



IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA AT BENGALURU

DATED THIS THE 24TH DAY OF MARCH, 2026

BEFORE

THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SACHIN SHANKAR MAGADUM

WRIT PETITION NO. 11114 OF 2025 (GM-RES)

BETWEEN:

1. MRS. B. CHAMUNDI BUVANESWARI
W/O. MR.M. BALASUBRAMANIAM,
AGED ABOUT 60 YEARS,
RESIDING AT NO.15,
2ND MAIN ROAD, BINNY LAYOUT,
ATTIGUPPE, BANGALORE-560 040
2. MR. M BALASUBRAMANIAM,
S/O. LATE MR. MARUTHA CHETTIAR,
AGED ABOUT 65 YEARS,
RESIDING AT NO. 15, 2ND MAIN ROAD,
BINNY LAYOUT, ATTIGUPPE,
BANGALORE-560 040.

...PETITIONERS

(BY SRI. ROHIT RAJKUMAR KUKREJA.,ADVOCATE)

AND:

1. STATE OF KARNATAKA,
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY,
FINANCE DEPARTMENT,
VIDHANA SOUDHA,
BANGALORE - 560001
2. THE MANAGER, STATE BANK OF INDIA,
VIJAYANAGAR BRANCH (07985),
NO.2, 5TH MAIN, CHBHS, 1ST LAYOUT,
NEAR BDA COMPLEX, GOVINDRAJ NAGAR,
BANGALORE - 560040.





3. SMT. SRISUBHASHINI,
W/O. VIKRAM SRIKANTH B.,
D/O. MR. SHANMUGASUNDARAM,
AGED ABOUT 34 YEARS,
RESIDING AT NO.2/2 NRS NAGAR,
NARASIMHANAICKEN PALAYAM,
COIMBATORE- 641 031

...RESPONDENTS

(BY SRI. ADITYA DIWAKAR, AGA FOR R1;
SMT. SADANA S DESAI, ADVOCATE FOR R2;
SRI. KIRAN KUMAR H.S., ADVOCATE FOR R3)

THIS WP IS FILED UNDER ARTICLE 226 & 227 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA PRAYING TO DIRECTING THE RESPONDENT NO.2 TO FORTHWITH INITIATE THE BREAK-OPEN PROCEDURE FOR THE PETITIONERS LOCKER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPLICABLE BANKING REGULATIONS AND FACILITATE ITS FORMAL CLOSURE, THEREBY GRANTING THE PETITIONERS ACCESS TO THEIR LAWFUL PROPERTY.

THIS PETITION, COMING ON FOR PRELIMINARY HEARING, THIS DAY, ORDER WAS MADE THEREIN AS UNDER:

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SACHIN SHANKAR MAGADUM

ORAL ORDER

Captioned petition is filed seeking following reliefs:-

"a) Issue an appropriate writ of mandamus or any other writ, order, or direction, directing the Respondent No.2 to forthwith initiate the break-open procedure for the Petitioners' locker in accordance with the applicable banking regulations and facilitate its formal closure, thereby granting the Petitioners access to their lawful property;



b) Direct the Respondent No.2 to prepare an inventory of the locker's contents in the presence of authorized Bank officials and an independent neutral party, ensuring compliance with procedural safeguards;

c) Direct the Respondent No.2 to furnish the locker usage ledger from the year 2016 till date, ensuring that the Respondent No.2 is maintaining proper and correct records.

d) Direct the Respondent No.2 to compensate the Petitioners for the mental agony, harassment, and financial loss suffered due to the Bank's arbitrary and illegal conduct by awarding damages of ₹50,000 (Rupees Fifty Thousand Only) or such other amount as this Hon'ble Court may deem just and proper in the interest of justice;

e) Pass such other order or orders as this Hon'ble Court deems fit to grant in the circumstances of the case in the interest of justice and equity."

2. The petitioners, who are the parents-in-law of respondent No.3 (daughter-in-law), have approached this Court alleging inaction on the part of respondent No.2–Bank. Their grievance is that, despite repeated requests, the Bank has neither permitted the locker to be broken open in accordance with due procedure nor facilitated access to its contents by preparing an inventory in the



presence of authorised officials and an independent neutral witness. The petitioners are further aggrieved by the failure of the Bank to furnish the locker operation/usage ledger from the year 2016 till date.

3. Heard the learned counsel appearing for the petitioners, the learned counsel for respondent No.2– Bank, the learned Additional Government Advocate for the State, and the learned counsel appearing for respondent No.3.

4. A perusal of the records indicates that there exists a matrimonial dispute between the petitioners' son, namely Vikram Srikanth B, and respondent No.3 (daughter-in-law). It is evident that the petitioners' son had instituted proceedings seeking dissolution of marriage before the Principal Family Court, Coimbatore. The said petition was contested by respondent No.3, who, by way of counterclaim in I.A. No.3/2023, sought return of gold jewellery weighing 230 sovereigns. Upon appreciation of



the evidence on record, the Family Court dismissed the petition for dissolution of marriage and allowed the counterclaim, directing the petitioners' son to return the gold jewellery weighing 230 sovereigns, as claimed.

5. The present petitioners, who are senior citizens, contend that although respondent No.2-Bank continues to debit locker rent from their account, it has failed to discharge its corresponding obligations. In particular, the Bank has not provided access to the locker usage ledger from the year 2016 onwards. In this backdrop, and before proceeding further, this Court deems it appropriate to extract the operative portion of the order passed by the Family Court on the counterclaim, which reads as follows:

" a) that the divorce petition be and the same is hereby dismissed,

b) that the counter claim of the respondent is concerned, the counter claim is decreed partly by dismissing permanent alimony and allowing the counter claim in part and thus, the petitioner is directed to return the gold jewels of 230 sovereigns as mentioned in IA No.03/2023 in HMOP No.835/2022 to the respondent



within 3 months, failing which, the petitioner is directed to pay counter claim mentioned accrued interest of Rs.52,04,900/- towards retaining of the above said gold jewels and to pay subsequent interest at the rate of 12% per annum as per the respective rate of gold on the respective years till the delivery of the 230 sovereigns of gold ornaments, and

c) that there be no costs."

On a careful reading of the operative portion of the judgment extracted supra, this Court is of the considered view that the petitioners have made out a justifiable and legally sustainable ground to seek access to the locker operation ledger maintained by respondent No.2-Bank. The direction issued by the Family Court requiring the petitioners' son to return gold jewellery weighing 230 sovereigns, coupled with the alternative monetary liability with accrued and future interest, casts a serious civil consequence not only upon the petitioners' son but also indirectly upon the petitioners, who assert joint control and interest over the locker in question.



6. In the peculiar facts of the present case, where the very custody, possession, and handling of the alleged gold ornaments are seriously disputed by the petitioners as well as their son, the details pertaining to the operation of the locker assume critical significance. The locker usage ledger would disclose as to who had access to and actively operated the locker over the relevant period, thereby furnishing vital evidence in determining the question of custody and control of the gold ornaments forming the subject matter of the counterclaim.

7. This Court cannot lose sight of the fact that the petitioners' son intends to assail the judgment and decree passed by the Family Court before the High Court at Chennai. In order to effectively prosecute such appellate proceedings and to meaningfully challenge the findings recorded by the Family Court, it is crucial that the petitioners and their son are equipped with all relevant material evidence. Denial of access to the locker operation details would seriously prejudice their right to defend and



contest the claim relating to 230 sovereigns of gold ornaments and would impair their ability to place a complete and effective case before the appellate forum.

8. Though this Court is not inclined to grant the other reliefs sought in the writ petition, having regard to the requirement of ensuring a fair opportunity to the petitioners and their son to contest the proceedings in appeal, this Court is of the considered opinion that limited directions are warranted. Accordingly, in the interest of justice, respondent No.2-Bank is directed to consider the request made by the petitioners at prayer column (c) and furnish the locker operation/usage ledger and such relevant information, both to the petitioners and respondent No.3, strictly in accordance with law, within a reasonable time frame.

9. With these observations, this Court proceeds to pass the following:



ORDER

- (i) The writ petition is allowed in part.
- (ii) Respondent No.2-Bank is hereby directed to furnish to the petitioners the locker operation/usage ledger pertaining to the subject locker from the year 2016 till date, within a reasonable period and in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.
- (iii) Upon receipt of the said information, the petitioners shall be at liberty to take such steps as are available to them in law, including placing the said material before the appropriate appellate forum.
- (iv) All other reliefs sought in the writ petition stand rejected.
- (v) No order as to costs.

**SD/-
(SACHIN SHANKAR MAGADUM)
JUDGE**