



Cont.P.(MD)No.1031 of 2026 etc. batch

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

ORDERS RESERVED ON : 29.04.2026

ORDERS PRONOUNCED ON : 01.06.2026

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY

Cont.P.(MD)No.1031 of 2026 and
W.P.(MD)Nos.30377 of 2024, 13433, 13979, 14043, 14357 of 2025, 7729,
9976, 10020, 11935 & 12986 of 2026 and
W.M.P.(MD) Nos.25547 of 2024, 9666, 9670, 10132, 10133, 10134,
10175, 10176, 10543, 10544 of 2025, 6303, 6306, 6854, 7848, 7849,
7850, 7872, 7874, 9733 & 9736 of 2026

Cont.P.(MD)No.1031 of 2026:-

1.D.Thirupathy
2.D.Sivakumar
3.D.Muthuselvam

... Petitioners

-VS-

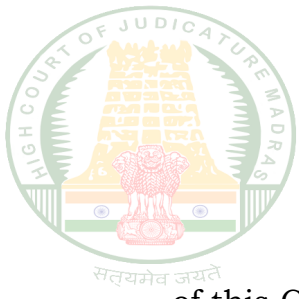
1.Mariappan,
Joint Commissioner,
HR & CE Department,
Madurai.

2.Pradeepa,
Assistant Commissioner/Executive Officer,
Arulmigu Koodal Azhagar Thirukovil,
Madurai.

3.Karnan
Inspector, Madurai North,
HR & CE Department,
Ellis Nagar, Madurai.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Petition filed under Section 11 of the Contempt of Courts Act, to
punish the contemnors/respondents for their wilful disobedience of the order



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of this Court in W.P.(MD) No.277 of 2026 dated 07.01.2026.

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For Petitioners : Mr.D.Rajagopal
For R1 & R3 : Mr.J.K.Jayaseelan
Government Advocate
For R2 : Mr.S.Manohar

W.P.(MD)No.30377 of 2024:-

Vandiyoor Sri Nachiyarammal Vagaiyara
Religious Endowment,
Represented by its Managing Trustee,
M.Thiruppathi, S/o.Junior Muthusami Pillai,
Vandiyoor, Madurai East Taluk,
Madurai District.

... Petitioner

-vs-

1.The Commissioner,
HR & CE Department,
Nungambakkam High Road,
Chennai - 600034.

2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department,
Madurai - 625002.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the records on the file of the first represent in A.P.No.35/2023/D2 dated 31.05.2024 confirming the order passed by the second respondent in Se.Mu.Na.Ka.No.9290/2007-2/Aa1 dated 29.07.2021 and quash the same as illegal, ultra vires, unconstitutional and quash all the consequential proceedings of the 1st and 2nd respondents and consequentially permit the petitioner to officiate the petitioner Trust as the Hereditary Trustee and as Managing Trustee.



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For Petitioner : Mr.S.Ramesh
For Respondents : Mr.M.Sarangan
Additional Government Pleader

W.P.(MD)No.13433 of 2025:-

R.Vijayakumar ... Petitioner

-vs-

- 1.The Commissioner,
HR & CE Department,
Chennai.
- 2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department,
Madurai.
- 3.The Fit Person,
Arulmighu Natcharammal Arakkatalai /
Executive Officer / Assistant Commissioner,
Arulmighu Koodal Alagar Thirukovil, Madurai.
- 4.D.Tamil Ganesan,
S/o.A.Dakshinamoorthy, Hereditary Trustee,
Nacharammal Trust, 1-5/32, Sanjeevi Nagar,
2nd Street, Anaiyur, Madurai-625 017.
[R4 is impleaded vide order dated 12.02.2026
made in W.M.P.(MD)No.13615 of 2025]

... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the records relating to the impugned proceedings in Na.Ka.No.2278/2025/A1 dated 27.03.2025 issued by second respondent and quash the same and consequently direct the second respondent to record the name of the petitioner as Trustee to Arulmighu Natcharammal Arakkatalai, Vandiyur.



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For Petitioner : Mr.J.Anandkumar
for Mr.K.Vignesh Kumar

For R1 and R2 : Mr.M.Sarangan
Additional Government Pleader

For R3 : Mr.S.Manohar

For R4 : Mr.P.Athimoolapandian

W.P.(MD)No.13979 of 2025:-

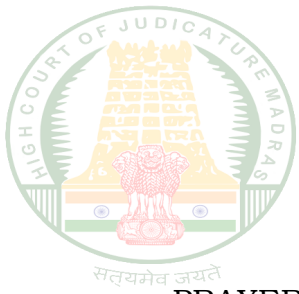
T.Kamatchi ... Petitioner

-vs-

- 1.The Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
No.119, Nungampakkam High Road, Chennai – 34.
- 2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Madurai.
- 3.The Fit Person,
Arulmigu Natcharammal Arakkattalai,
Executive Officer / Assistant Commissioner,
Arulmigu Koodal Alagar Thirukovil,
Madurai.
4. R.Meenakshi Sundaram,
Trustee,
Arulmigu Nacharammal Kattalai,
S/o.Ramalingam, No.108, Middle Street,
Kovilpappakudi, Podhumbu Post,
Madurai-625018

... Respondents

[R4 is impleaded vide order dated 22.04.2026 in
W.M.P.(MD)No.9408 of 2026]



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PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the records on the file of the second respondent in Na.Ka.No.2278/2025/A1 dated 27.03.2025 and quash the same as illegal, ultra vires, unconstitutional and consequently direct the second respondent to permit the petitioner to officiate the petitioner's Trust as the Hereditary Trustee and as Managing Trustee.

For Petitioner	:	Mr.S.Ramesh
For R1 and R2	:	Mr.M.Sarangan Additional Government Pleader
For R3	:	Mr.S.Manohar
For R4	:	Mr.M.Saravanan

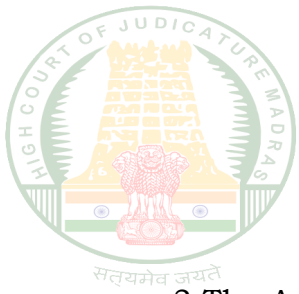
W.P.(MD)No.14043 of 2025:-

Arulmigu Nacharammal Kattalai,
Rep. by its Trustee, R.Meenakshi Sundaram,
S/o.Ramalingam,
No.108, Middle Street,
Kovilpappakudi,
Podhumbu Post, Madurai - 625 018.

... Petitioner

-vs-

- 1.The Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
No.119, Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam, Chennai – 600 034.
- 2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Madurai – 625 001.



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3.The Assistant Commissioner /
Executive Officer / Thakkar,
Arulmigu Koodallalagar Perumal Temple,
Madurai.

4.R.Vijayakumar

... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorari, calling for the records pertaining to the impugned order passed by the second respondent in Na.Ka.No.2278/2025/Aa1 dated 27.03.2025 and quash the same.

For Petitioner	:	Mr.M.Saravanan for Mr.P.Vinoth
For R1 and R2	:	Mr.M.Sarangan Additional Government Pleader
For R3	:	Mr.S.Manohar
For R4	:	Mr.J.Anandkumar for Mr.K.Vignesh Kumar

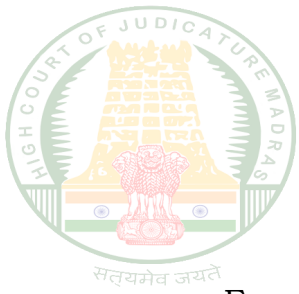
W.P.(MD)No.14357 of 2025:-

R.Vijayakumar

... Petitioner

-vs-

- 1.The Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department,
Chennai.
- 2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department,
Madurai.
- 3.The Fit Person,
Arulmighu Natcharammal Arakkatalai /



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Executive Officer / Assistant Commissioner,
Arulmighu Koodal Alagar Thirukovil, Madurai.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the records pertaining to the impugned notification of the second respondent in Na.Ka.No. 2278/2025/A1 dated 06.05.2025 published on 07.05.2025 and quash the same and consequently appoint the petitioner as Hereditary Trustee as next in line of succession.

For Petitioner	:	Mr.J.Anandkumar for Mr.K.Vignesh Kumar
For R1 and R2	:	Mr.M.Sarangan Additional Government Pleader
For R3	:	Mr.S.Manohar

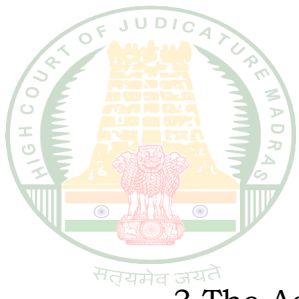
W.P.(MD)No.7729 of 2026:-

Arulmigu Nacharammal Kattalai,
Rep. by its Trustee, R.Meenakshi Sundaram,
S/o.Ramalingam,
No.108, Middle Street,
Kovilpappakudi,
Podhumbu Post, Madurai - 625 018.

... Petitioner

-vs-

- 1.The Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
No.119, Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam, Chennai – 600 034.
- 2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Madurai – 625 001.



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3.The Assistant Commissioner /
Executive Officer / Thakkar,
Arulmigu Koodallalagar Perumal Temple,
Madurai.

4.R.Vijayakumar

... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the records pertaining to the impugned proceedings of the second respondent in Na.Ka.No. 2278/2025/Aa1 dated 06.05.2025 and to quash the same, insofar as it invites applications from the descendants of the Junior Muthusamy Pillai line and consequently to direct the second respondent to recognise and appoint the petitioner as Hereditary Trustee of Arulmigu Nacharammal Kattalai representing the said branch.

For Petitioner	:	Mr.M.Saravanan for Mr.P.Vinoth
For R1 and R2	:	Mr.J.K.Jayaselan Government Advocate
For R3	:	Mr.S.Manohar
For R4	:	Mr.J.Anandkumar for Mr.K.Vignesh Kumar

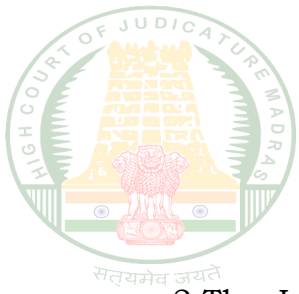
W.P.(MD)No.9976 of 2026:-

1.D.Thirupathy
2.D.Tamil Ganesan
3.D.Sivakumar
4.D.Muthuselvam

... Petitioners

-vs-

1.The Commissioner,
Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam, Chennai – 600 034.



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2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Madurai.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorari, calling for the records pertaining to the impugned notification of the second respondent in Na.Ka.No.2278/2025/A1 dated 06.05.2025 published in newspaper and quash the same.

For Petitioners : Mr.D.Rajagopal

For Respondents : Mr.M.Sarangan
Additional Government Pleader

W.P.(MD)No.10020 of 2026:-

S.Gopalakrishnan

... Petitioner

-vs-

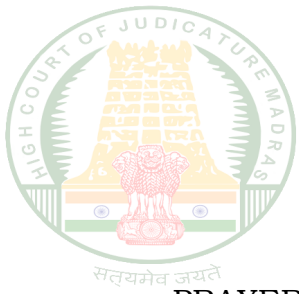
1.The Commissioner,
Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam, Chennai – 600 034.

2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Madurai.

3. R.Meenakshi Sundaram,
Trustee,
Arulmigu Nacharammal Kattalai,
S/o.Ramalingam, No.108, Middle Street,
Kovilpappakudi, Podhumbu Post,
Madurai-625018

... Respondents

[R3 is impleaded vide order dated 22.04.2026 in
W.M.P.(MD)No.9409 of 2026]



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PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorari, calling for the records pertaining to the impugned notification of the second respondent in Na.Ka.No.2278/2025/A1 dated 06.05.2025 published in daily newspaper Dinashudra and quash the same.

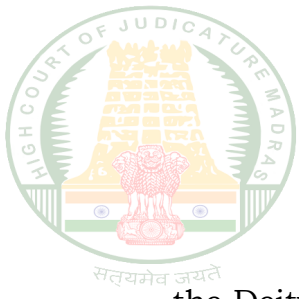
For Petitioner : Mr.M.P.Senthil
For R1 and R2 : Mr.M.Sarangan
Additional Government Pleader
For R3 : Mr.M.Saravanan

W.P.(MD)No.11935 of 2026:-

1.D.Thirupathy
2.D.Tamil Ganesan
3.D.Sivakumar
4.D.Muthuselvam ... Petitioners
-vs-

1.The Commissioner,
Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam, Chennai – 600 034.
2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Madurai. ... Respondents

PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Mandamus, directing the first respondent herein to permit the petitioner being the hereditary trustee representing the Senior Muthusamy Pillai group, to perform Mandagapadi and Annadhanam at the Nachiyarammal Trust Mandapam, Vandiyoor, Madurai District, during the ceremonial visit of



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the Deity Lord Sri Kallazhagar, as part of Chithirai Festival on 01.05.2026 and 02.05.2026.

For Petitioners : Mr.D.Rajagopal

For Respondents : Mr.M.Sarangan
Additional Government Pleader

W.P.(MD)No.12986 of 2026:-

D.Murugan ... Petitioner

-vs-

1.The Commissioner,
Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Nungambakkam High Road,
Chennai – 600 034.

2.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Ellis Nagar, Madurai.

3.Nacharammal Trust, Vandiyur,
Rep. by its Fit Person,
Executive Officer/Assistant Commissioner,
Arulmigu Koodalalagar Perumal Temple,
Madurai.

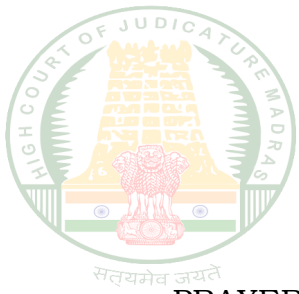
4.D.Tamil Ganesan

5.D.Thirupathy

6.D.Sivakumar

7.D.Muthuselvam

... Respondents



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PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus, calling for the records pertaining to the impugned proceedings of the second respondent in Na.Ka.No. 2278/2025/Aa1, dated 06.05.2025 and to quash the same insofar as it invites applications from the descendants of the Junior Muthusamy Pillai line and consequently, to direct the second respondent to recognise and appoint the petitioner as Hereditary Trustee of Arulmigu Nacharammal Kattalai representing the said branch.

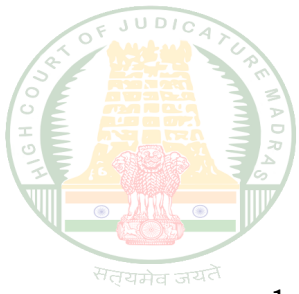
For Petitioner	:	Mr.N.C.Ashok Kumar
For R1 and R2	:	Mr.M.Sarangan Additional Government Pleader
For R3	:	Mr.S.Manohar
For R4 to R7	:	Mr.D.Rajagopal

COMMON ORDER

A.The Common Facts :

1.1. All these Writ Petitions relate to 'Nacharammal Kattalai', a religious endowment connected to Arulmigu Koodalazhagar Temple, Madurai and as such are taken up and disposed of by this common order.

1.2. The prayers in each of the Writ Petitions are different and have to be dealt with individually as per merits. However, certain background facts are common, which may be noted and are as follows:



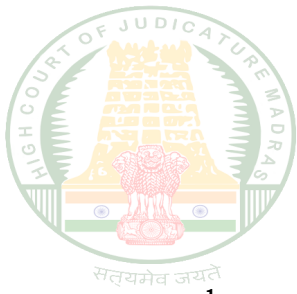
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1.3. By a duly registered document dated 20.03.1923, an endowment was created by three persons viz., (1) Nacharammal @ Vellaiammal, (2) Ammapillai @ Rakkaye Ammal and (3) Seeniammal @ Andathaiammal. Upon perusal of the document, it can be seen that one Ponnusankaran Pillai married one Ammakutty ammal as his first wife. Thereafter, he married one Mookayi ammal as his second wife. Through Mookayi Ammal, a daughter, namely Pichaiammal, was born. After the death of the aforesaid two wives, for want of a male descendant, Ponnusankaran Pillai married the aforesaid three persons who have executed the document as his wives. However, through Nacharammal, a girl child, namely Sethu @ Ponnammal, was born.

1.4. Under the said circumstances, the above dedication was made for the maintenance of the Mandagapadi Mandapam and for the conduct of the Mandagapadi of Lord Kallazhagar during the Chithirai festival. The details of which were also mentioned in the deed. The properties mentioned therein were dedicated. The said document also dealt with another purpose, namely, the maintenance of the Samadhi of Ponnusankaran Pillai.

1.5. Thereafter, on 30.09.1955, a scheme was framed in O.A.No.111 of 1953 relating to the administration of the endowment, through hereditary trusteeship. On 04.04.1967, by an order in O.A.No.3 of 1967, a modified



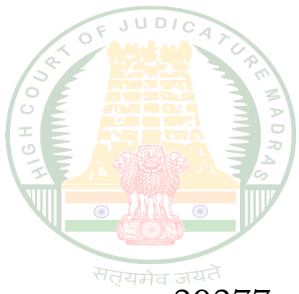
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scheme was framed, whereby it is ordered that hereditary trustees will be appointed from the three clans representing Senior Muthusamy Pillai, Junior Muthusamy Pillai and Sundararaja / Velusamy Pillai branches, along with two non-hereditary trustees.

1.6. By an order dated 14.02.1974, one Sethuraman was recognised as hereditary trustee representing the Junior Muthusamy Pillai branch. By an order dated 02.02.1993, M.Thiruppathi succeeded him as the hereditary trustee in the Junior Muthusamy Pillai branch. After his suspension, on 15.02.2010, one Pichaiammal @ Kamatchiammal was recognised as hereditary trustee representing the Junior Muthusamy Pillai branch. Thereafter, upon petition that the said Pichaiammal@ Kamatchiammal was getting older and was unable to discharge her functions, she was removed, and a fit person was appointed. Further, *inter se* litigations are pending, and applications have also been called for the further appointment of hereditary and non-hereditary trustees. Aggrieved by all that, with various prayers, the present Writ Petitions and a Contempt Petition have been filed.

B. Writ Petition (MD) No.30377 of 2024:

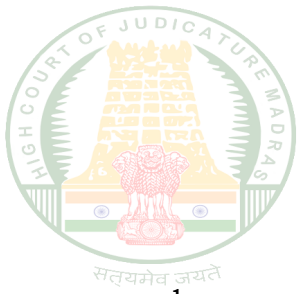
2. In the scheme of things, it is first essential to consider the Writ Petition filed by one M.Thiruppathi, S/o A.Muthusamy Pillai, in W.P.(MD).No.



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30377 of 2024. M.Thiruppathi is the grandson of Nacharammal, who was the first person who executed the deed of endowment dated 23.04.1923. He was recognised as a hereditary trustee with effect from 02.02.1993 and was functioning as such. While so, by an order dated 25.01.2010, four charges were levelled against him, and he was suspended from the hereditary trusteeship. His explanation with reference to the said charges was called for. All the charges are interconnected and relate to the sale of the endowed properties to third persons as if they were his absolute private property.

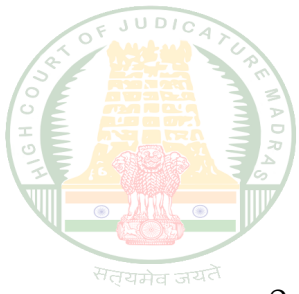
2.1. The petitioner's explanation is that only the five legal heirs of Late Dakshinamoorthy, who are the children of Anandam Pillai, had wrongly sold the property. The petitioner is not a party to the sale. It is those persons who have registered a sale agreement on 06.12.2005 vide document No.408 of 2007. While so, on 25.07.2007, the said M.Thiruppathi was abducted by some persons in a car and by knife point he was taken to the Sub-Registrar Office and was made to register a Power of Attorney. After, he came out of the clutches of the said abductors, he cancelled the Power of Attorney on 30.07.2007. Thereafter, a criminal case was registered against the petitioner and others, in crime No.590 of 2009 with reference to misappropriation, breach of trust and forgery in respect of the endowed property. Thereafter, when the said M. Thiruppathi was also charge-sheeted in C.C.No. 232 of 2015,



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by an order dated 18.01.2019 made in Cr.MP.No. 3432 of 2017, he was discharged from the criminal case. Therefore, the criminal court itself found that he had no involvement in the charges and the charges were not proved.

2.2. Thereafter, an enquiry was conducted, and it was found that even though the petitioner states that he was abducted to the Sub-Registrar's Office and was compelled to execute the Power of Attorney, no action was taken by the petitioner against the abductors. It was found that the petitioner had executed a Power of Attorney with reference to the endowed properties on 25.07.2007 through the power agent, and, along with others, the endowed property was sold in favour of the third parties by a sale deed dated 18.10.2007, registered as document No. 1080 of 2009. Therefore, the charges were found proved, and a final order was passed on 29.07.2021 by the Joint Commissioner, Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department, Madurai, removing him from the Office of Hereditary Trustee. Aggrieved thereby, the petitioner has preferred a revision before the Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department, Chennai, in A.P.No.35/2023/D2, and the same was dismissed by an order dated 31.05.2024. Challenging the same, the Writ Petition is filed.

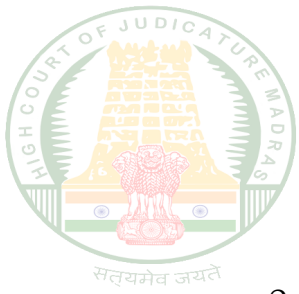


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2.3. It is specifically stated by the Writ Petitioner that he confines the Writ Petition only to the principles of natural justice. The primary ground raised is that during the course of the enquiry, the documents were not specifically marked. The appellate authority ought to have given the petitioner further opportunities. The Learned Counsel for the petitioner would point out the procedural infirmities and would also submit that the criminal court itself had discharged the petitioner. It is his case that once the impugned orders are quashed, all the other writ petitions would become infructuous.

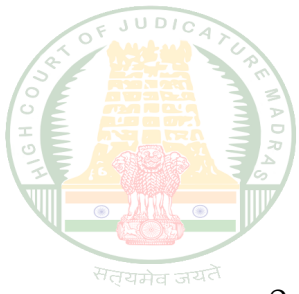
2.4. The act contemplates the conduct of an enquiry. In accordance with the rules, a charge memorandum was issued, an explanation was called for, and an enquiry was conducted. The specific charge is clearly put across to the petitioner. The petitioner has also answered that he had not voluntarily executed the Power of Attorney through which the sale of the endowed properties was made. It may be true that the criminal court, for want of evidence beyond proof, including proof of conspiracy, etc., could have discharged the petitioner. But, as far as the burden of proof with reference to the removal of the petitioner from the hereditary trusteeship, the proof in the departmental enquiry/statutory enquiry would only be preponderance of probability.



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2.5. In the present case, it is clear that the petitioner, through his power agent, has joined with others in selling the endowed property. Therefore, all four charges stand categorically proved. The purpose of marking the documents is to make it explicitly clear that the document is relied upon by the department or on behalf of the delinquent. In this case, that is very clearly put across, and the petitioner has given his explanation. The only finding is that the explanation is completely untenable, and the order of punishment has been passed. Therefore, the argument that the document number is not given in respect of the sale deed is only hyper-technical. Trusteeship of an endowment is an office to be discharged by persons of the highest integrity and devotion towards the purpose. When the same is found lacking and the very endowment is sought to be dismantled by selling the properties, the charges are extremely serious in nature, and it does not require a great deal of consideration, as the sale deed is in black and white to prove the charge of alienation of the endowed property. The movie-like defence of the petitioner cannot even be convincingly spoken by him, let alone being believed by anybody else. Therefore, the Disciplinary and Revisional authorities have rightly imposed and confirmed the punishment of removal from the hereditary trusteeship.



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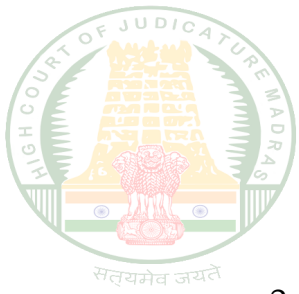
2.6. The Writ Petition not only deserves to be dismissed, but the petitioner also should not be involved in the administration of the endowment in any manner whatsoever.

2.7. Accordingly, with the above observations, W.P.No.30377 of 2024 shall stand dismissed, with costs of Rs.25,000/- payable by the petitioner to the Arulmigu Koodalazhagar Temple, Madurai. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petitions, if any, shall stand closed.

C. Writ Petition (MD)No.11935 of 2026:-

3. This Writ Petition is filed by the petitioner, D.Thirupathy, S/o Dakshinamoorthy.

3.1. The prayer is for a Mandamus directing the 1st respondent, viz., the Commissioner, to permit the petitioner, as the hereditary trustee representing the Senior Muthusamy Pillai branch, to perform the mandagapadi and annadhanam at the Nachiyarammal Trust Mandapam, Vandiyoor, Madurai District, during the deity Lord Sri Kallazhagar's ceremonial visit as part of the Chithirai festival on 01.05.2026 and 02.05.2026.



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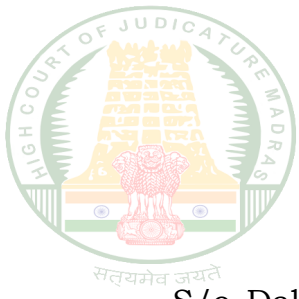
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3.2. It must be noted that an interim order was passed with reference to the said festival, and these matters could not be decided for want of time. In view of the fact that the festival is now over, nothing remains to be decided in this Writ Petition. Accordingly, this Writ Petition is dismissed as infructuous. No costs. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petitions, if any, shall stand closed.

D. Writ Petition (MD)Nos.14357 of 2025, 10020, 12986, 7729 and 9976 of 2026:-

4. These Writ Petitions challenge the notification dated 06.05.2025 issued by the Joint Commissioner, Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department, Madurai. By the said notification, an advertisement was issued for the appointment of trustees in respect of the endowment. The notification states that applications are invited for the appointment of three hereditary trustees from the three clans, viz., the Senior Muthusamy Pillai branch, the Junior Muthusamy Pillai branch, and the Sundararaja Pillai branch, and two non-hereditary trustees. The candidates are requested to apply in accordance with the procedure mentioned therein.

4.1. W.P.(MD)No.9976 of 2026 is filed by D.Thirupathy, S/o Dakshinamoorthy, D.Tamil Ganesan, S/o Dakshinamoorthy, D.Sivakumar,



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S/o Dakshinamoorthy and D. Muthuselvam, S/o Dakshinamoorthy. Of the four, even in the affidavit filed in support of the Writ Petition, it is admitted that earlier the 2nd petitioner - D. Tamil Ganesan, S/o Dakshinamoorthy, had challenged the notification by way of W.P.No.17445 of 2025 and has withdrawn the same.

4.2. It is evident from the said order dated 19.08.2025 that no liberty has been granted to him to file the second Writ Petition on the same cause of action. Accordingly, W.P.(MD)No. 9976 of 2026 shall stand dismissed *in limine* in respect of the 2nd petitioner.

4.3. The claim of the other petitioners, viz., 1st, 3rd and 4th, is that they are entitled to be recognized as hereditary trustees, next in line of succession, on the demise of their father, Dakshinamoorthy, in respect of the Senior Muthusamy Pillai branch. It is their case that their grandfather, viz., M.P.Anandan Pillai, was the hereditary trustee representing the Senior Muthusamy Pillai branch, and when Anandan Pillai died, Dakshinamoorthy, being next in line of succession, succeeded him. Thereafter, the 2nd petitioner – Tamil Ganesan – filed an application under Section 54(1) of the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act (in short 'the Act') to recognize him as the hereditary trustee, next in line of succession,



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representing the Senior Muthusamy Pillai branch, and the petitioners 1, 3 and 4 have consented to the recognition of the 2nd petitioner as the hereditary trustee, next in line of succession, representing the Senior Muthusamy Pillai branch.

4.4. Thus, it is clear that petitioners 1, 3 and 4 do not claim to appoint themselves as the hereditary trustee. Only the 2nd petitioner, Tamil Ganesan, has made a claim, and it is pending. Therefore, except to observe that the 2nd petitioner's claim will also be considered by the 2nd respondent, viz., the Joint Commissioner, Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department, Madurai, in the manner known to law as hereinafter contained in the detailed directions issued in respect of the other writ petitions with similar prayers, the prayer made in the Writ Petition cannot be countenanced. Accordingly, W.P.(MD)No.9976 of 2026 shall stand dismissed. No costs. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petitions, if any, shall stand closed.

4.5. R. Vijayakumar, S/o. Ramalingam and Pichaiammal @ Kamatchiammal, has filed W.P.(MD)No.14357 of 2025. It is his case that after the suspension of M. Thiruppathi, who was representing the Junior Muthusamy Pillai branch, his mother, Pichaiammal @ Kamatchiammal, was

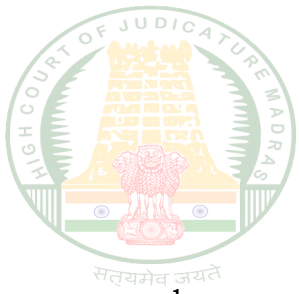


Cont.P.(MD)No.1031 of 2026 etc. batch

recognised as the hereditary trustee representing the Junior Muthusamy Pillai branch. In 2019, he filed M.P. No. 209 of 2019 seeking removal of his mother, Pichaiammal @ Kamatchiammal, and appointment of himself in her place. It is his further case that, when Pichaiammal @ Kamatchiammal was appointed, directions were issued to take all necessary steps to retrieve the lands within three months and report the same to the jurisdictional Joint Commissioner. Since no action was taken by her, the application filed by the petitioner was allowed in part by an order dated 27.03.2025, removing the petitioner's mother. However, instead of appointing the petitioner herein, a fit person was appointed. The petitioner has already challenged the appointment of the fit person in W.P.(MD)No.13433 of 2025, which will be dealt with later in this order.

4.6. Therefore, when the petitioner is simply required to be recognized as a hereditary trustee, inviting applications for determining every line of succession by the impugned notification is illegal. In any event, the impugned notification must be confined only to non-hereditary trustees.

4.7. W.P.(MD)No.10020 of 2026 is filed by S.Gopalakrishnan. He claims that his late father, Sethuraman, was the hereditary trustee representing the Junior Muthusamy Pillai branch, pursuant to the order dated 14.02.1974. Thereafter, his uncle, viz., M.Thiruppathi, was recognised, and he has now

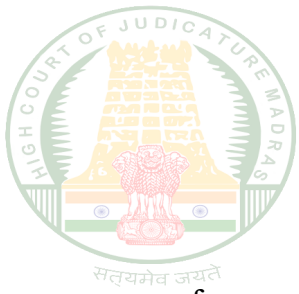


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been removed from the office of hereditary trustee. Therefore, he has the right to be recognized as a hereditary trustee, and thus, without recognising him as the hereditary trustee, calling for a fresh application is illegal.

4.8. W.P.(MD)No.12986 of 2026 is filed by one Murugan, S/o Dakshinamoorthy. It is also his case that after the death of his grandfather, Anandam Pillai, his father, Dakshinamoorthy, succeeded to the trusteeship and administered the trust. It is further seen that the said Dakshinamoorthy married one Vellachi, and out of the said wedlock, three children, namely, Anandhi, Dhavamani, and the petitioner herein, Murugan, were born. It is the further case of the petitioner that one Baby, who is not the legally wedded wife of the said Dakshinamoorthy, gave birth to Tamil Ganesan, Thirupathi, Sivakumar, and Muthuselvam through the said Dakshinamoorthy.

4.9. During that period, the said Dakshinamoorthy, along with the said Baby, was involved in selling the trust properties to one Ramesh. It is the further case of the petitioner that after the death of his father – Dakshinamoorthy, Tamil Ganesan obtained patta. Therefore, the petitioner – Murugan filed O.S. No. 189 of 2022 to declare himself the legal heir of Dakshinamoorthy. He also sent several representations seeking recognition as the hereditary trustee for the Senior Muthusamy Pillai branch. However, the



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aforementioned Baby was wrongly appointed as trustee by an order dated 19.01.2021. She was not even a descendant of Senior Muthusamy Pillai, and, by abuse of power, the then Joint Commissioner of the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department, Madurai, appointed her as a trustee. However, the said Baby died on 29.04.2021. Even though the petitioner had challenged her appointment in W.P. (MD) No. 9449 of 2021, in view of the death of the Baby, the Writ Petition was closed, directing the 2nd respondent therein to fill up the vacancy as per Section 54 of the Act.

4.10. Even thereafter, several applications were sent by the said Murugan. Without considering the applications, the impugned notification was issued, inviting applications and hence the present Writ Petition.

4.11. W.P. (MD) No. 7729 of 2026 is filed by R.Meenakshisundaram, who describes himself as representing the trustee of Nacharammal kattalai.

4.12. It is his case that his mother, representing the Junior Muthusamy Pillai branch, was recognized as the hereditary trustee. When she was about 90 years old and could no longer effectively administer the trust, an order dated 27.03.2025 removed her and appointed a fit person. Upon his mother's removal, being the person next in line of succession, he should have been



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recognized as the hereditary trustee. Under these circumstances, he was shocked to learn that the impugned notification was issued. Challenging the same, the Writ Petition is filed.

4.13. Upon consideration of the prayer and the rival claims, it is seen that, as on date, the endowment has to be administered by three hereditary trustees from the respective three clans and two non-hereditary trustees. It is also seen that in 2010, two non-hereditary trustees were appointed, and after their tenure ended, the posts remained vacant. The petitioner himself accepted that there is nothing wrong with the impugned notification regarding the appointment of non-hereditary trustees.

4.14. As far as hereditary trustees are concerned, it is true that the office of the hereditary trustee devolves as per the rule of succession, and it is not a case of appointment by the Joint Commissioner, but only a case of recognition of the person who has succeeded to the office. Therefore, in claiming succession to the office, all the petitioners have already filed applications. Certain allegations have also been made that some of the petitioners have mutated the patta pertaining to the endowment properties in their individual names and that they are disqualified, including for involvement in criminal cases.



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4.15. It is a settled principle of law that an endowment created for religious purposes, such as the one on hand, constitutes a religious institution within the meaning of the Act. If the endowment is for purposes connected with activities inside the temple, such as pooja, etc., the deity itself becomes the owner of the land, and it will be administered by the trustees attached to the temple. On the other hand, if the endowment is for a purpose, though connected with the temple, relating to any pious obligations to be performed outside the temple premises, as in the instant case, it has to be treated as a religious institution of its own, and the persons representing are to act as Dharmakarthas (Trustees) who can only administer the properties of the endowment and spend the income, truly and properly accounting for the same for the purposes mentioned therein. The conduct of mandagapadi and pooja for the deity, Lord Shri Kallazhagar, during the Chithirai festival is one of the most popular pious obligations in and around the Madurai District.

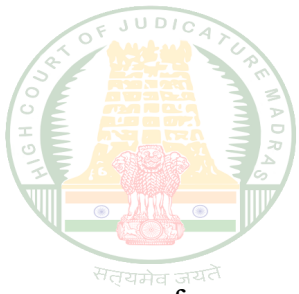
4.16. It is claimed by one of the petitioners that the properties endowed as on date are of the value around Rs. 800 Crores. It is seen that the revenue records in respect of several properties are in the individual names and not in the name of the Nacharammal Kattalai. Therefore, the primary objective is firstly to mutate the revenue records in favour of the Nacharammal Kattalai.



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Secondly, if anybody is in an unauthorized occupation, they have to be evicted in the manner known to law, and the properties have to be properly cultivated by leasing out in the manner known to law, and the income has to be generated and applied by the trustees representing the Kattalai for the purposes mentioned therein. Merely because some of the lands are dry lands and do not have irrigation facilities cannot be grounds to sell or otherwise dispose of the property. Lands are now valuable, and the same is increasing day by day. Cultivation is happening even in dry areas through bore wells, drip irrigation, etc. Thus, the contention that cultivation is not possible is rejected.

4.17. Though an order is normally passed under Section 54 merely recognizing the hereditary trusteeship, here it is not a simple exercise. There is also a dispute to be considered under Section 63 of the Act. For these purposes, if the applications have already been made by the Writ Petitioners, the same shall be considered by the 2nd respondent – the Joint Commissioner, Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department, Madurai, on their own merits. The list of properties of the endowment shall be enumerated and listed by the Jurisdictional Assistant Commissioner. Considering the extraordinary situation, every petitioner before this Court or any other person claiming to be recognized as a hereditary trustee or applying



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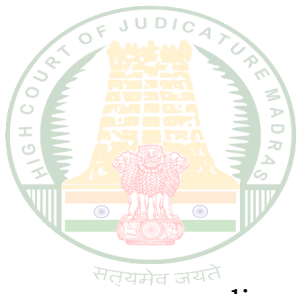
for non-hereditary trustee, in addition to complying with the regal procedure, shall file a notarized affidavit, (i) acknowledging that the list of properties as contained in the list prepared by the Assistant Commissioner belong to the Nacharammal Kattalai and he has no objection in mutating the revenue records; (ii) he is not in possession or cultivation of the said lands; (iii) the lands can be leased by public auction for cultivation; (iv) and that he will take all such steps in that direction and argument the income for Nacharammal Kattalai; (iv) disclose whether he was arrayed as an accused in any first information report; whether any final report was filed against him before any court; whether he was convicted or acquitted in any criminal case; whether any first information report or criminal case or appeal or further proceedings are pending against him. Strict scrutiny should be made with reference to the disqualifications as contained under Section 26 of the Act. If any one of the petitioners has already dealt with or in any manner been involved in the misappropriation of the endowed property, their applications shall be rejected. Any other disqualifications should also be considered. Thereafter, among the eligible persons, the next in line of succession must be determined in accordance with the existing scheme.

4.18. Therefore, even though the petitioners have already made applications for recognition, pursuant to the notification, they shall make a



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representation enclosing their earlier application and the affidavit as stated supra. The 2nd respondent can very well proceed to appoint the non-hereditary trustees from among the applicants, provided they are qualified and persons of integrity and devotion, capable of carrying out the purposes. If no qualified candidate has applied, a fresh advertisement can again be issued. As far as the hereditary trusteeship is concerned, pending applications of all the legal heirs, including those of the Writ Petitioners herein, along with any applications received pursuant to the impugned advertisement, shall be considered by the 2nd respondent in accordance with law and the rule of succession. After eliminating those involved in misappropriation of the properties or any other disqualification, suitable persons next in line of succession as per the scheme shall be appointed. The said process shall be conducted in an open and transparent manner by conducting an enquiry, fixing the dates of the enquiry, and permitting the petitioners to participate therein. During the enquiry, the petitioners or any other person claiming such office who has filed an affidavit shall be heard. All such applications earlier made and now made pursuant to the impugned notification shall all be considered together. All the petitioners are entitled to place before the 2nd respondent as to the eligibility or otherwise of themselves and the rival contesting parties. A specific date shall be given by the 2nd respondent before which all such documents have to be supplied. Such documents given by the



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applicants shall be indexed date-wise and be marked and referred to in the order appointing hereditary trustees, and every allegation made against every applicant should be adverted to, and a reasoned order should be passed as to how the said allegation is incorrect, correct or not a relevant consideration for the appointment of hereditary trustees. By order of speaking, hereditary trustees from the three clans shall be appointed, as per rule of succession if fit candidates are available. The aforesaid exercise shall be completed within a period of three months from the date of receipt of a website uploaded copy of this order.

4.19. In the meanwhile, the 2nd respondent shall pursue with the revenue and other authorities to update/mutate the revenue records in respect of all the properties which belong to the Nacharammal Kattalai. Once the hereditary and non-hereditary trustees assume office, the earliest person appointed to office shall, within four weeks of assuming office, bring to the notice of the jurisdictional Assistant Commissioner the properties which are encroached upon and possessed by any third parties or any family members. The jurisdictional Assistant Commissioner shall file an application under Sections 78 and 79 of the Act before the appropriate authorities, and all the unauthorized encroachers shall be evicted. Steps shall be taken to lease out the properties in an open and transparent manner, in accordance with the rules, and to augment income for the Kattalai.



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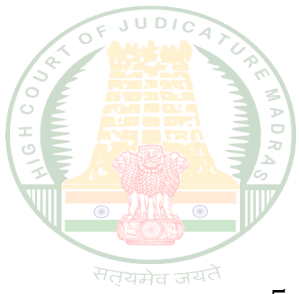
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4.20. Simultaneously, if any tenant is in arrears of rent, the arrears shall be recovered, and steps shall be taken to evict the defaulting tenants. It will also be open to the authorities to regularize any person who is otherwise in possession as a tenant, provided the party agrees that he is the tenant under the Kattalai and agrees to pay the rent that may be fixed by the authorities. The list of properties shall be meticulously compiled and maintained in a digital format. The movables, including the bank account, shall be duly administered by the duly appointed trustees and shall be periodically supervised and checked by the Joint Commissioner.

4.21. With the above observations and directions, these Writ Petitions are disposed of. No costs. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petitions, if any, shall be closed.

E. Writ Petition (MD) Nos.13433, 13979 and 14043 of 2025:

5. These Writ Petitions are filed challenging the order dated 27.03.2025, in as much as it appoints a fit person after removing the existing trustee - Pichaiammal @ Kamatchiammal with a consequential prayer to record the name of the respective petitioners as the trustees.



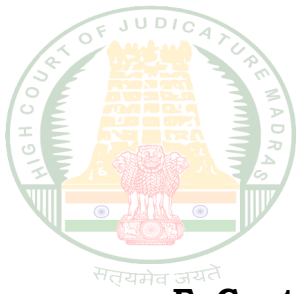
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5.1. In this regard, it can be seen that, as against the order dated 27.03.2025, there is an effective alternate remedy of filing a revision before the 1st respondent is available and already a revision petition in RP No.56 of 2025 is pending. It is also stated that some of the petitioners are already parties in the said revision. Any of the Writ petitioners who have not been made a party in the said RP No.56 of 2025 can also file an application to implead them as a party in the said revision petition.

5.2. It is already stated that an order of interim stay has been granted, and this Court, under extraordinary circumstances, permitted certain duties with reference to the conduct of mandagapadi for this year alone. That will not in any manner influence the commissioner before whom the revision is pending. Thus, after hearing all the concerns, the Revision Petition No. 56 of 2025 will be disposed of as expeditiously as possible. Further, once the decision regarding the appointment of the non-hereditary and hereditary trustees is complete, that would bring about a solution and would redress the grievance of the Writ Petitioners.

5.3. With the above said observations and directions, these Writ Petitions are disposed of. No costs. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petitions, if any, shall stand closed.



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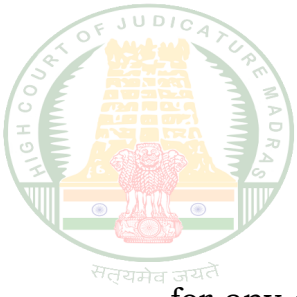
F. Contempt Petition (MD) No.1031 of 2026:

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6. This Contempt Petition is filed complaining of willful disobedience of the order dated 07.01.2026 in W.P.(MD)No.277 of 2026.

6.1. It is the contention of the petitioner that when the 3rd respondent therein, viz., the Assistant Commissioner, who was also appointed as the fit person, was directed not to interfere with the affairs of the trust, and the 1st respondent therein was directed to dispose of the revision petition within a period of three months, the interview with reference to the notification was not proceeded with, and the revision was also not disposed of within the time fixed by this Court, hence the Contempt Petition.

6.2. It can be seen that the situation arose in view of the factual matrix contained in the claims and counter-claims made and dealt with *supra* by the various orders in the Writ Petitions. Accordingly, the respondents' action cannot be said to be willful disobedience. Now, this Court has directed expeditious disposal of the revision and that all the cases of the family members be considered. The grievance that none of the family members were called for interview can no longer hold good, in view of the directions made *supra*. No further action need be taken in the Contempt Petition. If any of the above directions, which are now issued, are not complied with, it will be open



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for any one of the petitioners to approach this Court by way of an appropriate Contempt Petition.

6.3. With the above observations, this Contempt Petition shall stand disposed of.

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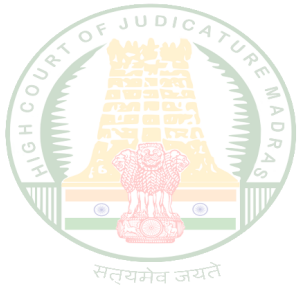
Neutral citation : Yes

To

1. The Joint Commissioner
HR & CE Department
Madurai.

2. The Assistant Commissioner/Executive Officer
Arulmigu Koodal Azhagar Thirukoil
Madurai.

3. The Inspector, Madurai North
HR & CE Department, Ellis Nagar, Madurai.



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D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY, J.

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Pre-Delivery Common Order made in
**Cont.P.(MD)No.1031 of 2026 and W.P.(MD)Nos.30377 of 2024, 13433,
13979, 14043, 14357 of 2025, 7729, 9976, 10020, 11935 & 12986 of
2026
and W.M.P.(MD) Nos.25547 of 2024, 9666, 9670, 10132, 10133, 10134,
10175, 10176, 10543, 10544 of 2025, 6303, 6306, 6854, 7848, 7849,
7850, 7872, 7874, 9733 & 9736 of 2026**

01.06.2026

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