



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 08.12.2025

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE P.DHANABAL

O.A No.467 of 2025
A. Nos.2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in C.S. No.100 of 2025

Saveetha Institute of Medical
and Technical Sciences
Represented by its Registrar,
Mr.Sheeja S Varghese,
Having an office at AC-109, 2nd Street,
Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar,
Chennai, Tamilnadu 600 040.

..... Applicant / Plaintiff
[common in O.A.. No.467 of 2025 and
A. Nos.2238 and 2239 of 2025]

vs.

1. India Research Watch
represented by its Founder
Dr. Achal Agarwal
Faculty, Applied Mathematics,
Sitare University, SRMCEM Campus,
Lucknow, Faizabad Road,
Lucknow – 226 010
Uttar Pradesh.

2. Dr. Achal Agarwal,
Faculty, Applied Mathematics,
Sitare University,
SRMCEM Campus, Lucknow,
Faizabad Road,
Lucknow – 226 010

Page No.1 of 43



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

Uttar Pradesh.
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3. Professor Sunil Mukhi,
Board Members – India Research Watch,
C702, Mount Very Dieu,
Pashan-Sus Road,
Pune 411 021, Maharashtra.

4. Professor S.C. Lakhota,
Board Members – India Research Watch,
P3/4, Ravindra Puri,
Lane No.13,
Varanasi – 221 005, Uttar Pradesh.

5. Dr. Ganesh Natarajan,
Board Members – India Research Watch,
9, “Sri Padmam”, Lakshmi Apartments,
Pallath Lane, Punkunnam P.O.,
Trichur – 682 002, Kerala.

6. Dr. Shashi Kant Shankar,
Assistant Professor,
School of Arts and Sciences,
Ahmedabad University, Gujarat – 380 009.

7. Retraction Watch,
121, W.36th St. Suite 209,
New York, NY 10018, USA.

Respondents / Defendants
[common in O.A.. No.467 of 2025 and
A. Nos.2238 and 2239 of 2025]



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

For Applicant(s)

: M/s.S. Silambanan, Senior Advocate
for M/s. Kaavya Silambanan Associates.

For Respondents

: Mr. Suhirth Parthasarathy
for M/s. Ashwini Vaidalingam

PRAYER in O. A. No.467 of 2025 : Application filed under Order XIV, Rule 8 of Original Side Rules read with Order XXXIX Rule 1 and 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure praying to grant an interim injunction restraining the Respondents/Defendants, their agents, representatives, and any other persons acting on their behalf from publishing, circulating or disseminating any defamatory content against the Applicant/Plaintiff Institutions its research, faculty, administration or any affiliated entities in any form, including but not limited to online blogs, articles, social media post or emails, pending disposal of the suit.

PRAYER in A. No.2238 of 2025 : Application filed under Order XIV, Rule 8 of Original Side Rules read with Section 151 of the Code of Civil Procedure praying to direct the Respondents/Defendants 1 to 7 to immediately remove all defamatory articles, posts or publications, concerning the Applicant/Plaintiff Institutions from their respective websites and affiliated platforms, pending disposal of the suit.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY
PRAYER in A. No.2239 of 2025 : Application filed under Order XIV, Rule 8

of Original Side Rules read with Section 151 of the Code of Civil Procedure
praying to direct the Respondents/Defendants 1 to 7 to issue a formal Interim
Public apology for Defaming Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical
Sciences (SIMATS) and the College(s) under SIMATS pending disposal of
the suit.

COMMON ORDER

The *original application in O.A. No.467 of 2025* has been filed by the
applicants to grant an interim injunction restraining the
Respondents/Defendants, their agents, representatives, and any other persons
acting on their behalf from publishing, circulating or disseminating any
defamatory content against the Applicant/Plaintiff Institutions its research,
faculty, administration or any affiliated entities in any form, including but not
limited to online blogs, articles, social media post or emails, pending disposal
of the suit.

(ii) The *application in A. No.2238 of 2025* has been filed praying to
direct the Respondents/Defendants 1 to 7 to immediately remove all
defamatory articles, posts or publications, concerning the Applicant/Plaintiff



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY Institutions from their respective websites and affiliated platforms, pending disposal of the suit.

(iii) The ***application in A. No.2239 of 2025*** has been filed praying to direct the Respondents/Defendants 1 to 7 to issue a formal Interim Public apology for Defaming Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS) and the College(s) under SIMATS pending disposal of the suit.

2. Brief averments of the applications are as follows:-

The applicant institute namely M/s. Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS) is a renowned institution in India. It operates as a deemed to be University and houses several constituent colleges under its umbrella, offering a wide range of programs in Medical, Dental, Engineering, Management, Law, Physiotherapy, Nursing, Pharmacy, Allied Health Sciences, Architecture and Liberal Arts. Saveetha Dental College is one of top dental institutions in the world, affiliated with Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS), Chennai. It has been consistently ranked No.I in India by the NIRF for three consecutive years and is renowned for its advanced dental education, research and clinical training. The Institution



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

integrates research methodologies into its academic framework, ensuring that students gain both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience. Saveetha Dental College faculty and students contribute to high impact journals indexed in PubMed, Scopus and Web of Science. The institution encourages students to publish their research, thereby promoting a culture of scientific excellence and also the institution has gained international recognition through collaborations with globally renowned universities and research centres, student exchange programs and Joint research initiatives.

2.1. Saveetha Dental College has also been recognised by the Dental Council of India (DCI) and the World Dental Federation (FDI) for its excellence in dental education. The research papers published by the students, faculty and researchers are subject to independent review by journals. No university has an official process to filter or approve all research publications. Each journal has its own expert team of reviewers who scrutinise articles for originality, reliability and impact before publication. The reputed journals maintain high standards and select papers based on strict review criteria. Many institutions assess their research strength based on the number of publications in top-tier journals. The journals indexed in databases



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY like Scopus and Web of Science categorise articles into Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4, with Q1 and Q2 being the most prestigious. The publication process involves rigorous review, with journals often requesting corrections, modifications and improvements before final acceptance. The articles may also be retracted for various reasons, but such retractions do not impact a university's overall research reputation.

2.2. In 2025, 83.9% of its publications were in Q1 and Q2 journals, placing it on par with leading global institutions. The institution allocates a substantial research budget of approximately Rs.60 crores annually, fostering innovation and academic excellence. In the year 2024, Saveetha Dental College (SIMATS) recorded the highest publication count in India, with over 11,000 publications in Scopus and 7000 in Web of Science, significantly raising its academic profile. Saveetha Dental College (SIMATS) has 80% of its publications in Q1 and Q2 journals, reflecting the high quality of its research.

2.3. While so, the 1st respondent / defendant i.e., India Research Watch (IWR) and the 7th respondent / defendant Retraction Watch (RW) have



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

primarily been targeting Private Indian institutions to project the research work in a negative light. The Plaintiff has been targeted continuously without proof and with false statistics and false allegations. These defamatory posts are posted and published on LinkedIn, a popular social platform and also in other social media platforms and blogs. From April 2024 to February 2025, so many defamatory articles were published by the respondents / defendants. India Research Watch exclusively targets Indian institutions while ignoring higher retractions and unethical practices in Western universities, such as UNC Chapel Hill's 208% publication spike. Comparative data from the QS Rankings 2024 indicates that 19 of the top 25 Universities have higher self-citation rates than Saveetha, yet only Saveetha is scrutinised. Fabricated metrics have been used by the respondents / defendants to misrepresent facts, including the inflation of retraction percentages from 0.9% to 20-30% in graphs. Furthermore, Saveetha's 68 international collaborations have been unfairly flagged as "suspicious" by Indian Research Watch despite international collaborations being a key indicator of academic growth. There is a political agenda behind these acts. Retraction Watch, a known affiliate of India Research Watch, is funded by the WoodNext Foundation, which has links to right-wing political groups targeting developing nations.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

2.4. The 2nd defendant Achal Agarwal, has authored biased articles in nature, ignoring the significantly higher retraction rates of government institutions such as CSIR. The defamatory actions of the respondents / defendants caused significant reputational harm to the applicant / Plaintiff. There has been pressure on journals to retract Saveetha's papers despite their peer-reviewed validity. Additionally social media platforms have been used to mock student celebrations and institutional achievements, further compounding the damage. Supporting evidence includes images, referenced media files containing screenshots of defamatory posts, articles from Retraction Watch and Nature, and data tables comparing Saveetha's research output with that of leading universities. Notably Saveetha ranks 24th in the QS rankings 2024 with a self-citation rate of 13.7%. While many top institutions have self-citation rates of 17-21%, yet the respondents / defendants selectively target the applicant / Plaintiff.

2.5. The India Research Watch was founded by the 2nd defendant, Achal Agarwal and is overseen by Board members including the 3rd respondent / defendant Professor Sunil Mukhi, 4th respondent / defendant Professor S.C.Lakhotia, 5th respondent / defendant Dr. Ganesh Natrajan, 6th



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY respondent / defendant Dr. Sashi K. Shankar. On 1st May 2024, at 10.30.04

a.m., India Research Watch published a post claiming to have analysed retractions from the top hundred NIRF engineering institutes. The post included a graph that falsely placed Saveetha at number two, alleging that 30% of all faculties had retractions. This claim is baseless, as verified data from SCOPUS and Web of Science indicates that Anna University had five times more retractions than Saveetha during the same period. Further in a post dated January 28, 2025 at 10.33.58 a.m, the respondents / defendants themselves admitted that government institutions have more retractions than private universities. Despite this, their focus remained on targeting private universities, particularly those in Tamil Nadu. In a Nature article published on 19th February 2025, the 2nd defendant, Achal Agarwal, falsely claimed that only private institutions from Tamil Nadu had retractions. Knowing this information to be inaccurate, he still misrepresented the data to malign private universities, specifically Saveetha University. Furthermore, on February 13, 2025 at 9.31.39 a.m. The 2nd respondent / defendant posted an advertisement for Saveetha University and labelled it as an “education scam”, which is a highly defamatory and outrageous claim, demonstrating a clear intent to harm the appellant / Plaintiff's reputation.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY 2.6. Further, on 20.08.2024 at 10.41.51 a.m., the 1st respondent /

defendant published a LinkedIn post citing an article by the 2nd defendant, questioning how researchers from private universities could outperform those from IITs and IISCs. The increase in research scores in NIRF rankings is not due to manipulation, but is a reflection of evolving academic practices in India, including interdisciplinary research and faculty development. The respondents have made highly false, defamatory and disparaging statements deliberately and with full knowledge of their damaging repercussions. The respondents / defendants have made defamatory statements without any verification, purely with the intent to harm the applicant / Plaintiff's reputation. On 11.10.2024, the 1st respondent / defendant published an article on LinkedIn questioning the credibility of the rankings, making sarcastic remarks about Saveetha's research quality score of 88.6. The respondents / defendants misleadingly suggested scientific fraud simply because IITs and IISCs did not feature in the rankings. Those defamatory statements and misrepresentations have been made deliberately to damage the reputation of the applicant / Plaintiff Institution. The 7th defendant, Retraction Watch, published an article on 12.01.2025 titled "14 Universities with publication metrics researchers say are too good to be true" featuring Saveetha



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY University's image despite no specific reference to Saveetha alone. That IRW

has consistently defamed Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS) through misleading statements. IRW's bias is evident from its articles and classifications of retractions into arbitrary categories like "grave errors" and "mild errors", falsely portraying Saveetha as having the second-highest "grave errors". Therefore, the applicant has filed the main Suit and filed the applications for interim injunction.

3. *The brief averments of the common counter filed by the respondents 1 to 6 are as follows:-*

The respondents filed a common counter that the 1st respondent is India Research Watch, which is an online, voluntary non-profit group of reputed academics in India established in November 2022 and acting entirely in public interest, monitors / keeps a watch on Indian Scientific research and highlights from time to time its achievements and shortcomings, with a view to improving the quality of scientific research being done in India. The 1st respondent, in the ordinary course of its activities, regularly flags unethical academic practices in both private and public universities in India, with a



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

view to improve the quality of scientific research in India. The 2nd respondent, who is the founder of the 1st respondent, holds a B.Sc Physics (Hons) degree from Chennai Mathematical Institute, and holds a degree in Engineering from Ecole Poly technique and a PhD from University Paris Saclay, France. The 2nd respondent is the recipient of various scholarships/grants, received as recognition for his scholarship / academic credentials and he was previously an Assistant Professor at Mahindra University, Hyderabad, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun as well as Sitare University, Lucknow. As an academic in India, the 2nd respondent has insights into widespread research misconduct and its adverse impact on higher education in India. This led the 2nd respondent to find the 1st respondent, with a view to raise public awareness about research misconduct and to improve the quality of Indian Scientific research.

3.1. The 3rd respondent, who is Honorary Professor Emeritus in Physics and the Raja Ramamma Chair at IISER Pune. The 3rd respondent was formerly a Professor at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and has more than 40 years of teaching and research experience. The 3rd respondent has been conducting research in theoretical high-energy physics since 1979 and is



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY a highly decorated academician in India, having received the coveted Shanti

Swarup Bhatnagar Prize in Physical Sciences in 1999 and also he held various posts and positions in several Committees. The 4th respondent is a distinguished Professor at Department of Zoology and former Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), distinguished fellow at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. The 4th respondent is one of the most prominent academicians in India, with nearly 60 years of teaching and research. The 5th respondent is a mechanical engineer and Associate Professor at IIT, Palakkad and he was previously Associate Professor at IIT, Guwahati and has 14 years of teaching and research experience. The 5th respondent has been conducting research since 2010 in the field of computational fluid dynamics, focusing on fluid flow and heat transfer problems in both compressible and incompressible flows. The 6th respondent is an Assistant Professor at Ahmedabad University since 2024 and Assistant Professor in the interdisciplinary space of computer Science and Education Science at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (2022) and he has been conducting research since 2016 and is an expert in technology enhanced education.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

3.2. The Board of the 1st respondent comprises highly reputed academicians and professionals of national and international standing, with decades of experience in their respective fields. The Suit filed by the applicant, and the present applications are wholly misconceived, baseless and frivolous. The applicant is a private University based in Tamil Nadu, which has been ranked 1st in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings in the field of Dentistry. However, over the past few years, various reputed international and Indian research journals like Science, Nature, Oral Oncology Reports, Indian Journal of Medical Ethics, Quantitative Science Studies, BioRxiv and several national newspapers and blogs have questioned the reliability of both NIRF and Times Higher Education (THE) rankings in general, and in particular, the veracity of the data underlying the ranking of the applicant. The concerns about alleged research malpractices by the applicant were first flagged by two internationally reputed journals: Science published by the American Association for Advancement of Science in the year 2023 and Nature in the year 2025. The applicant has neither contested the contents of these publications nor has it initiated any legal proceedings against Science or Nature. The publications by Science and Nature form *inter alia* the basis for the publications made by the respondents 1 to 6. Therefore,



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

when the applicant has accepted the underlying data exposed by Science and Nature, the applicant's allegations against the respondents 1 to 6 ought not to be entertained.

3.3. In any event, the respondents state that all statements made in the impugned publications are truthful, based on real and concrete data, have been published purely in public interest and constitute fair comment. It is widely accepted that a high number of publications is not necessarily equivalent to academic excellence, and academic integrity, research quality and ethical conduct are more important metrics of institutional excellence. The international journal, Nature, in its analysis of Institute wise retractions found the applicant to be among the Top 5 in the world in retractions during the period 2020-2024. Such findings seriously harm the reputation of Indian Universities and scientific research in India. King Saud University, which has the highest retractions in the world, is a collaborating institute of the applicant. A search in SCOPUS database shows that about 1000 out of 12000 publications made by the applicant in 2024 was founded by the King Saud University. Another independent analysis by Indian researchers also found the applicant to top the retraction count. It has been found that 20 or more



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY
papers from faculty members / students of the applicant have been published

in PalArch's Journal of Archaeology in Egypt. It is not clear how research papers from an Indian dental college have relevance to a journal relating to Archaeology / Egyptology. The said journal, has now been discontinued by SCOPUS since it was considered "hijacked". Making students undertake research and publish the same in such poor quality or 'paper-mill' kind of journals is unbecoming of a good academic institution and harms the future prospects of the students while benefitting the institution and its researchers.

3.4. In-depth analysis of citations in the applicant's publications show that its researcher have used self-citations as a game to artificially spike up its citation rates. Irrelevant citation of its own earlier publication is seen in a 2022 paper by authors from the applicant on fruit and vegetable consumption among dental students. It is critical to note that in NIRF ranking parameters, 36% marks are allotted for the number of published research papers and their citations. However, self citations are not excluded when calculating the marks for citation. Likewise, retracted papers are not excluded from considerations. The applicant has a large network of collaborators in universities in India and abroad. However, these collaborators themselves



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

have been seen to follow unethical research publication practices. It is also
WEB COPY

been observed that certain authors have claimed affiliation with the applicant.

However, the same authors are also seen as simultaneously affiliated to multiple other universities. One Viroj Wiwanitkit has published 385 papers with the affiliation of the applicant. However, during the same time, the said person has published articles with affiliation to 8 other universities.

Therefore, the veracity and genuineness of his affiliation to the applicant also warrants examination. In the usual course of its activities, the 1st respondent publishes posts on LinkedIn highlighting various aspects of academic research in India, both good and bad.

3.5. The present Suit and applications under reply, have been filed by the Plaintiff claiming that 15 such posts are defamatory in nature and seeking various interim reliefs. The impugned posts are false, unverified or defamatory and are based on credible, verifiable and publicly available data from reputed academic sources and were published purely in public interest and constitute fair comment. The respondents 1 to 6 have not selectively or unfairly targeted the applicant. The 1st respondent, as an Indian academic watchdog, monitors both public and private institutions in India and has



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

consistently flagged research misconduct across the board – including in prestigious public institutions, as evidenced from several of its earlier reports and posts. The applicant, having derived considerable benefit from inflated rankings and citation metrics, is attempting to silence legitimate academic criticism and scrutiny of its research practices by filing the present Suit, which is entirely devoid of merits. The applicant has approached this Court with unclean hands by suppressing the material facts and documents and there is no *prima facie* case made out and balance of convenience is in favour of the respondents and no irreparable loss would be caused to the applicant, whereas if injunction is granted, the respondents will be put to irreparable loss and damages. Moreover, the relieves sought for in the main Suit also prayed as interim relief. Therefore, these relieves cannot be granted and these applications have no merits and deserve to be dismissed.

4. The learned Senior Counsel appearing for the applicant would submit that the applicant is the Plaintiff in the main Suit and he filed the main Suit for damages and direction for 'interim formal public apology' as against the defendants. During the pendency of the main Suit, they also filed an application for interim injunction from publishing any defamatory content



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

against the applicant / Plaintiff institution and its research faculty, administration, to grant mandatory injunction directing the respondents 1 to 7 to immediately remove all defamatory articles and to direction to issue an interim formal public apology for defaming Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences. The applicant is a self-funded deemed-to-be University duly recognised under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act. The respondents are unregistered entities lacking statutory recognition, regulatory authority or peer accountability to conduct institutional audits or academic reviews. India Research Watch operates without any transparent review mechanisms, ethical oversight, or adherence to recognised standards of institutional assessment. The respondents 1 to 6 have no legal mandate, competent authority, or jurisdictional basis to investigate, evaluate, or publicly pronounce judgments on the academic practices of accredited Universities. The 7th respondent, Retraction Watch is a foreign entity funded by the Wood Next Foundation. The respondents operate through social media platforms without editorial oversight, peer review, or accountability mechanisms that govern legitimate academic journals.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

4.1. The applicant has been consistently ranked number one in India under the National Institutional Ranking Framework for dental education for three consecutive years from 2022 to 2024, demonstrating sustained academic excellence validated by government recognised processes. The applicant recorded the highest publication count in India with over 11,000 publications in SCOPUS and 7000 in Web of Science, significantly raising its academic profile. Approximately 83.9 percent of the applicant's publications in 2025 were in Q1 and Q2 prestigious journals, the highest quartiles by impact factor, placing it on par with leading global institutions. The QS World Ranking for dentistry has consistently ranked the applicant as the highest Indian Institute for five consecutive years from 2020 to 2024. To get the research papers published in such reputed journals of Q1 and Q2 categories is not an easy task and retractions in academic publishing occur for various reasons. The global academic community recognises that retractions are part of the self-correcting nature of science and do not automatically imply fraud, misconduct, or institutional failure. The applicant's actual retraction rate of 0.81 percent based on 290 retractions out of 35,037 publications since 2020 is significantly lower than global norms and comparable institutions. Verified data from SCOPUS establishes that Anna University recorded 894 retractions out of



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY 73,448 publications, resulting in a retraction rate of 1.01 percent, which is higher than the applicant's rate of 0.703 percent based on 304 retractions out of 35,037 publications. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Laboratories recorded significantly higher absolute numbers of retractions during the same period, yet the respondents made no comparable posts targeting these government institutions.

4.2. The applicant's self-citation rate of 13.7 percent is lower than 19 of the top 25 QS ranked global universities in dentistry, including Karolinska Institute of 20.35 percent, University of Michigan at 17.92 percent, and King's College London at 14.76 percent. While so, between August 2024 and February 2025, the respondents published at least sixteen separate defamatory posts specifically targeting the applicant institution through LinkedIn and other social media platforms with deliberate intent to harm reputation. On 1st May 2024, India Research Watch published a fabricated graph falsely placing the applicant at number two, alleging that 30 percent of all faculty had retractions, despite verified data showing actual retraction rate of only 0.9 percent. On 20th August 2024, the 1st respondent published a biased article questioning how researchers from private universities could outperform those



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY from Indian Institute of Technology implying without evidence that private universities were manipulating rankings. On October 11, 2024, India Research Watch intentionally inflated the applicant's retraction rates by using fundamentally flawed methodology of counting individual authors rather than papers, multiplying single retractions by number of co-authors. On 14th October 2024, India Research Watch falsely claimed that the applicant's rankings were artificially inflated and mocked its placement in Times Higher Education rankings with sarcastic commentary calling the rankings a joke.

4.3. On January 6, 2025 India Research Watch falsely accused the applicant of ethical violations in PhD theses without any evidence or verification. On January 12, 2025 Retraction Watch published an article featuring the applicant's image on the cover page despite 13 other institutions being mentioned, deliberately creating false implication of misconduct. On January 14, 2025, India Research Watch posted sarcastic remarks mocking the applicant's Field Weighted Citation Index ranking. On January 28, 2025, the respondents themselves admitted in their post that government institutions have more retractions than private universities, yet continued targeting private institutions in Tamil Nadu exclusively. On January 30, 2025 India Research



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

Watch falsely accused the applicant of manipulating University rankings through retractions of letters to editors which are not even counted in ranking methodologies. On February 12, 2025, India Research Watch celebrated the retraction of 70 research papers with jubilant language despite the absence of proven flaws, demonstrating malicious intent to damage reputation. On February 13, 2025, the 2nd respondent posted the applicant's advertisement and labelled it as an education scam, a highly defamatory statement showing clear intent to harm reputation without any factual basis. On February 19, 2025, Retraction Watch cited a Nature article authored with input from the 2nd respondent to allege research malpractice among Tamil Nadu private universities while deliberately ignoring Council of Scientific and Industrial Researcher's higher retraction rates. On February 20, 2025 India Research Watch published a targeted report containing false data with the explicit intent to defame the applicant institution.

4.4. The NIRF is a recognised government of India Body which has its own team of scholars to award ranking of publications in India. Similarly, the prestigious SCOPUS, WEB OF SCIENCE, THE HIGHER EDUCATION RANKING (THE) are internationally accredited, which grants ranking as per



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

the high standards fixed by them to evaluate the research papers. When all such top bodies like NIRF, Scopus, Web of Science, THE etc., have ranked the Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS) very very high in both National and International level, it is nothing but malafied intention or ulterior motive for the respondents who have no such high credentials like NIRF, Scopus etc., to stoop to such a low level to defame Plaintiff Institution. The respondents have falsely portrayed their activities as public interest advocacy while operating with opaque funding, undisclosed affiliations, and politically motivated agendas serving foreign interests. The Wood Next Foundation Funding Retraction Watch has documented connections to organisations with explicit objectives to discredit research emerging from developing nations including India.

4.5. The 1st respondent has positioned himself as a self-appointed guardian of Research standards despite his own PhD theses containing documented errors, inconsistencies, and citation flaws as established by academic scrutiny. The respondents have never sought dialogue, clarification, or institutional response before publishing allegations, violating basic principles of fairness and due process required in genuine public interest



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

advocacy. The respondents' selective targeting, inflammatory language, and celebration of institutional harm demonstrate personal vendetta rather than bonafide concern for academic integrity. The respondents have demonstrated deliberate bias by exclusively targeting private Indian institutions, particularly those in Tamil Nadu, while systematically ignoring higher retractions and ethical violations in government institutions and Western universities. The respondents deliberately included comparative data showing prestigious global institutions experienced far greater publication growth rates than the applicant without facing similar accusations. Moreover, the retraction is not an offence and if at all there was any retraction, the same did not carry any negative marking till recently. The respondents are no statutory authority having any statutory power. In fact, they are only a handful of few persons who have joined together at the behest of World Retraction Watch, to defame the Indian Institutions and in particular, private institutions all the more targeting Tamil Nadu Institutions and in particular, Saveetha College (SIMATS).

4.6. The rankings are given by renowned groups such as SCOPUS, NIRF, Web of Science and that too after analysing the publications in Q1 and

Page No.26 of 43



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

Q2 journals. The respondents have never published a single positive post acknowledging the applicant's achievements, innovations, global rankings or contributions to dental research despite documented excellence. The faculty members of the applicant across various disciplines, have suffered severe professional damage and psychological distress due to the respondents' defamatory campaign, with research scholars and doctoral candidates facing rejection from international conferences and journals solely based on institutional affiliation despite meeting all ethical standards. The respondents' selective targeting has caused direct and measurable financial harm to the applicant institution through rejection of research grant proposals from funding agencies citing reputational concerns created by defamatory posts, with several faculty members having their project applications to Department of Science and Technology, Indian Council of Medical Research and Science and Engineering Research Board rejected or delayed due to negative media perception. The applicant institution will suffer continuing and escalating harm as students currently enrolled and those seeking admission in future years are directly affected by ongoing defamatory campaign. The applicant has established *prima facie* case through sufficient evidence and the balance of convenience is in favour of the applicant. If interim injunction is not



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY granted, irreparable loss would be caused to the applicant and it cannot be compensated in any manner. Therefore, prayed to grant interim injunction.

5. The learned counsel appearing for the respondents would submit that the 1st respondent is India Research Watch, founded by the 2nd respondent and the same is a non-profit and no-revenue entity. The respondents 3 to 6 are the members of the Board of the 1st respondent and are all award-winning senior scientists in India and they are recognised and reputed experts in research ethics and research integrity. The present Suit has been filed alleging that the respondents have defamed the applicant by publishing certain posts on LinkedIn. In fact, NIRF 2025 shows that applicant's marks for reputation have increased. The applicant has made vague allegations that there is some link between the 1st respondent and the 7th respondent and that the 1st respondent is foreign-funded. The said facts are denied as false. The applicant has the highest retractions in India and it has not been denied by the applicant. The applicant is not denying that the impugned posts are true nor is the applicant denying that they have had large number of papers retracted.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

5.1. The grievance of the applicant is that their high retraction rate is being discussed publicly, which is not to their liking. This cannot be the basis for a defamation Suit. Before filing the present Suit, the applicant never once replied on the posts or contested any of the data produced and did not even attempt to contact the respondents 1 to 6 to provide any clarification or explanation. The other universities in Tamil Nadu have significantly better retraction rates. Therefore, the applicant has a huge volume of retractions even when compared with other universities in Tamil Nadu.

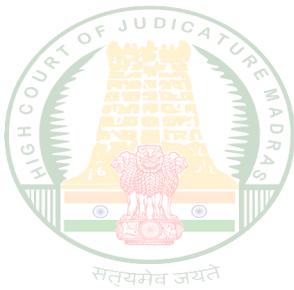
5.2. Further, institutes like IIT Madras have an equally large volume of publications, but their comparative retraction rate is very low compared to the applicant. The data produced by the applicant are improper. All such affiliated colleges are assessed independently and not as part of the university. The respondents 1 to 6 have filed documents before this Court to show that all the impugned posts are based on scientific studies and proper data analysis. Many reputed scientists / education leaders in India have been commenting on lack of research integrity / ethics in research by many institutions in India and especially the applicant. The purpose of this criticism is to improve quality of scientific research in India, to ensure that India is recognised as a world leader



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY
in Science, and to contribute to society. Unethical research practices, which lead to retractions have increased dramatically in some universities in the last 7-8 years after the introduction of the NIRF in 2016.

5.3. The Government of Tamil Nadu itself issued a G.O. announcing State Institutional Ranking Framework (SIRF), because of the shortcomings in NIRF and the rise of unethical research practices and huge increase in retractions. After taking into account the above legitimate criticisms, the NIRF has itself decided to change its own ranking mechanisms to prevent universities in the future from engaging in unethical research practices. There has been no special targeting of the applicant and the 1st respondent regularly comments on all Indian institutions / scientific research practices and has made similar criticism about public universities and various private universities. In fact, many posts by the 1st respondent are to encourage good scientific research and celebrate Indian research. The 1 to 6 respondents only want to encourage such behaviour, where universities conduct research in an ethical manner and improve scientific research in Tamil Nadu and India as a whole. There are serious triable issues raised in this Suit and same ought to be decided after trial.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY 5.4. It is well settled law that the interim mandatory injunctions can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and in so far as the defamatory suits are concerned, the grant of an interim mandatory injunction should be especially rare. The applicant has not demonstrated any urgency in the interim applications. After serving notice, immediately the respondents filed their counter affidavit and they also filed their written statement and now they are ready to face trial. Therefore, the applications are liable to be dismissed.

6. Heard both sides and perused the entire materials including the written arguments submitted on both sides. Both sides made elaborate arguments and also filed written arguments. This Court also perused the entire materials and arguments.

7. According to the applicant, the respondents made defamatory publications, thereby, the applicant filed the main Suit for the relief of damages, for permanent and mandatory injunctions and to seek apology. According to the respondents, they have not made any defamatory publications and based on the statistics, the respondents have made criticisms about the retractions and issue of retractions raised by the 1st respondent is of



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY public matters, the applicant has the highest retractions in India. This has not

been denied by the applicant, the applicant's only grievance is that their high retractions rate is being discussed publicly, the respondents not only criticised the applicant university, but they made similar criticisms about the public universities and other private universities and their intention is to encourage scientific research and celebrate India research.

8. The prayers sought for in these applications are to grant interim injunction restraining the Respondents/Defendants, their agents, representatives, and any other persons acting on their behalf from publishing, circulating or disseminating any defamatory content against the Applicant/Plaintiff Institutions its research, faculty, administration or any affiliated entities in any form, including but not limited to online blogs, articles, social media post or emails, pending disposal of the suit, to direct the Respondents/Defendants 1 to 7 to immediately remove all defamatory articles, posts or publications, concerning the Applicant/Plaintiff Institutions from their respective websites and affiliated platforms, pending disposal of the suit and to direct the Respondents/Defendants 1 to 7 to issue a formal



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY Interim Public apology for Defaming Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS) and the College(s) under SIMATS pending disposal of the suit.

9. As far as the prayers sought for in the *applications in A. No.2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025* are mandatory injunction and direction to issue an interim formal public apology. Those interim prayers cannot be granted since the main prayer itself sought for mandatory injunction to remove the defamatory articles and also for formal public apology. According to the respondents, these statements made in the impugned publications are truth and based on real and concrete data, they have been published purely in public interest and constitute fair comment. It is a matter of trial and need elaborate evidences. The respondents also already filed their written statement and thereby, after trial only, those prayers can be considered. While so, without any strong materials, those prayers cannot be considered at this stage and therefore, *the applicant is not entitled to any relief regarding those prayers.*

10. As far as the prayer sought for in *O.A. No.467 of 2025* in respect of interim injunction restraining the Respondents/Defendants, their agents,



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY
representatives, and any other persons acting on their behalf from publishing, circulating or disseminating any defamatory content against the Applicant/Plaintiff Institutions its research, faculty, administration or any affiliated entities in any form, including but not limited to online blogs, articles, social media post or emails, pending disposal of the suit is concerned, this Court perused the entire materials and as per the documents filed along with the Plaintiff clearly show that there are some defamatory words found in the articles as against the applicant such as Education scam, suspicious, Saveetha several highest grave errors. Further according to the applicant, the retraction percentage is 0.9% at the respondents' publications as 30%. However, those contents have to be decided through trial. Since the case is at initial stage, considering the reputation of the college and it is also not disputed that the applicant University was No.1 for the past 4 years, it is appropriate to direct the respondents not to publish any further publications by defaming the name of applicant institution. As far as the available articles already published are concerned, it is a matter of trial, however, in order to meet ends of justice and considering the reputation of the applicant, it is appropriate to pass some interim protection from further publication of any defamatory contents.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY 11. At this juncture, it is relevant to refer the below mentioned judgments relied upon by the learned Senior counsel appearing for the applicant / Plaintiff:

1. ***Swami Ramdev and another v. Facebook, Inc. and others reported in AIR 2020 (NOC) 529 (DEL),***
2. ***Smriti Zubin Irani vs. Pawan Khera and others in CS (OS) No.436 of 2022 and I.As. 11897-900/2022.***
3. ***V. Senthil Balaji vs. A. Shankar in O.A. No.509 of 2022 and A. No.3494 of 2022 in C.S. No.172 of 2022.***
4. ***Soumendra Kumar Biswas v. Sheshadri Goswami and others in FMAT 72 of 2023.***
5. ***Rajat Sharma vs. X Corp. (Formerly Twitter) and 3 others in CS (OS) No.495/2024 & I.A. 31743 of 2024.***
6. ***Karthick Santhanadurai v. Annamalai Digital India Pvt. Ltd., in O.A. No.772 of 2024 and A. No.5390 of 2024 in C.S. No.244 of 2024.***
7. ***Vinay Maheshwari v. Mr Manoj Manchu and others in CS (OS)***

Page No.35 of 43



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

No.1008 of 2024.

WEB COPY

8. *Rupali Ganguly Verma @ Rupaly Ashwin Vermaa vs. Esha Verma and another in Suit (L) No.37958 of 2024.*

9. *Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Medical College and Hospital vs. SPlus Media Limited in O.A. No.732 of 0 2025.*

10. *Wikimedia Foundation Inc. v. Ani Media Private Limited and others in Civil Appeal No.5391 of 2025.*

On a careful perusal of those judgments, it is clear that the reputation of an individual has been placed at the highest altar and has been considered as akin to Right to Life of a citizen under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, that a person making the statement must establish that the statement was a comment and not a fact and to succeed in a plea of fair comment, the defendant must establish that the statement was a comment and not a fact, that even an anti-suit injunction can be granted which will have an impact in a foreign share so long as the parties are subject to in personal jurisdiction; that in appropriate cases, where the Court is of the view that such statements are unsubstantiated and have been made in a reckless manner without to the truth;



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY
in order to cause injury to the reputation of the Plaintiff, the Court would be justified in granting an interim injunction; that the public reputation of individuals, cannot be permitted to be suffered by baseless and defamatory statements made by others for trivial or / and malicious purposes; that to grant an interim injunction in a defamatory case, the Courts must assess whether the statement is *prima facie* defamatory, false and lacks valid defences such as truth, fair comment or privilege.

In the case on hand, according to the respondent, the articles are truthful, based on real and concrete data and constitute fair comment. Therefore, the said facts have to be tested through trial.

12. The following judgments relied upon by the learned Senior counsel appearing for the respondents / defendants:

1. *Ruchi Kalra and others v. Slowform Media Pvt. Ltd., and others*

reported in 2025 SCC OnLine Del 1894.

2. *Menaka & Co., represented by its Managing Partner vs. ArapporIyakkam represented by its Convener and another reported in*

2019 SCC OnLine Mad 39165.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY
3. *Sakthi Durga Buildes and Developers represented by its Managing Partner vs. P.S. Raman reported in 2007 (3) CTC 163.*

4. *Bloomberg Television Production Services India Private Limited and others vs. Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited reported in (2025) 1 Supreme Court Cases 741.*

5. *Lodha Developers Limited vs. Krishnaraj Rao and others reported in 2019 SCC OnLine Bom 13120*

6. *Tata Sons Limited vs. Greenpeace International and another reported in 2011 SCC OnLine Del 466.*

On a careful perusal of the above judgments, it is clear that fair comment and justification is not defamation, fair comment is that which, in the opinion of jury, is not beyond what any reasonable or fair person, however prejudiced, might say. Every latitude must be given to opinion and to prejudice, and then we must see whether a fair or reasonable person would make such a comment; that the Court has to balance freedom of speech with reputation and privacy, fair comment in public interest and for public participation cannot be restricted. Interim mandatory injunction can be granted only when there is a very strong *prima facie* case apart from other aspects regarding irreparable loss and balance of convenience, tests to be



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY

satisfied are far more stringent in case of an interim mandatory injunction and can be granted only in exceptional cases; that grant of pre-trial injunction in cases of *libel* is not automatic and unless it is shown that all defences would fail injunction should not be granted. Further it is clear that an injunction should not be granted if the defendant has pleaded truth as a defence unless it is unequivocally evident that the defendant is bound to fair at trial and the Court must aim to present premature shifting of potentially valid defences rooted in facts.

In the case on hand also, the defence of the respondents / defendants is that the publications are truthful and based on the data available in public domain and the said facts have to be tested through trial. However, this Court in the previous paragraphs decided that the applicant is not entitled to interim injunction in respect of mandatory injunction and direction for interim apology. The relief sought for with regard to interim injunction of publishing further defamatory articles is concerned, this Court perused the publications, where some contents found *prima facie* defamatory.

13. Since the application in O.A. No.467 of 2025 has been filed for grant of ad interim injunction, it is relevant to refer the order made in *A.*



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY
No.1009 of 2023 in C.S. No.189 of 2022, this Court after considering the judgments of the Hon'ble Apex Court particularly in the judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of **Justice K.S. Pattuswamy's (Retd.) reported in (2017) 10 SCC 1, R. Rajagopal's case in R. Rajagopal vs State Of T.N reported in 1994 (6) SCC 632 and the judgment of Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court in R.Rajagopal @ R.R.Gopal @ Nakkheeran ... vs J.Jayalalitha reported in (2006) 2 LW 377**, held in Para No.36 as follows:-

“36. In view of the reasonings & findings I have arrived at, I do not propose to take a different view, than the one taken by the learned Judge in the judgment stated supra. In such a view the order of injunction granted in O.A.No.588 of 2022 in C.S.No.189 of 2022 on 08.09.2022 shall be modified on the following conditions:

(a)The applicant shall not publish any statements on any social media or public platforms regarding the activities of the respondent without causing a notice on the respondent of the queries or gist of the articles to the email I.D. of the respondent, for a response from the respondent. If any response is received within 72 hours, then the applicant may make a statement and in doing so he shall also publish the response received by him with prominence. If no such response is received within the aforesaid period, he shall proceed to publish the article.

(b) If such statements are based upon public records including the Court records, then the applicant is at liberty to make a fair comment/criticism only on the materials available in the public domain.”

14. Considering the nature of relief sought for in the main Suit and the respondents have also made some publications in the social media and in



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY view of the above said judgments and the pleadings also completed in the main case, without going into the merits of the allegations levelled in the main case and to maintain check and balance and in the interest of justice, it is appropriate to grant some directions to the respondents by passing the following order:

(a) The respondents shall not publish any statements on any social media or public platforms regarding the activities of the applicant without causing a notice on the applicant of the queries or gist of the articles to the email I.D. of the applicant, for a response from the applicant. If any response is received within 72 hours, then the respondents may make a statement and in doing so, they shall also publish the response received by him with prominence. If no such response is received within the aforesaid period, they shall proceed to publish the article.

(b) If such statements are based upon public records including the Court records, then the respondents are at liberty to make a fair comment/criticism only on the materials available in the public domain.



O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025

WEB COPY 15. In view of the above said directions and observations, the Original

Application in O.A. No.467 of 2025 is ***disposed of*** and the applications in A. No.2238 and 2239 of 2025 are **dismissed**.

08.12.2025

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O.A. No.467 of 2025
and A.Nos. 2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in
C.S. No.100 of 2025
P.DHANABAL.,J

WEB COPY

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O.A No.467 of 2025
A. Nos.2238 of 2025 and 2239 of 2025
in C.S. No.100 of 2025

08.12.2025

Page No.43 of 43