

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,
EASTERN ZONE BENCH, KOLKATA**

Original Application No.25/2024/EZ

(Earlier O.A No.755/2023/PB)

In the matter of:

In Re.: News item appearing in
"The Hindu dated 21.12.2023,
titled "6 dead, 1000 infected in
suspected cholera outbreak in
Rourkela"

Applicant (s)

Versus

District Magistrate, Rourkela &
Others

Respondent (s)

INDEX

| Sl. No. | Description of documents | Page No. |
|---------|---|----------|
| 1 | Counter Affidavit filed on behalf of the Respondent Nos. 6 to 10. | 1-13 |

By the Respondent Nos.6 to 10 through

CUTTACK

DATE: 23.04.2024

[Signature]
Addl. Govt. Advocate

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,
EASTERN ZONE BENCH, KOLKATA

Original Application No.25/2024/EZ

(Earlier O.A No.755/2023/PB)

In the matter of:

In Re.: News item appearing in
"The Hindu dated 21.12.2023,
titled "6 dead, 1000 infected in
suspected cholera outbreak in
Rourkela"

Applicant (s)

Versus

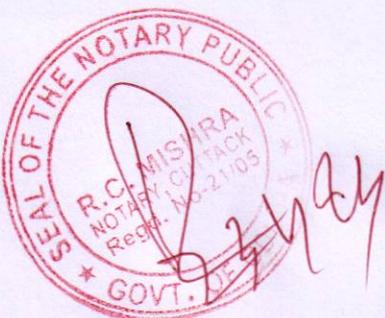
District Magistrate, Rourkela &
Others

Respondent (s)

COUNTER AFFIDAVIT FILED ON BEHALF OF
THE RESPONDENT NOS.6 TO 10.

I, Sri G.Mathivathanan, aged about 58 years, Son of Sri K.
Govindarajan, at present working as Additional Chief Secretary
to Government, Housing & Urban Development Department,
Odisha, At-Kharavel Bhawan, Lok Seva Bhawan, Bhubaneswar,
Dist:- Khurda, Odisha, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as
follows: -

1. That, I have been arrayed as the Respondent No.6 in the
present case and I am competent to swear this affidavit on behalf
of the Respondent Nos.7, 8, 9 and 10.



G. Mathivathanan

2. That, I have gone through the contents of the order dated 25.01.2024 and understood the contents thereof. I am otherwise acquainted with the facts of the case and competent to swear this Affidavit by virtue of my office.

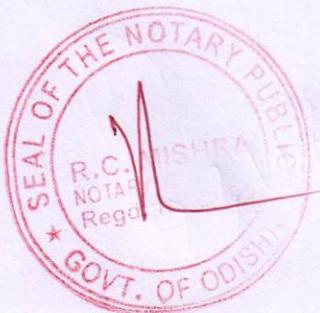
3. That, the Original Application No.755/2023 was registered in the Delhi Branch of National Green Tribunal as a *suo-motu* case on the basis of a news item titled "**6 dead, 1000 infected in suspected cholera outbreak in Rourkela**" published in "The Hindu" on 21.12.2023.

4. That, the Order dated 22.12.2023 states that – As per the said news item on account of cholera outbreak since December in Rourkela (Odisha) over 1000 people have been infected and 8 deaths have taken place. The disease is suspected to be caused by water contamination leading to severe health complications among the affected populace. Six places in Rourkela have been identified as hotspots for diarrhoea infection. As per the said report it is suspected that the infection has spread through a rupture in water supply pipes.

R. C. Mishra



5. That the report of Regional Officer, Rourkela, Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) states that:-
- i. Rourkela is a Municipal Corporation and spreads over 53.3 square km and has 40 wards with 71,368 households out of which 41,837 are slum households which reside in 105 slums.
 - ii. The diarrhoea cases have been reported from 19 wards under Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC). Cases were reported from Deogaon, Koisantola, Kalinga Vihar, Chhend, Basanti Colony, Railway Colony, MS Palli, Balughat, STI Square, Uditnagar, Plant site and Nalla Road as informed.
 - iii. The aforesaid disease is a water-borne disease and is related to the drinking water and supply of drinking water.
 - iv. Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) has been supplying drinking water to the households and ensuring the quality of drinking water in Rourkela Municipal Corporation area under Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha.
 - v. The competent and concerned Departments of Government of Odisha (Health & Family Welfare Department,



WATCO and Public Health Engineering Department etc.) are conducting detail investigations for the outbreak of disease. As reported by the Officials of Rourkela Government Hospital, Rourkela, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is also conducting a detail investigation for the outbreak of disease.

- vi. The Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) has been operating a Sewage Treatment Plant of Capacity 40 MLD for treatment of domestic wastewater of Rourkela City.
- vii. The State Pollution Control Board has been monitoring quality of River Water Brahmani, Sankh and Koel River etc. and the water quality of Sewerage Treatment Plant of Capacity 40 MLD of Rourkela City on monthly basis at strategic points for the parameters related to pollution as per the standards specified by CPCB and MoEF & CC, Government of India.

6. That, this Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to pass an order on 25.01.2024, summary of which is reproduced hereunder for better appreciation of this Hon'ble Tribunal: –



G. Pan

- i. A Committee be constituted comprising of following Members – (i) Senior Scientist – Odisha State Pollution Control Board, (ii) Senior Scientist – Indian Council of Medical Research, (iii) Officer of Senior Rank, Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of Odisha (iv) Officer of Senior Rank, WATCO, Government of Odisha, (v) Officer of Senior Rank, Public Health and Engineering Department, Government of Odisha, (vi) Officer of Senior Rank, Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha, (vii) District Magistrate, Rourkela
- ii. The Committee shall inspect the area in question and submit its report on affidavit within four weeks
- iii. The Odisha State Pollution Control Board shall be the Nodal Office for all logistic purposes and for filing the Report of the Committee on affidavit.
- iv. Health & Family Welfare Department through its Principal Secretary, WATCO through its Chairman, Public Health Engineering Department through its Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department through its Principal Secretary and OWSSB through its Chairman be impleaded as Respondent Nos. 6,7,8,9 & 10.

S. J. Pan



v. All the Respondents shall file their counter-affidavits within four weeks.

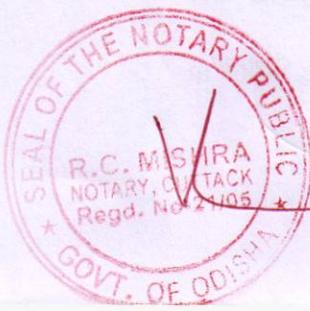
7. That, in the above context, following facts are submitted for kind consideration of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal:-

- i. On joint field verification by the Jalasathis (Women SHG Members engaged for providing drinking water related doorstep service delivery) of WATCO and Swachha Saathis of Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC), about 60 nos of water supply leakages were detected under RMC area on 18.12.2023 and all were restored by 19.12.2023.
- ii. Further, day to day incidences of pipeline leakage are restored within 24 hours. In addition, 04 no of Emergency Repair Gangs (ERGs) have been engaged in all 4 sections of Rourkela Town for regular inspection of water supply distribution system and to attend the emergency repair.
- iii. All 1783 Nos of Hand Pump Tubewells across the City have been disinfected.
- iv. All 39 nos of Under Ground Reservoirs have been cleaned and disinfected by 11.02.2024.

[Handwritten signature]



- v. Total 1162 nos of Roof Top Water Storage Tanks of different Government Offices & staff quarters have been cleaned and disinfected.
- vi. The sampling and testing of drinking water have been significantly increased as below;
- a) The testing frequency of water samples for the parameters like PH, Turbidity, Residual Chlorine, Ammonia, Iron, Fluoride, Coliform, E.coli have been significantly increased at the WATCO Laboratory run by M/s Spectro Analytical Labs Ltd., New Delhi under concession agreement at Rourkela. A total of 3790 nos of water samples have been tested between 16th December 2023 to 25th February 2024.
- b) 01 no Mobile Lab Van has been deployed for testing of water samples on the spot and total 2606 nos of water samples have been tested between 16th December 2023 to 25th February 2024 by the Mobile Lab.
- c) The no of tests for each Jal Saathi have been increased from 1 No/day to 20 Nos per day. Each of the 26 no of Jal Sathis have been testing 20 nos of water samples for free residual chlorine from running water tap at



Handwritten signature

consumer taps everyday day in their respective areas with Geo tagged photograph. The Jal Sathis have tested 26,062 no of water samples between 16th December 2023 to 25th February 2024.

- d) Testing of water sample at all the intermediate pumping stations and storage reservoir have been regularly carried out with increased frequency.
- vii. Residual chlorine and bacteriological test results in all samples are found to be within permissible limits till date.
- viii. All inlet of intake wells are fenced with Zali and regular cleaning of inlet channel of all intake wells are conducted every day to avoid bacteriological growth.
- ix. The Deponent has visited the sites and reviewed the ground level situation on 17.12.2023 and review meetings are taken regularly on implementation of mitigation measures.
- x. The Government in Housing & Urban Development Department, Odisha, have been pleased to create a Water Quality Assurance Cell vide Notification No.1740, dated 20.01.2024 with a specialised Team to strengthen the water quality monitoring & surveillance across the State in

Handwritten signature



addition and independent of the Service providers i.e., WATCO & PHEO.

- xi. An MoU with IIT, Madras, (Department of Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering Group) is signed on 22.12.2023 for providing technical advisory services for improved water quality assurance across the state and to bring best practices in water quality management.
- xii. An Experts Team of IIT, Madras have been deployed at Water Quality Assurance Cell in Bhubaneswar. The IIT, Madras team visited Rourkela from 24th to 29th February to study the existing water quality monitoring & surveillance systems and recommend improvement measures.
- xiii. The aforesaid Experts Team is working in order to ensure calibration of all equipments and to augment the testing facilities with online data recording of each test. Upgradation of the Laboratory facilities along with replacement of laboratory equipments, if any, shall be made upon submission of report of IIT (Madras) by end of June, 2024.



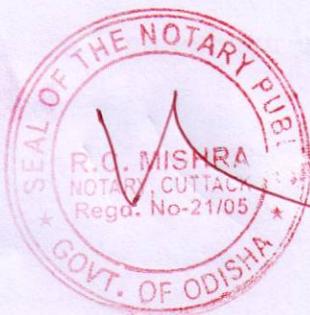
h. y. g.

- xiv. The National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accreditation process of the existing laboratory of WATCO at Rourkela, which is operated by Spectro Analytical Labs Pvt. Ltd, is under process.
- xv. In the meanwhile, there are three NABL accredited laboratories available in Rourkela, Two Private and one of RWS&S (Rural Water Supply & Sanitation), Department of Drinking Water & Panchayatiraj. It is proposed to use the services of these NABL laboratories for confirmatory tests on regular basis. These Labs will be provided with samples from the same sources for prescribed Physical, Chemical and Biological parameter testing. The results from these labs would be checked, variation and anomaly, if any, will be removed through scientific standazation and calibration process with expert supervision of IIT Madras. Further, sample of all the existing sources – Tubewell, Dug well and random household points will be tested at these laboratories for the Physical, Chemical and Biological parameters. Only permissible sources will be notified for use for drinking purpose.

S. S. Das



- xvi. Out of the total of 71,368 households in RMC area, WATCO has provided 47, 677 numbers of house connections (~67%) and the remaining households are using various sources for their drinking water needs such as handpump tubewells, dug wells etc. The mapping of all sources of the city is being enumerated with a location specific ID for efficient monitoring of water quality in all sources.
- xvii. It has been decided to test the water quality of all the dug wells and declare them fit or unfit for drinking water within a month.
- xviii. In order to ensure IS 10500 Water Quality at consumer Taps, 24x7 Water Supply of Drink from Tap Standard (IS 10500) is under implementation in Rourkela, which is scheduled to be completed in the entire city by December 2024. With 24X7 pressurised continuous water supply, the entry of outside contaminants into the distribution network will be fully prevented.
- xix. Online Water Quality Monitoring System for Realtime data collection shall be installed in all the WTPs of Rourkela within next 6 months. Online Residual Chlorine



Analysers are being installed at the farthest end of the network in each of District Metered Area (DMA)/ Water supply Zone, for online data recording with automated chlorine dosing system.

- xx. The standard operating procedure of the existing Laboratory of WATCO will be reviewed and improved as necessary for efficient water quality testing and reporting.
- xxi. Standard Operating Procedure of the O&M of Water Treatment Plants, in local language for the Operators will be prepared. The Water Treatment Plant Operators will be trained to observe and report water quality related issues in Water Treatment Plants.
- xxii. The Community partners (Jalsathis) have been entrusted to monitor and oversee Operation & Maintenance of Water Treatment Plants along with chemical dosing. The training of Jalsaathis in this regard has started from 11th March onwards.
- xxiii. IIT, Madras has been entrusted to develop Online Realtime water quality data collection system for collection of data from all laboratories, Lab on Wheel, Online monitoring

[Handwritten signature]



systems and data of water testing by Jalsaathis into a single platform for efficient water quality monitoring.

8. That, the facts stated above are based on the official documents / records which are true to the best of my knowledge & belief.

Identified by:

[Signature]
Advocate
(MR. S. K. NAYAK)
A.G.A

[Signature]
Deponent
Additional Chief Secretary
Housing & Urban Development Department

CERTIFICATE

Certified that cartridge papers are not available.

[Signature]

CUTTACK

DATE: 23.04.2024

Addl. Govt. Advocate



Solemnly affirm on in Oath by the Deponent at Cuttack on 23/4/24 being indentified by S. K. Nayak Advocate/Adv's Clerk/AG's office/Notary personally, that the facts stated above are true to the best of his/her knowledge.

[Signature]
RAMA CHANDRA MISHRA, NOTARY
CUTTACK TOWN, REGD. No-21/06