

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM
PRESENT
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V
&
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE K. V. JAYAKUMAR

Wednesday, the 22nd day of October 2025 / 30th Aswina, 1947
DBP NO. 52 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD - COMPLAINT ALLEGING MALADMINISTRATION
AND CORRUPTION AT CHOTTANIKKARA - SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS INITIATED BASED ON A
COMPLAINT DATED 24.04.2025 FROM SRI. THAMPY THILAKAN-REG.

PETITIONER:

SUO MOTU

RESPONDENTS:

1. STATE OF KERALA
REPRESENTED BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
REVENUE (DEVASWOM) DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695001.
2. COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, ROUND NORTH,
THRISSUR - 680001.
3. COMMISSIONER
COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD, SWARAJ ROUND NORTH,
ROUND NORTH, THRISSUR, PIN-680 001
4. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
CHOTTANIKKARA DEVASWOM, CHOTTANIKKARA P.O.,
ERNAKULAM, PIN-682312
5. DEVASWOM MANAGER
CHOTTANIKKARA BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE, CHOTTANIKKARA P.O.,
ERNAKULAM, PIN-682312
6. THE TEMPLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, CHOTTANIKKARA TEMPLE COMPOUND,
CHOTTANIKKARA P.O., ERNAKULAM, PIN-682312

***ADDL.R7 & R8 IMPEADED**

7. THE CHOTTANIKKARA GRAMA PANCHAYAT,
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, CHOTTANIKKARA P.O.,
ERNAKULAM DISTRICT – 682312
8. THE DISTRICT TOWN PLANNER,
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT TOWN PLANNER, LSGD PLANNING,
DPC SECRETARIAT BUILDING, 4TH FLOOR, CIVIL STATION, KAKKANAD,
ERNAKULAM – 682030

***ARE SUO MOTU IMPEADED AS ADDITIONAL RESPONDENTS 7 AND 8 AS PER ORDER DATED 10/09/2025 IN DBP.NO.52/2025.**

***ADDL.R9 TO R11 IMPEADED**

9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SUCHITWA MISSION, DEPARTMENT OF LSGD, PUBLIC OFFICE BUILDING,
3RD FLOOR, REVENUE COMPLEX, LMS, VELLAYAMBALAM ROAD,
UNIVERSITY OF KERALA SENATE HOUSE CAMPUS, PALAYAM,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695033
10. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
MARAMATH WING, COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD, CDB HEAD QUARTERS,
SWARAJ ROUND NORTH, THRISSUR - 680001
11. ASSISTANT ENGINEER,
CHOTTANIKKARA DEVASWOM, CHOTTANIKKARA, KOCHI - 682 312

***ARE SUO MOTU IMPEADED AS ADDL.RESPONDENTS 9 TO 11 VIDE ORDER DATED 19.09.2025 IN DBP 52/2025.**

BY SRI.S.RAJMOHAN, SENIOR GOVERNMENT PLEADER

BY SRI.K.P.SUDHEER, SC, COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD

BY SRI.VINEETH KOMALACHANDRAN FOR ADDL.R7

THE DEVASWOM BOARD PETITION HAVING COME UP FOR ORDERS AGAIN ON 22/10/2025, UPON PERUSING THE PETITION AND THIS COURT'S ORDER DATED 16/10/2025, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY PASSED THE FOLLOWING:

**RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V.,
&
K.V. JAYAKUMAR, JJ.**

DBP No. 52 of 2025

Dated this the 22nd day of October, 2025

ORDER

Raja Vijayaraghavan V. J.

This Devaswom Board Petition brings to light serious lapses in the cleanliness, sanitation, and overall maintenance of the Chottanikkara Temple premises.

2. After perusing the photographs annexed to the petition, we had observed, in our order dated 20.08.2025, that there existed widespread filth and decay, particularly in the kitchen and adjoining areas. The photos revealed a complete absence of hygiene and sanitation. In the said circumstances, we had directed the Executive Engineer of the Maramath Wing, Cochin Devaswom Board, and the Assistant Engineer of the Chottanikkara Devaswom to appear before us and had taken their inputs. We had also interacted with the learned counsel appearing for the Chottanikkara Grama Panchayat.

3. Pursuant to our directions, the learned Standing Counsel for the Devaswom Board has filed an affidavit detailing the immediate remedial measures proposed to address the deficiencies identified at the Chottanikkara Temple. The affidavit also categorises matters of lesser

urgency, enabling the issuance of time-bound directions.

4. By order dated 16.10.2025, this Court directed the local authority to depute its Health Inspector to conduct a detailed inspection and submit a report before us, delineating the present state of hygiene, cleanliness, sanitation, and overall maintenance at the temple premises.

5. In compliance with the said direction, a statement has been filed by the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the Chottanikkara Grama Panchayat. A copy of the report of the Health Inspector, Public Health Centre, Chottanikkara, has also been placed on record.

6. We find from the said report that steps have been initiated to improve cleanliness and rectify the noted deficiencies. The learned counsel for the local authority has further submitted that the Panchayat, in coordination with the Devaswom Board, has launched a programme titled “Unnami Kshetranganam”, which involves the participation of local residents to undertake cleaning of the temple premises on all Sundays.

7. Sri. K.P. Sudheer, the learned Standing Counsel for the Devaswom Board, submitted that, in the order dated 09.10.2025, prepared by the Executive Engineer (Annexure R2(a)), fifteen works of urgent nature and eight of lesser importance have been enumerated. It is stated that, with respect to Item Nos. 1, 2, and 3, the Assistant Engineer has prepared the estimates and the Board has issued necessary orders, with the works expected to be completed within one month. Item No. 4 pertains to a

sponsored project, the execution of which has already commenced. As regards Item Nos. 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10, it is submitted that the works shall be completed within one month. Item No. 8, concerning the drain over the roofing, requires the consent of the Thantri, for which additional time has been sought. With respect to Item No. 11 concerning parking, the Board has passed requisite orders, and upon obtaining concurrence from this Court, the work shall commence. Item No. 12, relating to the Annadhana Mandapam, is stated to be in its second stage, with completion expected within two months. Regarding the Anakottil, the learned Standing Counsel submitted that several deficiencies were identified, and prompt remedial measures are being undertaken, and the same is expected to be completed within three months. Concerning the incinerator, quotations have been invited, and the work is anticipated to be completed within two months. For waste disposal, estimates are to be prepared within three weeks, following which appropriate measures will be implemented.

8. As for the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), it is submitted that the Suchitwa Mission, by communication dated 18.12.2023, informed the Board that the work could only be undertaken if the DPR were prepared by an accredited agency. Subsequently, the Suchitwa Mission has taken the stand that, since the temple falls within a Panchayat area, it cannot extend assistance as its scheme applies only to properties within municipal limits. In response, the Devaswom Board and the local authority have addressed a representation to the Government, a copy of which is produced as Annexure- R4(ab).

9. We find that the communication addressed by the Devaswom Board to the Special Secretary (Revenue) dated 03.07.2023, seeking permission and appropriate directions, remains pending. We are of the view that the Government must take note of the fact that Chottanikkara Temple is one of the most revered temples and centres of pilgrimage in the State. In that light, every possible effort must be made to ensure that the services and benefits of the Suchitwa Mission are extended to the temple without raising untenable excuses. The learned Government Pleader shall obtain instructions and report back regarding the steps that can be taken by the Suchitwa Mission to provide necessary assistance to the temple and the local authority.

Post the matter on 26.11.2025, by which time an action taken report shall be filed by the Devaswom Board, the local authority, and the Government.

Sd/-

**RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V,
JUDGE**

Sd/-

**K.V. JAYAKUMAR,
JUDGE**

ANNEXURE IN DBP.NO.52/2025

ANNEXURE R4(ab)	TRUE COPY OF COMMUNICATION BEARING NO.H1.1764/12/CDB DATED 03/07/2023 SUBMITTED BY THE 3RD RESPONDENT TO THE 1ST RESPONDENT.
ANNEXURE R2(A)	TRUE COPY OF ORDER NO.H1.376/2025 DATED 9.10.2025 ISSUED BY THE 2ND RESPONDENT.

