

WP(MD)Nos.15950 of 2024, 17212 of 2025

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

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RESERVED ON : 29.08.2025

PRONOUNCED ON : 17.09.2025

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE B.PUGALENDHI

WP(MD)Nos.15950 of 2024, 17212 of 2025

and

WMP(MD)Nos.13078, 13080 of 2025

WP(MD)No.15950 of 2024:-

Vanniyakulachathiriyar Nala Arakattalai

Rep. by its President

Murugan

: Petitioner

Vs.

1.The District Collector,
Karur District,
Karur.

2.The Revenue Divisional Officer,
Karur District,
Karur.

3.The Tahsildar,
Aravakuruchi Taluk,
Karur District.

4.The Inspector of Police,



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Chinnadharapuram Police Station,
Karur District.

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5.Marimuthu

6.The Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Tiruppur District.

7.The Circle Inspector,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Aravakurichi Taluk,
Karur District.

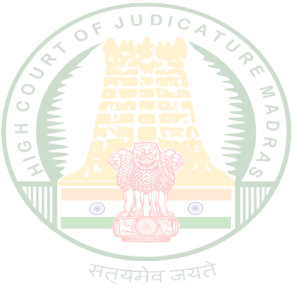
8.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Tiruppur.

: Respondents

[R.6, R.7 impleaded vide order dated 09.06.2025]

[R.8 *suo-motu* impleaded vide order dated 09.06.2025]

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking issuance of a Writ of Mandamus directing the fourth respondent to provide adequate protection to the petitioner and the trustees and to the Arulmigu Mariamman Temple, Chinna Dharapuram, Aravakurichi Taluk, Karur District, by considering the petitioner's representation dated 10.07.2024.



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For Petitioner : Mr.C.Vakeeswaran

For Respondents: Mr.F.Deepak
Special Government Pleader
for R.1 to R3

Mr.E.Antony Sahaya Prabahar
Additional Public Prosecutor
for R.4

Mr.S.Gokulraj for R.5

Mr.S.S.Madhavan,
Additional Government Pleader
for R.6 to R.8

WP(MD)No.17212 of 2025:-

Marimuthu : Petitioner

Vs.

1.The District Collector,
Karur District,
Karur.

2.The Superintendent of Police,
Karur District,
Karur.



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3. The Revenue Divisional Officer,
Karur District,
Karur.

4. The Tahsildar,
Aravakuruchi Taluk,
Karur District.

5. The Inspector of Police,
Chinnadharapuram Police Station,
Karur District.

6. The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Tiruppur District.

7. The Circle Inspector,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Aravakurichi Taluk,
Karur District.

8. Vanniyakulachathiriyar Nala Arakkatalai,
Rep. by its President,
Murugan

: Respondents

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking issuance of a Writ of Certiorarified Mandamus calling for the records relating to the impugned proceedings of the third respondent in Na.Ka.No.A2/320/2024 dated 19.07.2024, quash the same and



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consequently, directing the respondents 1 to 7 to open the Temple, namely, Sri Mariamman Temple, situated at Chinna Dharapuram, Aravakurichi Taluk, Karur District, for offering worship by the petitioner and villagers without any discrimination, by providing adequate police protection by the fourth respondent to the petitioner, devotees and villagers.

For Petitioner : Mr.S.Gokulraj

For Respondents: Mr.F.Deepak
Special Government Pleader
for R.1, R.3, R.4

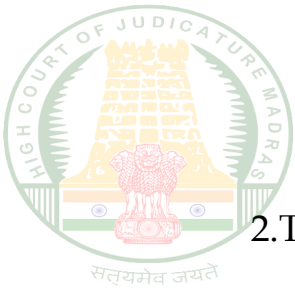
Mr.E.Antony Sahaya Prabahar
Additional Public Prosecutor
for R.2, R.5

Mr.S.S.Madhavan,
Additional Government Pleader
for R.6, R.7

Mr.C.Vakeeswaran for R.8

COMMON ORDER

In continuation and in conjunction of the earlier order dated 15.07.2025, this Court is passing the following order.

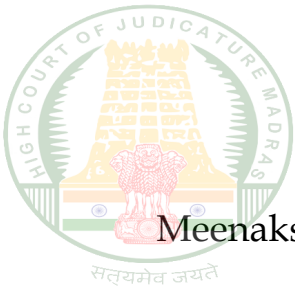


2.The struggle for equality in worship has a long and painful history.

The Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924-25 in Travancore was the first organised resistance against caste-based restrictions on temple approach roads. The Guruvayur Satyagraha of 1931-32 in Malabar demanded the right of the Depressed Classes to worship in the Guruvayur Sri Krishna Temple. The Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936 issued by the Maharaja of Travancore formally opened all temples in his State to all Hindus irrespective of caste.

3.These struggles reached a defining moment in Madurai in 1939. The Madras Temple Entry Authorization and Indemnity Act, 1939, enacted by the then Government, gave trustees the legal power to admit Scheduled Caste devotees into temples. It was under this Act that during 1939, a group led by A.Vaidyanatha Iyer and L.N.Gopalaswami, along with Scheduled Caste devotees including P.Kakkan, first entered the Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai.

4.Mahatma Gandhi regarded this moment as a spiritual triumph. He wrote in *Harijan* that Hinduism itself was purified by the act of opening the



Meenakshi Temple to Harijans. To Gandhi, this was not a concession granted to a class, but the restoration of God's house to all His children. He later himself visited the Meenakshi Temple in 1946 with Harijan devotees, recording it as one of the most satisfying experiences of his life.

5.The message from Madurai in 1939 was unambiguous, that the walls of caste had no place in the precincts of God. The entry of Scheduled Caste devotees into the Meenakshi Temple was celebrated across the nation as proof that social reform and constitutional morality could triumph over centuries of oppression.

6.Yet, in 2025, this Court is constrained to witness the irony that the very land where Gandhi rejoiced in the breaking of caste barriers in worship, now presents the spectacle of Scheduled Caste devotees being excluded from the Arulmigu Mariamman Temple, Chinna Dharapuram.

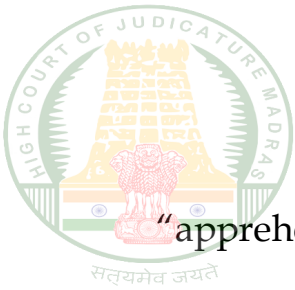
7.After the order of this Court dated 15.07.2025, it is reported that the members of the Scheduled Caste community were permitted to enter and



offer their prayers. The fact that such entry has been secured only by an order of this Court is not a matter of pride, but of shame.

8.This Court is constrained to observe that what was achieved in 1939 at Madurai through the moral conviction of reformers and the courage of leaders, is, in 2025, possible only through a judicial mandate. A question arises then as to what the District Collector and the Superintendent of Police are for? They are not ornamental posts; they are constitutional offices. They cannot enjoy the powers and privileges of the Constitution, while refusing to enforce its most fundamental guarantees.

9.The District Collector, as the chief executive authority of the District, ought to have immediately convened peace meetings between communities, declared unequivocally that caste discrimination in temple entry is unconstitutional, directed the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department to ensure joint worship under official supervision, requisitioned police protection wherever necessary, and ensured that worship continued without interruption. Hiding behind



“apprehension of disturbance” for seven long years is nothing but administrative cowardice.

10.The Superintendent of Police was duty-bound to ensure that the temple remained open to all devotees. He should have deployed adequate force during worship, proceeded against caste-based obstructionists under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and maintained law and order by enforcing rights, not by extinguishing them. Instead, the temple was closed — not because law required it, but because law was abandoned.

11.This Court holds that if the Collector had acted with firmness and if the Superintendent of Police had discharged his legal obligations, the temple would never have been closed since 2018. The devotees would have enjoyed their rights without recourse to litigation. Their inaction is not neutrality; it is betrayal.

12.The District Collector and the Superintendent of Police of Karur District have displayed an utter abdication of constitutional responsibility.



They have not preserved peace, instead they have preserved discrimination. They have not defended rights, instead they have defended violations. By their conduct, they have confessed that they are unfit to discharge the duties of their office.

13.Officers who live off the fruits of the Constitution, but refuse to implement its commands, betray their oath. They cannot wield authority in the name of the Constitution, while trampling upon the equality it enshrines. They cannot preside over a “People’s Government” while denying that *people includes Scheduled Castes also*.

14.This Court therefore records its strongest condemnation. The State Government is expected to take immediate corrective measures, including replacement of administrators who will uphold constitutional values in letter and spirit.

15.Pursuant to the earlier order of this Court, the temple was finally opened, and members of the Scheduled Caste community were permitted



to enter and offer their prayers. This was a moment of justice long delayed, but at last realised. However, this Court notes with dismay that at the very time of such entry, certain persons attempted to obstruct the worship, leading to a commotion. It is reported that a criminal case in Crime No.74 of 2025 has been registered on the file of the Chinnadhapuram Police Station, Karur, against 17 such trouble-mongers, some of whom even claim to be administrators of the temple. Their conduct is an open defiance of the Constitution and of this Court's order.

16.This Court directs that the said criminal case shall be pursued with earnestness and brought to its logical conclusion at the earliest. Only then will a clear message go forth – that those who obstruct constitutional rights will face strict legal consequences, and that equality in worship is non-negotiable. The law must speak firmly, so that no person or group ever again dares to deny temple entry on grounds of caste.



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With the above observations and directions, these writ petitions stand disposed of. No costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petitions are closed.

Internet : Yes
gk

17.09.2025

Note:

Mark a copy of this order to
The Chief Secretary,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat, Chennai.

To

- 1.The District Collector,
Karur District,
Karur.
- 2.The Revenue Divisional Officer,
Karur District,
Karur.
- 3.The Tahsildar,
Aravakuruchi Taluk,
Karur District.
- 4.The Inspector of Police,
Chinnadharapuram Police Station,
Karur District.

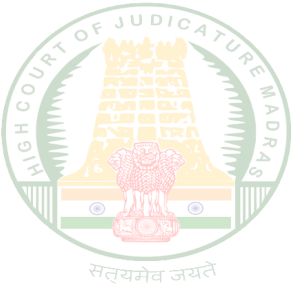


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5.The Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Chennai.

6.The Circle Inspector,
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B.PUGALENDHI, J.

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