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W.P. No.40191 of 2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 17.03.2026

CORAM:

THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE M. DHANDAPANI

W.P.No.40191 of 2025

1. T.Kalaimani

2.R.Arumugam

Petitioners

Vs

1. The Commissioner
Hindu Religious and Charitable
Endowment Dept,
Nungambakkam High Road,
Chennai-34.

2.The Joint Commissioner
Hindu Religious and Charitable
Endowment Dept,
Thiruvannamalai

3.The Assistant Commissioner
Hindu Religious and Charitable
Endowment Dept,
Thiruvannamalai

4.The Executive Officer
Arulmigu Panchaiamman Temple,
Arulmigu Mannaarsamy Temple,
Thiruvannamalai

Respondents



W.P. No.40191 of 2025

Prayer : Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, for the issuance of a Writ of Mandamus to direct the 4th respondent to not to interfere with the worship of the petitioners in the Arulmigu Mannaarsamy Temple, permit them to perform pujas

For Petitioners : Mr.VR. Vishnu

For Respondents : Mr.N.R.R. Arun Natarajan

Spl. Govt. Pleader for R1 to R4

ORDER

This Writ Petition has been filed seeking issuance of a Writ of Mandamus directing the 4th respondent not to interfere with the right of the Petitioners to worship and perform poojas in Arulmigu Mannarsamy Sametha Pachaiyamman Temple situated at Chettikulam Hill, Polur Road, Tiruvannamalai.

2. The case of the petitioners is that they are worshippers belonging to one of the families and performing poojas in the aforesaid Temple. According to the petitioners' their forefathers were Trustees of the Temple and a Trust Deed dated 22.01.199 was also executed in this regard. It is the stand of the petitioners that the poojas in the said Temple have been performed in a rotational manner among five groups of families, each allotted specific days in every Tamil month.



3. While so, the Temple administration was taken over by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department in June 2024. Thereafter, the 4th Respondent issued a notice dated 10.05.2025 calling upon petitioners to furnish certain accounts relating to Temple collections. The petitioners have submitted a reply and sought time; however, according to them, the 4th respondent, without any authority, has been interfering with their right to perform pooja and worship in the Temple. Aggrieved by such interference, the present Writ Petition has been filed.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioners submitted that the petitioners, being worshippers and they are entitled to perform poojas on the allotted days. He further submitted that it is the fundamental right to worship and hence, the petitioners cannot be prevented from performing pooja. In the light of the above, he prayed for issuance of appropriate directions.

5. Per contra, learned Special Government Pleader appearing for the respondents submitted that separate poojaris have been appointed for conducting the poojas in the temple and the petitioners cannot claim an exclusive right to perform pooja. He further submitted that the petitioners, who are worshippers, are always entitled to offer prayers, however, they cannot interfere with the administration of the Temple or disturb the functioning of the appointed poojaris.



6. This Court has considered the rival submissions made by learned counsel on either side and perused the materials available on record.

7. It is not in dispute that the petitioners are worshippers of the Temple. It is the right of a devotee to enter a Temple and offer worship, subject to reasonable regulations imposed by the Temple administration.

8. At the same time, once the Temple has been brought under the control of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, the administration, including the conduct of poojas, is to be regulated in accordance with law and by the authorities concerned. The petitioners cannot insist on performing poojas in a manner that would interfere with the administration or the duties of the appointed poojaris.

9. However, the apprehension of the petitioners that they are being prevented from even offering worship cannot be countenanced. The respondents are duty bound to ensure that no obstruction is caused to any devotee in offering worship, subject to the established procedures of the Temple.

10. Recording the submission made by the learned Special Government Pleader appearing for the respondents this Court permit the petitioners to offer their prayers and perform pooja in the said Temple, without any obstruction or without causing disturbances to others.



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11. In view of the above, this Writ Petition stands disposed of. No costs.

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Index : Yes / No

Speaking Order / Non-speaking order

Neutral Citation Case : Yes / No

vsi2

To

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