

Sampath Vs The Commissioner of Land Administration

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Court : Chennai

Decided On : Jun-22-2026

Judge : Honourable the Chief Justice, Honourable Mr. Justice G. Arul Murugan

Appeal No. : WA/1412/2026

Appellant : Sampath

Respondent : The Commissioner of Land Administration

Judgement :

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

RESERVED ON : 18.06.2026 DELIVERED ON : 22.06.2026

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,
CHIEF JUSTICE AND THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE G. ARUL
MURUGAN WA No.1412 of 2026 and CMP No.13018 of 2026 Sampath
S/o.Kolanthaigounder, No.4/379, Veppasennampatti Village, Morappur
Post, Harur Taluk, Dharmapuri - 635 305. Appellant(s) Vs

1. The Commissioner of Land Administration Chepauk, Chennai - 600
005.

2. The District Collector Dharmapuri District, Dharmapuri.

3. The Deputy Chief Engineer O/o. Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction) Southern Railway, Salem District.

4. The Competent Authority Land Acquisition and District Revenue Officer Morappur-Dharmapuri, New Broad Gauge Railway Line (L.A), Dharmapuri. Respondent(s)

PRAYER: Appeal filed under Clause 15 of the Letters Patent to set aside the order dated 08.04.2026 passed by the learned Single Judge in WP.No.39169 of 2024 and to allow the above writ appeal. For Appellant(s): Mr.E.Om Prakash Senior Counsel for Mr.R.Murali For Respondent(s):Mr.K.Kumaran Government Pleader for R1 and R2 Mr.AR.L.Sundaresan Additional Solicitor General of India assisted by Mr.K.Srinivasa Murthy Senior Panel Counsel for R3 Mr.A.Niranjana for R4

JUDGMENT

THE CHIEF JUSTICE

This appeal has been preferred against the order dated 8.4.2026 passed by the learned Single Judge, whereby the writ petition challenging the land acquisition proceedings initiated under the Tamil Nadu Acquisition of Land for Industrial Purposes Act, 1997 for the formation of the New Broad-Gauge Railway Line between Morappur and Dharmapuri was dismissed.

2. The nub of the matter is that the lands of the appellant situated in Survey Nos.11/1, 11/2, 12/2B4, 12/2B2A, and

District, were sought to be acquired under the provisions of the Act for a public purpose, namely, the execution of the Morappur - Dharmapuri New Broad-Gauge Railway Line project. The appellant challenged the acquisition primarily on the grounds of procedural infirmities and alleged

ambiguities regarding the exact extent of the layout and specifications in the final notification. The learned Single Judge, after considering the public importance of the railway project and finding no illegality in the procedure adopted by the authorities, dismissed the writ petition.

3. Learned Senior Counsel appearing on behalf of the appellant submitted that:

(i) The objections submitted by the land owner were not considered and no reasons whatsoever have been assigned by the respondents;

(ii) The failure to provide a clear layout plan has severely handicapped the appellants ability to utilize or alienate the unacquired portion of his agricultural holding.

(iii) The current alignment for the Morappur -

Dharmapuri New Broad-Gauge line was altered arbitrarily to bypass certain commercial properties, thereby putting undue burden on marginal agricultural landowners in Veppasennampatti Village.

(iv) The final layout specifications in the published notification lacked absolute clarity, creating prejudice for the appellant in identifying the exact residual portion of his holdings. 4.1. Per contra, learned Additional Solicitor General appearing on behalf of the third respondent submitted that:

(i) The acquisition proceedings were conducted strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Due notice was published and all objections raised by the land owners were evaluated and rejected on merits by the Competent Authority.

(ii) The Morappur - Dharmapuri line is a vital, long-

pending public infrastructure project sanctioned by the Ministry of Railways to enhance socio-economic connectivity in the region. Delaying the acquisition would cause massive cost overruns and disrupt a layout designed by expert railway engineers based on optimal technical feasibility.

(iii) The spatial details provided in the notification schedule are sufficient for identification of the property.

4.2. In response to the contention of learned Senior Counsel for the appellant regarding non-mentioning of the precise spatial specifications in the schedule, the learned Additional Solicitor General categorically stated that the appropriate authorities are ready and willing to issue a corrigendum to the final notification, incorporating exhaustive details of the exact land sought to be acquired finally.

5. We have carefully evaluated the submissions and scrutinized the material on record.

6. The project under execution, viz., the creation of a New

Broad-Gauge Railway Line linking Morappur and Dharmapuri, is an infrastructure project of paramount public interest. It is a trite that individual interest must yield to the larger public good, provided the acquisition follows the due process of law. When an acquisition is backed by statutory mandate, subserved by public purpose and accompanied by the provision of fair compensation, hardships or personal conveniences of individual landowners cannot be allowed to stall projects of nationwide priority.

7. Apropos of the contention pertaining to route alignment, it

is settled law that the determination of a railway track alignment is a technical exercise within the exclusive domain of the experts. The courts do not possess the requisite expertise to decide where a railway line should ideally run, nor can the judiciary sit in appeal over scientific designs and alternate route availabilities. In the

absence of mala fides or patent perversity, this court cannot substitute its own views for the considered wisdom of the experts who calibrate alignments based on

structural stability, safety parameters and optimal public utility.

8. With regard to the contention raised by learned Senior

Counsel for the appellant that his objections were not considered, it needs to be noted that, in the counter affidavit filed by the third respondent in the writ petition, it is asserted that despite opportunity extended by the authorities, the appellant did not attend the meeting convened. Having failed to avail the opportunity of personal hearing extended by the respondents, the appellant cannot now allege that his objections were not considered.

9. The grievance of the appellant regarding non-mentioning of

survey specifications and precise boundaries is sufficiently mitigated by the explicit undertaking given today by the learned Additional Solicitor General. Since the respondents are prepared to publish a corrigendum specifying the exact final parameters of the 0.26.00 hectares of acquired land, no surviving prejudice can be legitimately claimed by the appellant.

10. Furthermore, we deem it necessary to clarify a distinct

factual discrepancy concerning the quantum of land under acquisition. While the impugned order of the learned Single Judge records the extent to be acquired as 25 cents, the official records and the counter-pleadings clarify that the total area originally contemplated for acquisition was 1.02.92 hectares, which has now been substantially reduced to 0.26.00 hectares. This vast reduction demonstrates that the authorities have actively calibrated the infrastructure alignment to minimize the burden on the local appellant.

11. In view of the public importance of the project and

recording the submission of the learned Additional Solicitor General that a corrigendum to the final notification will be issued giving full details of the land

sought to be acquired, the order of the learned Single Judge is affirmed, barring minor clarification regarding the extent to be acquired. Resultantly, the writ appeal stands dismissed. No costs. Consequently, interim application stands closed. (SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,CJ) (G.ARUL MURUGAN,J) 22.06.2026
Index : Yes Neutral Citation : Yes sasi To:

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