



13-Mar-2021

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Arrack shops are more prominent than temples in Tamil Nadu: Sadhguru

13 March 2021, Coimbatore: In a hard-hitting interaction with Tamil actor Santhanam, Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation, addressed members of the media in Chennai this morning. Speaking out for Freeing Tamil Nadu's Temples from the stranglehold of governmental controls, Sadhguru made a passionate argument for the people's constitutional right to run and manage their places of worship.

Sadhguru made some pertinent points, which demonstrate the extent of 'decay' that the mismanagement and neglect has caused.

- The HR&CE (Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department) has told the Madras High Court that 11,999 temples have no revenue to perform even one daily puja.
- Out of 44,121 temples under its control in Tamil Nadu, more than 37,000 do not get enough revenue to appoint more than one person, who has to carry out all tasks including priestly and caretaker duties.
- 34,093 temples are struggling with less than Rs 10,000 as annual income and consequently are grossly neglected.

UNESCO's report on Tamil Nadu's temples speaks of "some truly shocking scenes of demolition and massacre of historic temples."

Speaking of the once vibrant and glorious Tamil culture, Sadhguru asked how we expect the same vitality in today's youth and well-being in society when we are giving more prominence to arrack shops than temples.

Sadhguru announced the start of a Missed Call Campaign, urging the Tamil people to call in at 83000 83000 to register their support for the cause. When asked about what this would achieve, he said that it is foolish to expect that a missed call would revive Cauvery or Free Temples. The idea is to create awareness and awaken responsibility in citizens, which would manifest as electoral decisions and actions in a democratic land.

Volunteers of Isha Foundation have already started action on the ground by documenting the dilapidation and misadministration of temples through thousands of videos and photographs. These would be rolled out in the days to come. The social media campaign with the hashtag #FreeTNTemples has been gaining tremendous momentum.

Earlier this month, Sadhguru wrote the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister E. Palaniswami as well as Opposition Leader MK Stalin, calling on them to declare “their intentions and plans” on this issue in their election manifestos.

If you would like to know more about this, please write to mediarelations@ishafoundation.org.