



Cont.P.No.4143 of 2025

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS**

DATED : 13.03.2026

CORAM :

**THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE T.VINOD KUMAR**

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P.Mahalingam

.. Petitioner

**Versus**

1. T.S.Selvavinayagam,  
Director of Public Health and  
Preventive Medicine, DMS Compound,  
359, Anna Salai,  
Teynampet, Chennai – 600 006.

2. P.Sentilkumar, IAS  
Secretary to Government,  
Health and Family Welfare Department,  
Secretariat, Fort St. George,  
Chennai – 600 009.

.. Respondents

**Prayer :** Contempt Petition filed under Section 11 of the Contempt of Court Act, 1971, to punish the respondents for wilful disobedience of the order, dated 26.08.2019 passed by this Court in W.P.No.18671 of 2015 on the file of this Court.

For Petitioner : Mr.R.Ezhilarasan

For Respondents : Mr.E.Sundaram,  
Government Advocate



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## **ORDER**

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This Contempt Petition is filed alleging willful non-compliance and disobedience of the order, dated 26.08.2019 in W.P.No.18671 of 2015, whereby, this Court had directed the respondents to consider the representation made by the petitioner and pass appropriate orders on the same within a period of eight weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of the order, if the representation had not been disposed of.

2. Though, on behalf of the petitioner, it is contended that despite this Court directing the respondents to dispose of the representation within a period of eight weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of the order, the respondents did not comply with the order and willfully disobeyed the order of this Court.

3. The learned Counsel for the petitioner submits that despite the petitioner following up the matter with the respondents, the respondents kept the issue pending and as such, the petitioner is constrained to file the present Contempt Petition on 07.11.2025.



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4. I have take note of the respective submissions made on behalf of the learned Counsel for the petitioner.

5. At the outset, it is to be noted that Section 20 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 (in short, 'Act, 1971') prescribes limitation of one year for initiating contempt proceedings.

6. This Court, by the order, dated 28.11.2025 in Cont.P.Nos.2599 and 3033 of 2025 and by the order, dated 12.09.2025 in Cont.P.No.2706 of 2025, had considered the scope of Section 20 of the Act, 1971 and Article 215 of the Constitution of India and also as to what would constitute continuing cause of action.

7. This Court, having regard to the law declared by the Hon'ble Apex Court and by a Co-ordinate bench of this Court, held that Section 20 of the Act, 1971, being a specific provision, the Contempt Petition has to be filed within one year when the cause of action arises.

8. In the facts of the present case, the cause of action of the petitioner to initiate contempt had arisen on expiry of the eight weeks



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granted by this Court while disposing of W.P.No.18671 of 2015 on 26.08.2019. The petitioner not only did not take any steps thereafter within the time prescribed under the Act, 1971, but, remained silent for a considerable length of time and approached this Court by filing the present Contempt Petition nearly after six years.

9. Having regard to the aforesaid facts and the decision of the Hon'ble Apex Court and also this Court on the maintainability of the Contempt Petition filed beyond the period of one year, the present Contempt Petition cannot be entertained as having been filed beyond the limitation prescribed under the Act, 1971.

10. Accordingly, this Contempt Petition is dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs.

13.03.2026

Index : yes/no  
Speaking order/Non-speaking order  
Neutral Citation : yes/no  
grs



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**T.VINOD KUMAR, J.,**

grs

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