In 2022, the Tamil Nadu Waqf Board laid claim to about 480 acres of land in Tiruchendurai village, Tiruchirapalli district, which included the 1,500-year-old Manendiyavalli Sametha Chandrasekhara Swamy Temple (also known as Sundareswarar Temple). This claim shocked the residents because they had been living on and owning the land for generations, with official documents proving their ownership. When a local farmer, Rajagopal, tried to sell his 1.2-acre plot, the sub-registrar's office informed him that the land belonged to the Waqf Board and that he needed a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Board to proceed with the sale[4](https://theprint.in/ground-reports/brahmins-bjp-and-waqf-the-story-of-tamil-nadu-villages-fight-for-land/2586970/) [6](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/in-tamil-nadu-waqf-board-claims-ownership-of-an-entire-village-there-s-a-temple-too-101663245541768.html) [7](https://www.siasat.com/tn-waqf-board-claims-1500-year-old-temple-land-is-theirs-2418338/).

The controversy arose because the Waqf Board's records showed ownership of the land, including the temple area, which the Board claimed was donated land from the 18th century by Rani Mangammal of the Madurai Nayak dynasty. According to historical revenue records, these lands were given as "Inam Gramam" (free grants) with the condition that existing temples remain untouched. The properties were transferred to the Waqf Board in 1964. The Board argued that having a temple on Waqf land was not unusual, as donors had stipulated the temple should remain intact[4](https://theprint.in/ground-reports/brahmins-bjp-and-waqf-the-story-of-tamil-nadu-villages-fight-for-land/2586970/) [8](https://thefederal.com/category/states/south/tamil-nadu/tamil-nadu-waqf-board-head-refutes-kiren-rijijus-claim-over-1500-year-old-hindu-village-137903).

The residents contested the claim, pointing out that the village was predominantly Hindu, with no Muslim population, and that they had been paying taxes and holding valid land documents for decades. The dispute created fear and confusion among villagers about their land rights and livelihood[2](https://www.newsx.com/india/waqf-board-claims-vellore-village-land-as-dargah-property-residents-demand-government-action/) [6](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/in-tamil-nadu-waqf-board-claims-ownership-of-an-entire-village-there-s-a-temple-too-101663245541768.html).

The matter was escalated to the district administration. The Tiruchirapalli district collector intervened and ruled that residents could register and sell their land without needing an NOC from the Waqf Board, effectively restoring the status quo and protecting the villagers' ownership rights. This intervention resolved the immediate crisis and reassured the residents[4](https://theprint.in/ground-reports/brahmins-bjp-and-waqf-the-story-of-tamil-nadu-villages-fight-for-land/2586970/) [7](https://www.siasat.com/tn-waqf-board-claims-1500-year-old-temple-land-is-theirs-2418338/).

Further, the passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in 2025, which removed Section 40 of the Waqf Act, was welcomed by the residents. Section 40 had allowed the Waqf Board to initiate suo motu inquiries to classify properties as Waqf land, which had sparked fears of arbitrary claims. The amendment curtailed such powers, providing legal safeguards against sudden Waqf claims on privately owned land. Residents viewed this as a protective measure for their property rights[3](https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2025/Apr/05/tamil-nadu-thiruchendurai-residents-welcome-passage-of-waqf-bill).

In summary, the land was effectively removed from the Waqf Board's claim through:

* State government and district collector's intervention, which allowed land transactions without Waqf Board NOCs.
* Legal and administrative clarification that the residents' ownership documents were valid.
* The Waqf (Amendment) Act, which limited the Waqf Board's powers to unilaterally claim land as Waqf property.

This resolution restored confidence among residents that their ancestral lands, including the ancient temple site, remained under their ownership and protected from Waqf claims[3](https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2025/Apr/05/tamil-nadu-thiruchendurai-residents-welcome-passage-of-waqf-bill) [4](https://theprint.in/ground-reports/brahmins-bjp-and-waqf-the-story-of-tamil-nadu-villages-fight-for-land/2586970/) [7](https://www.siasat.com/tn-waqf-board-claims-1500-year-old-temple-land-is-theirs-2418338/).

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