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W.P.No.27356 of 2019

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 24.04.2026

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE N.SATHISH KUMAR

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY

[Through Video Conferencing]

**W.P.No.27356 of 2019 &
W.M.P.No.37000 of 2024**

W.P.No.27356 of 2019

Mr. S.Muralidharan
S/o.Mr.P.Sivalingam, 2A, 3rd Main Road,
Kottur Gardens, Chennai-600 085

Petitioner(s)

Vs

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forests,
Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
No.1 Jeenis Road, Panagal Buildings,
Saidapet, Chennai-600 015 and 76 Others

Respondent(s)

W.M.P.No.37000 of 2024

S.Muralidharan

... Petitioner (s)

Vs

Principal Chief Conservator Of Forests And
Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forests,
Govt. Of Tamil Nadu, No.1 Jeenis Road,
Panagal Buildings, Saidapet,
Chennai-600 015 and 64 Others

... Respondent(s)



W.P.No.27356 of 2019

W.P.No.27356 of 2019 :

For Petitioner :

Mr.Muralidharan (P-IN-P)

For Respondent(s):

Dr.T.Seenivasan,
Special Government Pleader (Forests),
for RR1, 3 & 5

Mr.P.Wilson, Senior Counsel
assisted by Dr.T.Seenivasan,
Special Government Pleader (Forests) for R74 (TTDC)

R2 – Deleted vide Court order dated 09.01.2021 in
W.M.P.No.4685 of 2021 in W.P.No.27356 of 2019

Mr.B.N.Suchindran,
Standing Counsel for R4 (TNPCB)

Mr.V.Chandrasekaran, Senior Panel Counsel for R6

Mr.S.P.Chockalingam for R7

Mr.L.Jaivenkatesh, Standing Counsel for R8

Mr.Richardson Wilson for RR9 to 11, 16 to 45

RR 12 to 15 - No Appearance

Mr.N.Muralikumaran,
Senior Counsel for M/s.MCGAN Law Firm
for RR 46 to 49

Mr.L.Palanimuthu for RR 50 to 64

Mr.M.Purushothaman for RR 65 & 66

Mr.Ramasamy Meiyappan for R67

R68 – Returned unserved (Insufficient Address)

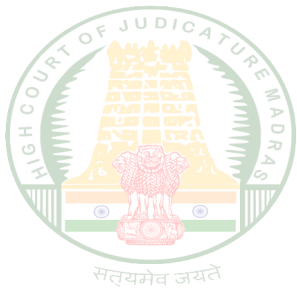
Mr.V.Jayaprakash Narayanan for RR 69 to 73

Mr.N.R.R.Arun Natarajan,
Standing Counsel for R75 (HR & CE)

R76 – Fresh Notice (Service awaited)

R77 – Fresh Notice (Service awaited)

Mr.K.M.D.Muhilan,
Additional Public Prosecutor
for the Special Investigation Team (SIT)



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Amici Curiae

1. Mr.C.Mohan, Advocate
2. Mr.T.Mohan, Senior Advocate
3. Mr.M.Santhanaraman, Advocate
4. Mr.Rahul Balaji, Advocate

ORDER

(A) Usage of Speed Boats / Mechanised Boats :

The Learned Senior Counsel appearing on behalf of the Tamil Nadu Tourism Corporation by placing on record an affidavit filed by the said corporation would seek the following relief.

2. By relying upon paragraph Nos.11 to 13, he would submit that the organization nominated by this Court to undertake the study, viz., Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore, had submitted a quote of Rs.23,57,500/- , which is abnormally high.

3. Per contra, the learned Senior Counsel would submit that the State-run the Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation, Vandalur, can be required to conduct this study. We are in agreement with the same. Therefore, the order to that effect can be modified.



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4. The learned Senior Counsel also wants to make second modification that until the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation procures the electric outboard motors and take steps to operate its boat through electric motors, the interim injunction should be temporarily lifted and they should be permitted to run motorised boats run on petrol or diesel.

5. The learned Senior Counsel would also submit that the even though eco-friendly electric outboard motors have been procured, certain other components must be imported, which is currently difficult on account of the Gulf War. Therefore, in the interregnum, the learned Senior Counsel would submit that in the absence of any report to the contrary, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation should be permitted to operate petrol powered motorboats.

6. The learned Senior Counsel would submit that they would stop using the jet ski boats. He would also submit that the place in question has a depth of 110 metres and therefore, there is no question of introducing pedal boats or rowing boats in the lake.

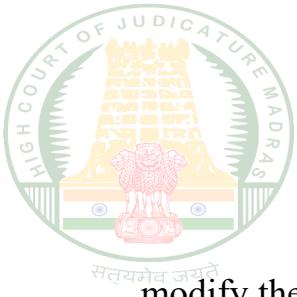
7. We have considered the submission made.



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8. As a matter of fact, in spite of the earlier order, no steps were taken

to collect the samples or commence the study. Merely because no steps were taken to implement the order even to collect the samples, the order of interim injunction was granted. After the interim injunction was granted, it is now stated in the affidavit filed by the 74th respondent that the Central Soil and Water Conservation Research, Demonstration and Training Institute, Udhagamandalam has nominated a team and carried out the field inspections. Soil and water samples were collected on 24.03.2026 and have been sent for scientific analysis. It is further submitted that the report from National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), after detailed laboratory analysis, is awaited. Therefore, when already samples have already been collected and the laboratory analysis report is awaited, in the interregnum, the stand of the Corporation has changed from their original stand that there is nothing wrong with petrol and diesel powered motor. Now they want to migrate to electric powered outboard motor boats. The Court had the consideration of environment, safety of water source, air and water pollution resulting in loss of ecology and biodiversity. The emergent prayer is made only submitting that the Corporation will lose profit by 40 lakhs. The interim order granted is only temporary in nature, pending further studies. Let the report be placed on record and thereafter the matter can be considered.



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9. As far as our earlier order dated 13.02.2026 is concerned, we

modify the same to the effect that instead of Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore, the Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation, Vandalur, shall carry out the study as directed. Let due communication be sent to the said Institute to nominate experts to conduct the study of the area in question.

10. Post this matter on **05.06.2026** for consideration of the NEERI report. It is also made clear that even in the absence of the petrol motorboat activity, let the study be done and analysis be proceeded with.

[N.S.K., J.] [D.B.C., J.]
24.04.2026

vsm

To

- 1.The Principal Secretary,
Department of Forests And Environment,
St. George Fort, Chennai 600 009.
- 2.The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
(Head of Forest Force),
Forest Head Quarters,
Guindy-Velachery Main Road,
Velachery, Chennai – 600 032.
- 3.The District Collector,
The Nilgiris, Ooty,
The Nilgiris District.
- 4.The District Collector,
Coimbatore.
- 5.The District Forest Officer,
Kodaikanal, Dindigul District.

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6.The Assistant Director of Rural Development,
Coimbatore.

7.The Commissioner,
Department of Geology and Mining,
Thiru.Vi.Ka.Industrial Estate, Alandur Road,
Guindy, Chennai-600 002

8.Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,
Indira Paryavaran Bhavan, Jorbagh Road, New Delhi-110 003

9.The Superintending Engineer (Coimbatore North),
Tamilnadu Generation and Distribution Limited (TANGEDCO),
Tatabad, Coimbatore.

10.The Principal Secretary/Chairman,
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,
No.76, Mount Salai, Guindy, Chennai- 600 032

11.The Managing Director
Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation
Wallajah Road, Chennai – 600 002.

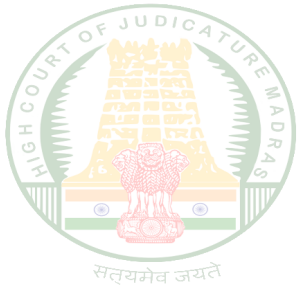
12.The Director,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
No.119, Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam High Road,
Chennai – 600 034.

13.The Special Government Pleader (Forests),
Madras High Court, High Court Campus,
Chennai 600 104.

14.The Commissioner,
Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation,
Coimbatore.

Copy to

The Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation,
Vandalur, Chennai.



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AND
D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY, J.

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