No.3 of 1999 before the Joint Registrar of HR&CE, Vellore, under section 63(b) of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1959 claiming for right of trusteeship. This application came to be dismissed by an order dated 20.05.2002. Later, the petitioner's father died after filing an appeal in AP No.29 of 2002. The legal heirs were impleaded and even



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the appeal came to be dismissed on 01.03.2011. This order has become final.

Therefore, it is quite clear that the petitioner has lost the legal right to claim any right to administer the temple since the temple is under the administration of a fit person, who has been appointed in the year 1992 itself. Accordingly, the petitioner was informed through the impugned communication dated 22.03.2025 to hand over both the keys and the jewel box in order to take the jewels from the vault and to adorn the deity during the festival.

6. This Court does not find any illegality in the communication issued by the 2nd respondent since the temple is under the administration of a fit person and the proceedings initiated challenging the same also ended against the petitioner and his brother. Therefore, the relief sought for by the petitioner cannot be granted by this Court. Accordingly, this writ petition stands dismissed. No costs. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petition is closed.

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Index: Yes/No

Speaking/Non-speaking order

Internet: Yes

Neutral Citation: Yes/No

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To

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N.ANAND VENKATESH J.

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