



W.P(MD)No.7895 of 2026

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 24.03.2026

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR JUSTICE D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY

Writ Petition(MD)No.7895 of 2026

R.Rajendran

..Petitioner

Vs

1.The District Collector,
Pudukkottai District,
Pudukkottai.

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

3.The Assistant Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments
Department,
Pudukkottai.

4.The Executive Officer,
Pudukkottai Devasthanam,
Pudukkottai District.

5.The Tahsildar,
Alangudi Taluk,
Pudukkottai District.

6.The Inspector of Police,
Alangudi Police Station,
Pudukkottai District.

7.K.Aathimoolam

8.V.Rajendran

..Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying this Court to issue a Writ of Mandamus to direct the fourth



W.P(MD)No.7895 of 2026

respondent to permit the petitioner and other villagers of Vadakku Agraharam Village, Alangudi Taluk, Pudukkottai District, to carry the Urchavar Deity of Arulmigu Mazhai Mariyamman Temple, Senthakudi Village in a decorated motor vehicle on the 10th day Mandagapadi Festival scheduled from 31.03.2026 to 01.04.2026 to permit them to carry the Urchavar Deity of Arulmigu Mazhai Mariyamman Temple, Senthakudi Village in a bullock cart by the person selected by the villagers of Vadakku Agraharam Village on the rotational basis as per customs by considering the petitioner's representation dated 12.02.2026.

For Petitioner	: Mr.M.P.Senthil
For R1 to R3 & R5	: Mr.J.K.Jeyaselan Government Advocate
For R4	: Mr.G.Mathavan
For R7	: Mr.M.C.Maninder Nath
For R6	: Mr.K.Gnanasekaran Government Advocate (crl.side)
For R8	: Mr.M.Rajarajan

ORDER

By consent, this writ petition is taken up for final disposal at the admission stage itself.

2.This writ petition is filed seeking for a writ mandamus directing the 4th respondent to permit the petitioner and other villagers of Vadakku Agraharam Village, Alangudi Taluk, Pudukkottai District, to carry the Urchavar Deity of “Arumighu Mazhai Mariyamman Temple”, Senthakudi Village in a decorated motor vehicle on the 10th day Mandagapadi Festival scheduled to be held on 31.03.2026 and 01.04.2026 or to permit them to



W.P(MD)No.7895 of 2026

carry the Urchavar Deity in a bullock cart by the person selected by the villagers of Vadakku Agraharam Village on the rotational basis as per customs by considering the petitioner's representation dated 12.02.2026.

3.Upon hearing the learned counsel for the petitioner and perusing the affidavit and other material records of the case, the case of the petitioner is that when a dispute arose as to the 10th day Mandagapadi festival, originally when it was claimed by a sub-sect, orders have been passed that the mentioning of the sect name is incorrect and as a matter of fact, the festival in question belongs to the Village. Reliance is made on the order dated 13.01.2026 passed by the Joint Commissioner, Thanjavur. If that be the case, for this year, the Executive Officer had nevertheless permitted one of the descendents of the same sub-sect, being the private respondents 7 and 8, to carry the Urchavar Deity in a bullock cart.

4.According to the learned counsel for the petitioner, time has come to change the bullock cart into motor vehicle and any person from the village should be permitted to drive the vehicle.

5.The learned counsel appearing on behalf of the Department would submit that earlier when the orders were directed to be passed by considering the situation, the Joint Commissioner had passed the order.



W.P(MD)No.7895 of 2026

6.The learned counsel appearing on behalf of the Executive officer would submit that after the orders have been passed that the sub-caste or sub-sect should not be permitted to conduct the Mandagapadi and it is only the villagers, who are entitled to conduct. By considering the traditional practice, that one S.R.S.Selvaraj and Aathimoolam's family alone have been traditionally driving the bullock cart and their family members are directed to do the same. A specific order, in this regard, has been passed by the Executive Officer on 10.03.2026 and accordingly, without reference to any caste or sub-sect, the festival will be conducted for this year. The petitioner as well as all the other devotees will be participating in the Urchavar festival and in the presence of all the villagers, the deity will be taken in a bullock cart.

7.The learned counsel appearing on behalf of the 7th and 8th respondents would submit that they are the family members of the said S.R.S.Selvaraj and Aathimoolam. Traditionally, they have the customary rights. The learned counsel would point out that even last year 'Sagadai' is driven only by the 7th respondent's son. This year also, as per the traditions and practices, the 'Sagadai' will be driven by the 7th and 8th respondents and their family members only. Therefore, when the festival is about to take place, the same need not be interfered with. Even the order passed by the Joint Commissioner is without notice to the respondents 7 and 8.



W.P(MD)No.7895 of 2026

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8.Considered the rival submissions made on either side and perused the material records of the case.

9.It can be seen that earlier when the dispute arose as to who is entitled to conduct the 10th day Mandagapadi Festival, the same is decided by the order dated 13.01.2026. Even if anybody is aggrieved of the said order, the aggrieved party shall file such appeal as may be permissible under law. Now, even going by the order, when the name of the community has rightly been removed and it has been held that the festival belongs to the village, the question that arises is as to the method to be followed among the villagers. Whether the respondents 7 and 8 have a customary right to drive the 'Sagadai' or whether it was alternatively held on rotation by the villagers, as claimed by the learned counsel for the petitioner, or whether a new method of selecting one of the persons from the village has to be adopted, are all matters pertaining to the customary rights and practices of the Temple. Such issues fall within the jurisdiction of the Joint Commissioner and are required to be decided under Section 63 of the Act.

10.Therefore, the petitioner, if he is aggrieved by the fact that the 7th and 8th respondents are wrongly being permitted by the Executive Officer,



W.P(MD)No.7895 of 2026

shall approach the second respondent by a specific application under Section 63 of the Act and the second respondent shall issue notice to the petitioner, 7th and 8th respondents or any other persons, who will be interested and conduct an enquiry and pass orders. Thereafter, the parties should be governed by the order that is passed by the second respondent. Within two weeks from the date of receipt of the web copy of the order, the petitioner shall make an application. As and when such application is received, the second respondent shall conduct enquiry and pass final orders thereon, within a period of four(4) months from the date of filing of the application.

11.With the above directions, this Writ Petition is disposed of. No costs.

12.It is made clear that no equitable right can be claimed by any person whatsoever merely because this Court has not interfered for the present year and no right can be claimed by any of the parties with reference to the same.

24.03.2026

NCC : Yes/No



W.P(MD)No.7895 of 2026

Index : Yes/No
Internet:Yes
Rmk

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W.P(MD)No.7895 of 2026

D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY, J.

Rmk

Writ Petition(MD)No.7895 of 2026

24.03.2026