



W.P.Nos.16760 and 13540 of 2025

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 11.06.2025

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THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE P.VELMURUGAN

**W.P.Nos.16760 and 13540 of 2025 and
W.M.P.No.15180 of 2025**

In W.P.No.16760 of 2025

P.Mani @ Arunachalam

... Petitioner

Vs.

1. The District Collector
Salem
Salem District

2. The Superintendent of Police
Nethimedu
Salem, Salem District

3. The Deputy Superintendent of Police
Omalur, Omalur Taluk,
Salem District

4. The Inspector of Police
Thulasampatti Police Station
Omalur Taluk
Salem District

5. Madhesh

... Respondents



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PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Section 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Mandamus directing the respondents 1 to 4 to implement the order of 4th respondent dated 15.03.2025 in proceeding Na.Ka.No.01/Tharamangalam Taluk/2025 and take an appropriate criminal action against the 5th respondent and his followers for violating the same and consequently provide a police protection to conduct Muppoojai Thavam to be held on 20.05.2025 at Periyandichi Amman Pathikovil located at Thulasampatti, T.Maramangalam Village, Chettikuttipallam of Omalur Taluk, Salem District by considering petitioner's representation dated 20.04.2025.

For Petitioner	: Mr.M.Elango
For Respondents 1 to 4	: Dr.C.E. Pratap
	Government Advocate (Crl. Side)
For 5 th Respondent	: Mr.V.Elangovan

In W.P.No.13540 of 2025

Madhesan

... Petitioner

Vs.

1. The Collector
Salem District, Salem
2. The Revenue Divisional Officer
Mettur, Salem District
3. The Superintendent of Police
Salem, Salem District



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4. The Deputy Superintendent of Police
Omalur, Salem District

5. The Inspector of Police
Tharamangalam Police Station
Salem District

6. P.Mani @ Arunachalam ... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Section 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus to call for the records relating to the order passed by the 5th respondent in Na.Ka.No.01/Tharamangalam Taluk/2025 dated 15.03.2025 and direct the 5th respondent to refer the matter to the 2nd respondent for conducting peace committee meeting for conducting Muppoojai Devam based on the representation dated 20.03.2025 made by the petitioner.

For Petitioner : Mr.V.Elangovan

For Respondents 1 to 5 : Dr.C.E. Pratap
Government Advocate (Crl. Side)

For 5th Respondent : Mr.M.Elango



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ORDER

The petitioners in these two writ petitions belong to two rival groups claiming the right to conduct a religious event titled "Muppoojai Thavam" scheduled to be held at Periyandichi Amman Pathikovil, situated in Thulasampatti, T.Maramangalam Village, Chettikuttipallam, Omalur Taluk, Salem District. The dispute between them culminated in certain proceedings initiated by the local police authorities, which are the subject matter of challenge and enforcement in the present petitions.

2. In W.P.No.16760 of 2025, the petitioner-Mani has sought a direction to the respondents 1 to 4 to implement the proceedings dated 15.03.2025 issued by the 4th respondent/Inspector of Police, Tharamangalam Police Station, in Na.Ka.No.01/Tharamangalam Taluk/2025, whereby certain conditions were imposed on both groups following a peace committee meeting. He also seeks criminal action against the 5th respondent-Madhesh and his associates for allegedly violating the said proceedings, and further requests police protection to



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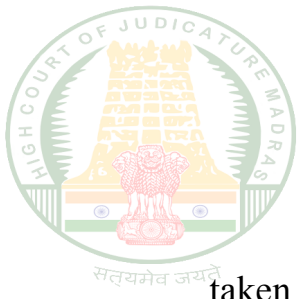
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ensure the smooth conduct of the Muppoojai Thavam, based on his representation dated 20.04.2025.

3. In W.P. No. 13540 of 2025, the petitioner is Madhesan, who is arrayed as the 5th respondent in the former petition. He seeks to quash the very same proceedings dated 15.03.2025 issued by the Inspector of Police, alleging that his signature was forcibly obtained during the so-called peace committee meeting. He also prays for a direction to the 2nd respondent/Revenue Divisional Officer, Mettur, to convene a proper peace committee meeting, considering his representation dated 20.03.2025.

4. The background of the case, as could be gathered from the records, is as follows:

The petitioner-Mani in W.P.No.16760 of 2025 had initially made a representation dated 08.02.2025 to the official respondents, seeking police protection to conduct the religious event and to restrain interference from the rival group led by Madheshan. Since no action was



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taken, he filed W.P.No.7540 of 2025, which was disposed of by this Court on 04.03.2025, directing the official respondents to consider the representation and take appropriate action.

5. Following that order, the 4th respondent in W.P.No.16760 of 2025 and 5th respondent in W.P.No.13540 of 2025/Inspector of Police conducted a peace committee meeting between the two groups on 15.03.2025 and issued proceedings in Na.Ka.No.01/Tharamangalam Taluk/2025, imposing nine conditions on both sides, purportedly to maintain peace and facilitate smooth conduct of the festival.

6. The grievance of Mani (the petitioner in W.P.No.16760 of 2025) is that Madheshan (the petitioner in W.P.No.13540 of 2025) and his followers violated the conditions imposed in the said police proceedings and obstructed the religious function. Despite further representation dated 20.04.2025, the authorities took no steps to ensure compliance, leading to the filing of W.P.No.16760 of 2025.



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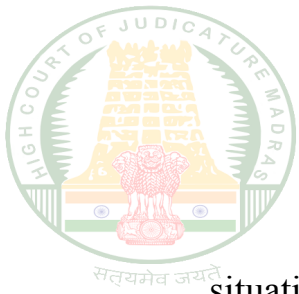
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7. On the other hand, Madheshan (the petitioner in W.P.No.13540 of 2025) disputes the legality and voluntariness of the police proceedings dated 15.03.2025 and claims that the peace committee meeting was one-sided, where he was forced to sign the proceedings. He, therefore, seeks to quash the said order and prays for a fresh peace meeting under the guidance of the Revenue Divisional Officer.

8. Heard the learned counsel appearing for both sides and perused the materials on record.

9. The main issue that arises in both writ petitions is the legal validity and enforceability of the proceedings dated 15.03.2025 issued by the Inspector of Police, following a peace committee meeting convened by the local police authorities.

10. This Court is constrained to observe that peace committee meetings have no basis in any statutory law. They are informal mechanisms evolved to maintain law and order in local areas in



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situations of social or communal tension. However, they cannot assume the character of a quasi-judicial adjudication. Neither the police authorities nor the revenue authorities have the legal competence to decide civil or religious rights of parties through such informal forums.

11. It is repeatedly seen that, under the guise of peace committee meetings, one group is often forced to sign so-called agreements or conditions, which are then sought to be enforced by the police as if they were binding legal orders. Such actions are wholly without jurisdiction and violate the fundamental rights of the parties, including the right to legal remedies and access to courts.

12. The only legitimate role of a peace committee is to help settle disputes informally between the parties, with their consent, and only for the purpose of maintaining peace and order. It cannot be used as a mechanism to determine entitlements, decide festival rights, or enforce binding conditions unless there is an explicit order of a competent court authorising such process.



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13. In the present case, the proceedings dated 15.03.2025 issued by the Inspector of Police in Na.Ka.No.01/Tharamangalam Taluk/2025 are clearly without legal authority and cannot be given effect to. Consequently, the relief sought in W.P.No.16760 of 2025 for implementation of such proceedings is liable to be rejected. Furthermore, the petitioner's prayer to conduct *Muppoojai Thavam* on 20.05.2025 has become infructuous. It is also significant to note that the petitioner, Mani, had already instituted civil proceedings in O.S. No.109 of 2022 on the file of the District Munsif, Omalur, seeking to restrain the grant of permission for renovation of the temple in question. The said suit is still pending adjudication. More importantly, this material fact was not disclosed in the present writ petition, W.P. No.16760 of 2025.

14. Likewise, the prayer of the petitioner in W.P.No.13540 of 2025, seeking a direction to the Revenue Divisional Officer to convene a fresh peace committee meeting, cannot be entertained. It must be underscored that even the Revenue Divisional Officer does not possess



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any statutory authority to adjudicate civil or religious disputes through peace committee mechanisms, unless such direction is issued by a competent Court.

15. Insofar as the dispute is concerned, the petitioner in W.P.No.13540 of 2025, Mr.Madhesan, alleges that Mr.P.Mani (petitioner in W.P.No.16760 of 2025) had collected donations in the name of the temple and misappropriated the same. Conversely, Mr.P.Mani contends that Mr.Madhesan is attempting to raise unauthorized construction on Government poramboke land situated in Survey Nos.189/2 and 189/3. In view of these rival claims, and considering that any grievance relating to temple management, financial impropriety, or conduct of religious events must be agitated before the appropriate civil court or the competent statutory authorities, this Court is not inclined to grant any further relief in either of the writ petitions.

16. Before parting with the matter, this Court is constrained to observe that in several cases, it is increasingly seen that Police and



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Revenue Authorities have taken upon themselves to convene peace committee meetings without any direction from the Court, often obtaining signatures from one party while extending undue advantage to the other. Such actions are not only without jurisdiction but also undermine the rule of law. It is, therefore, made unequivocally clear that henceforth, no Police Officer or Revenue Official shall convene or facilitate any peace committee meeting for resolving disputes involving civil rights, religious practices, or matters relating to temple usage or management, unless specifically directed to do so by a competent Court. Any breach of this direction shall be viewed seriously and may invite disciplinary as well as legal consequences.

17. With these observations, the writ petitions are disposed of as follows:

- (i) W.P.No.16760 of 2025 is dismissed.
- (ii) W.P.No.13540 of 2025 is partly allowed. The proceedings dated 15.03.2025 passed by the Inspector of Police, Tharamangalam Police Station in Na.Ka.No.01/Tharamangalam Taluk/2025 are quashed.



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(iii) It is open to either party to work out their remedies before the appropriate civil forum in accordance with law.

No costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petition is closed.

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Index: Yes/No

Speaking Order: Yes/No

Neutral Citation: Yes/No



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To
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1. The District Collector
Salem
Salem District
2. The Revenue Divisional Officer
Mettur, Salem District
3. The Superintendent of Police
Nethimedu
Salem, Salem District
4. The Deputy Superintendent of Police
Omalur
Omalur Taluk
Salem District
5. The Inspector of Police
Tharamangalam Police Station
Salem District
6. The Public Prosecutor
High Court of Madras, Chennai



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P.VELMURUGAN,J.

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