

APHC010146912026



IN THE HIGH COURT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
AT AMARAVATI
(Special Original Jurisdiction)

[3329]

MONDAY, THE THIRTIETH DAY OF MARCH
TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY SIX

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE VENKATESWARLU NIMMAGADDA

WRIT PETITION NO: 8102/2026

Between:

1. D S S S SUBRAHMANYAM SOMAYAJI, S/OXAKSHMINARYANA
MURTHY, AGED 43 YEARS, SRI CHAKRA NAVAVARANA ARCHANA
PARAYANADHAR, SRI
DURGAMALLESWARASWAMYVARLADEVASTANAM,
INDRAKEELADRI, VIJAYAWADA, KRISHNA DISTRICT NOW NTR
DISTRICT

...PETITIONER

AND

1. THE STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH, REP. BY ITS PRINCIPAL
SECRETARY, ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT, SECRETARIAT,
VELAGAPUDI, GUNTUR DISTRICT-522238
2. THE COMMISSIONER, ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH, GOLLAPUDI, VIJAYAWADA,
NTR DISTRICT, -520001

...RESPONDENT(S):

Petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed therewith, the High Court may be pleased to issue an appropriate Writ, Order or Direction more particularly in the nature of Writ of Mandamus, declaring the action of the respondents in not following Circular Memo No.21 Rc.No.D.P/52200/2009 dated 10-11-2010 issued by the Endowments Department and the Pramanika dated 20-12-2024 issued by the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham as illegal, arbitrary and contrary to Section 13 of the

Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act. 1987, and consequently direct the respondents to strictly follow and implement the Circular Memo No.21 Rc.No.D.P/52200/2009 dated 10-11-2010 issued by the Endowments Department and the Pramanika dated 20-12-2024 issued by the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham in matters relating to temple rituals and Agama practices, and pass

IA NO: 1 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to direct the respondents to follow Circular Memo No.21 Rc. No. D. P/52200/2009 dated 10-11-2010 . issued by the Endowments Department and the Pramanika dated 20-12-2024 issued by the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham in respect of temple rituals and Agama practices, and pass

Counsel for the Petitioner:

1.K R SRINIVAS

Counsel for the Respondent(S):

1.GP FOR ENDOWMENTS

The Court made the following:

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE VENKATESWARLU NIMMAGADDA

WRIT PETITION NO.8102/2026

ORDER:-

This writ petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of the India seeking the following reliefs:-

“to issue an appropriate Writ, Order or Direction more particularly in the nature of Writ of Mandamus declaring the action of the respondents in not following Circular Memo No.21 Rc.No.D.P/52200/2009 dated 10.11.2010 issued by the Endowments Department and the Pramanika dated 20.12.2024 issued by the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham as illegal, arbitrary and contrary to Section 13 of the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act, 1987 and consequently direct the respondents to strictly follow and implement the Circular Memo No.21 Rc.No.D.P/52200/2009 dated 10.11.2010 issued by the Endowments Department and the Pramanika dated 20.12.2024 issued by the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham in matters relating to temple rituals and Agama practices and pass such other order or orders....”

2. Heard learned counsel for the petitioner and learned Government Pleader for the respondents.

3. The case of the petitioner herein is that the respondents herein are not following the Circular Memo No.21 Rc.No.D.P/52200/2009 dated 10.11.2010 issued by the Endowments Department and the Pramanika dated 20.12.2024 issued by the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham as illegal, arbitrary and contrary to Section 13 of the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act, 1987.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the petitioner herein is working as Sri Chakra Navavarana Archana Parayanadhar at Sri Durga MalleswaraSwamyVarla Devasthanam, Indrakeeladri, Vijayawada, Krishna District. He further submits that the hereditary archakas who traditionally perform the worship of the deity are required to perform strict spiritual discipline including Trikala Sandhyavandanam, Guru-Upadesha Mantra Japa, adherence to Vedic study and maintenance of ritual purity in food habits, conduct and personal discipline. Only such qualified hereditary priests are entitled to enter the sanctum sanctorum and perform the worship of the presiding deity. Pursuant to which, Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswami, the Jagadguru Shakarachary of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham established in the lineage of Adi Shankaracharya issued Pramanika directions dated 20.12.2024 clarifying the traditional norms governing the worship and the observance of the temple rituals. He further submits that pursuant to the said directions, persons who have travelled aboard, persons who have undergone shaving or haircutting contrary to traditional norms and persons who do not adhere to the prescribed spiritual practices shall not enter the sanctum sanctorum and participate in the worship of the deity.

5. Learned counsel for the petitioner further submits that the Commissioner of Endowments issued a circular dated 10.11.2010 directing that the temple rituals and religious ceremonies must be performed strictly in accordance with the Agama Shastras and established temple traditions. However, the respondents are not following the circular memo dated

10.11.2010 and Pramanika dated 20.12.2024 thereby affecting the sanctity of the temple worship and the rights of the hereditary priests to perform rituals in accordance with Agama traditions.

6. Learned counsel for the petitioner has drawn the attention of this Court to the order dated 18.09.2025 passed by this Court in W.P.No.41481 of 2022, wherein, the operative portion of the said order reads as follows:

“The specific grievance of the petitioner is that the unofficial respondent No.4, who went abroad, is not eligible to perform archakatvam at sanctum sanctorum in the light of the circular memo Circular No.21 in Rc.No.DP1/52200/2009 dated 10.11.2010, however, he was considered senior to the petitioner and issued proceedings, posting him as Pradhana Archaka, which according to the petitioner is in disregard of the circular memo of the endowment department. The 3rd respondent did not reply to the petitioner’s specific objection thereto, stating that it is an administrative issue.

In view of the above, the matter is remanded to the 3rd respondent temple, for passing of orders afresh in terms of the Circular No.21 in Rc.No.DP1/52200/2009 dated 10.11.2010, after giving opportunity to both the petitioner and unofficial respondents, within one (1) month from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.

The writ petition is accordingly disposed of. There shall be no order as to costs.”

7. On the other hand, learned counsel for the respondents submits that the respondents will follow the Circular Memo No.21 Rc.No.D.P/52200/2009 dated 10.11.2010 issued by the Endowments Department and the Pramanika

dated 20.12.2024 issued by the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham.

8. Having regard to the submissions made by the learned counsel for the petitioner and learned counsel for the respondents and on perusal of the material placed on record, this Court is of the considered view that the present writ petition can be disposed of directing the respondents to follow the guidelines framed under Circular Memo No.21 Rc.No.D.P/52200/2009 dated 10.11.2010 issued by the Endowments Department and the Pramanika dated 20.12.2024 issued by the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham.

9. With the above observation, the writ petition is disposed of. There shall be no order as to costs.

As a sequel, miscellaneous applications pending, if any, shall also stand closed.

VENKATESWARLU NIMMAGADDA, J

Date:30.03.2026
BSP

61

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE VENKATESWARLU NIMMAGADDA

WRIT PETITION NO: 8102/2026

Date:30.03.2026
BSP