

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

Thursday, the 23rd day of October 2025 / 1st Karthika, 1947

SSCR NO. 31 OF 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD-SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER
REPORT-S.M.NO.31/2025-REPORT AS DIRECTED IN THE ORDER DATED 10-10-2025 IN SSCR
NO.28/2025 BY THE HONOURABLE HIGH COURT OF KERALA REGARDING THE SELECTION OF
MELSHANTHIES TO THE SABARIMALA SREE DHARMA SASTHA TEMPLE AND MALIKAPPURAM TEMPLE
FOR THE YEAR 1201 M.E BY DRAW OF LOTS HELD AT SABARIMALA ON 18.10.2025 -SUO MOTU
PROCEEDINGS INITIATED-REG:-**

PETITIONER:

SUO MOTU

RESPONDENTS:

1. STATE OF KERALA

**REPRESENTED BY SECRETARY, REVENUE (DEVASWOM) DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695001**

2. THE TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD

**REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, NANTHANCODE, KAWDIAR POST,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695003**

3. DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER

**TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, DEVASWOM BUILDINGS, NANTHANCODE,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695003**

4. EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SABARIMALA, SABARIMALA P.O., PATHANAMTHITTA - 689662



BY SRI.S.RAJMOHAN, SENIOR GOVERNMENT PLEADER

BY STANDING COUNSEL FOR TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD

BY SMT.SAYUJYA RADHAKRISHNAN, AMICUS CURIAE FOR

SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER

**THIS SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT HAVING COME UP FOR
ADMISSION ON 23.10.2025, UPON PERUSING THE REPORT, THE COURT ON THE SAME
DAY PASSED THE FOLLOWING:**



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

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Dated this the 23rd day of October, 2025

ORDER

Raja Vijayaraghavan V, J.

When the matter was taken up, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the respondents submitted that the selection of Melshanthis for the Sabarimala Sree Dharmashastha Temple and the Malikapuram Temple for the year 1201 M.E. (2025–26) was conducted by draw of lots on 18.10.2025, and that the entire selection process was duly completed in the presence of the observer appointed by this Court, in accordance with the established procedure.

2. Upon a specific query put by this Court, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), submitted that in order to assist the Melshanthi in the performance of his duties and rituals at the Sannidhanam, approximately 20 individuals are brought by the Melshanthi himself, and such persons serve at his discretion and pleasure during his entire tenure. We also sought clarification as to whether these individuals are engaged afresh by each Melshanthi on a yearly basis, or whether they continue to serve from year to year under successive Melshanthis, thereby remaining permanently associated with the temple establishment, but without being on the rolls.

3. The learned Standing Counsel sought a short adjournment to obtain instructions on the said aspect, submitting that a detailed

clarification would be furnished after ascertaining the factual position from the officials concerned.

4. It was further submitted that, insofar as the Melshanthi himself is concerned, he is paid only an honorarium, and that no remuneration or financial benefit is provided by the Travancore Devaswom Board to the persons assisting him. These assistants are stated to be personally engaged and maintained by the Melshanthi, without burden for the Board.

5. Having regard to the above submissions and the significance of ensuring transparency, accountability, and sanctity of service at the Sabarimala and Malikapuram Temples, this Court deems it appropriate to call for a detailed affidavit from the Travancore Devaswom Board. Accordingly, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the Travancore Devaswom Board is directed to file an affidavit narrating all relevant aspects, including but not limited to the following:

- a) The names and full identities of the persons who will be assisting the Melshanthis during the current year, i.e., for the year 1201 M.E. (2025–26);
- b) Whether any verification or inquiry has been carried out with regard to their antecedents, background, or character;
- c) Whether identity proofs or credentials of the persons assisting the Melshanthis are obtained and verified prior to their being permitted to serve at the Sannidhanam;
- d) Whether any of these individuals have served in the same capacity during previous years under different Melshanthis;

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and

- e) The manner in which responsibility or accountability is fixed in the event that any such individual is found to be involved in objectionable, unlawful, or reprehensible acts within the temple premises.

Post on 31.10.2025.

Sd/-

**RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V,
JUDGE**



Sd/-

**K.V. JAYAKUMAR,
JUDGE**

msp