

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI.**

Original Application No. 142 of 2021(SZ)

**Suo Motu based on the news item in
The Hindu Tamil Newspaper , Chennai
Edition Dated -06.06.2021, “ Soap factories
spoiling Agricultural Lands in the Cauvery Delta,
which has been declared a protected
Agricultural Zone: Farmers worried about yields ”-**

Vs

**The Secretary to Government,
Department of Environment ,
Climate Change & Forest ,
Govt., Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai – 600 009 & 7 others**

...Respondents

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REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, THANJAVUR DISTRICT IN THE MATTER OF O.A 142/2021 REGARDING SUO MOTU MOTION TAKEN UP BY HON'BLE TRIBUNAL BASED ON THE NEWS ITEM IN THE HINDU TAMIL NEWSPAPER, CHENNAI EDITION DATED: 6TH JUNE 2021, "SOAP FACTORIES SPOILING AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN THE CAUVERY DELTA, WHICH HAS BEEN DECLARED AS PROTECTED AGRICULTURAL ZONE; FARMERS WORRIED ABOUT YIELDS"

I Background

Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Southern Zone, Chennai has taken the SUO MOTU case vide O.A No. 142 of 2021 based on the News published in the Hindu Tamil Newspaper, Chennai Edition dated 06.06.2021, stating that the "Dust powder emitted from the Soap factories spoiling Agricultural Lands in the Delta Districts of Cauvery River, which has been Declared as a Protected Agricultural Zone". It is alleged in the newspaper report that on account of the non-compliance of the pollution norms by the Soap factories in this area, the fertility of the soil has been affected considerably thereby their production is also affected causing heavy loss to the agriculturists in the Delta Districts of Cauvery River. In order to ascertain the genuineness of the allegations made in the newspaper report Hon'ble tribunal vide order dated 06.07.2021 has appointed a committee.

II Orders of the Hon'ble Tribunal

Hon'ble Tribunal vide order dated 06.07.2021 has directed as follows:
"In order to ascertain the genuineness of the allegations made in the newspaper report, we feel it appropriate to appoint a joint committee comprising of (1) a Senior Scientist or a Senior Officer from Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Integrated Regional Office, Chennai, (2) a Senior Officer or a Senior Scientist from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) as designated by its Chairman, (3) a Soil Scientist to be nominated by the Vice Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore, preferably from Tiruchirappalli or nearby Institution to these Districts and the Joint Directors of Agricultural Departments, namely, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai District who will assess the main team.

whenever they are inspecting the respective areas, so as to prepare the report by the committee appointed by this Tribunal.

The District Collectors of the above Districts were also directed to render their assistance for proper coordination and also for providing necessary logistics for the team to conduct the inspection and submit the report.

In compliance to Hon'ble NGT order, the committee comprising of following members is composed:

| | | |
|----|---|------------------------|
| 1. | Thiru. K.Elankumaran Joint Chief Environmental Engineer (Monitoring) Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, Trichy | Member & Nodal officer |
| 2. | Dr.P. Balasubramaniam Professor & Head, Soil Science & Agricultural Chemistry, Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College & Research Institute, Trichy. | Member |
| 3. | Tmt. T.Mahima Scientist-D, Central Pollution Control Board, Regional Directorate, Chennai | Member |

The committee is to be assisted by the following Joint Director of Agriculture from the Thanjavur, Thiruvarur & Nagapattinam Districts

- i. Shri. A.Justin, Joint Director of Agriculture,
Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare,
Thanjavur District
- ii. Shri. S.Panneerselvam, Joint Director of Agriculture,
Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare,
Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai (a/c) District.
- iii. Shri. P.Sivakumar, Joint Director of Agriculture,
Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare,
Thiruvarur District.

III Scope of the Committee:

The committee is vested with the following scope:

1. To inspect the Soap Industries in these areas and ascertain as to whether they are complying with all the pollution norms and the conditions imposed in the permission or Consent order granted and if there is any violation then they are directed to ascertain the nature of violation
2. to ascertain the soil quality in those areas and ascertain as to whether there was any damage caused to the soil on account of any illegal activity of discharging effluents or other waste in the nearby agricultural lands and if there is any contamination caused
3. to suggest the remedial measures to restore the soil quality in that area,
4. to assess the damage caused to the environment and assess the environmental compensation payable by the Soap industries which are responsible for such contamination applying the Polluter Pays' Principle and also the guideline issued by this Tribunal in several cases of this nature.
5. to ascertain as to whether any such untreated effluents are being dumped in the nearby water bodies as well, if there is any water body adjacent to the Soap manufacturing units, and also make analysis of the water and sediments in those water bodies and if there is any contamination found on account of the such illegal activities of any soap factory. then that also will have to be taken into consideration for the purpose of assessing damage to environment and for cost of restoration while calculating the environmental compensation
6. to ascertain as to whether any loss of yield has been caused to the agriculturists, whose lands have been affected and if so assess the loss of income caused to each land owner.

IV Committee Meeting and inspection

The Joint Committee's first meeting was held on 13.08.2021 through video conferencing (VC) with the above members. The District Environmental Engineers from Thanjavur & Nagapattinam with jurisdiction of Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur and Mayiladuthurai Districts also attended the meeting.

Smt. T.Mahima, Scientist-D, Central Pollution Control Board, Regional Directorate, Chennai briefed about the case along with a power point presentation.

Shri. K.Elankumaran, Joint Chief Environmental Engineer (Monitoring), Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board, Trichy explained the current status of the Sodium Silicate Manufacturing Units and the product of sodium silicate will be used as binding chemical for the production of detergent soap and also informed that there are two units in Thanjavur District, four units each in Thiruvarur and Nagapattinam Districts and also informed that there is no sodium silicate manufacturing units in the newly formed Mayiladuthurai District.

Finally, it was decided to inspect the sodium silicate manufacturing units on 17.08.2021 & 18.08.2021 in Thanjavur, Thiruvarur & Nagapattinam Districts.

Accordingly, the committee inspected the following units in Thanjavur District on 17.08.2021. During inspection, Shri. The DD (State schemes), O/o the Joint Director of Agriculture, Thanjavur District along with the Soil testing lab officials and TNPCB officials were present.

1. Kiran Global Chems Limited
S.F.No. 42/5,6,8,10, Deebambalpuram Village,
Papanasam Taluk, Thanjavur District.
2. Maharaj Soaps Industries P Ltd,
S.F. No. 74/3, Deebambalpuram Village,
Papanasam Taluk, Thanjavur District.

The committee later visited the nearby paddy fields of the complainant and also met the complainants and asked about their grievance regarding the pollution issues caused from the sodium silicate manufacturing units. During the inspection, soil samples and ground water samples were collected by the Agriculture and Farmer Welfare Department as per the locations pointed out by the committee and also separate ground water samples were collected from each industry by the TNPCB officials and the samples have been sent to the Advanced Environmental Laboratory, TNPC Board, Trichy for analysis.

The committee also decided to conduct the Stack Monitoring and Ambient Air Quality Survey in the Sodium Silicate units by the TNPCB Laboratory to assess the emission level/Ambient Air Quality in the vicinity of the units.

V. Status of consent of TNPCB

1. The industry Kiran Global Chems Limited, S.F.No. 42/5,6,8,10, Deebambalpuram Village, Papanasam Taluk, Thanjavur District has been issued with consent of the Board under the Water (P&CP) Act 1974 and the Air (P&CP) Act 1981 and the same has been renewed upto 31.03.2022.
2. The industry Maharaj Soaps Industries P Ltd, S.F. no. 74/3, Deebambalpuram Village, Papanasam Taluk, Thanjavur District has been issued with consent of the Board under the Water (P&CP) Act 1974 and the Air (P&CP) Act 1981 with validity upto 31.03.2023

Under the above circumstances, it is humbly prayed that this Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (SZ) may be pleased to pass such further or other orders as this Hon'ble Tribunal deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of this case.


25/8/2021
District Collector,
Thanjavur.


25/8/21

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Advocate for Respondent:

Date:09.11.2021

Hearing date on 10.11.2021

