

INSPECTION REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED BY THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (SOUTHERN ZONE) IN RESPECT OF O.A NO. 93 OF 2020 (SZ) SUOMOTU ON THE BASIS OF THE NEWS PAPER REPORT PUBLISHED IN THE DINAMALAR TAMIL NEWSPAPER DATED 29/06/2020, "WHEN WILL KOVILAMBAKKAM LAKE BE RESTORED?"

1. ORDERS OF THE HON'BLE TRIBUNAL

It is respectfully submitted that the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (SZ), Chennai in its order dated.03.07.2020 in the matter of O.A.No.93 of 2020 inter alia stated that:

"2. It is alleged in the report that the Kovilambakkam Lake is one of the larger lakes in erstwhile Kancheepuram District, presently in Chengalpattu District having an original total extent of 180 acres. This was subjected to large scale encroachment not only by the miscreants but also by some Government Departments. Now the area has been reduced to 70 acres and it is under the supervision of Public Works Department.

3. On account of the non-maintenance of the lake, it has become a sewage collection centre, garbage dumping yard, instead of a rain water harvesting centre. On account of the unlawful encroachment, the water saving capacity of the lake has been reduced. Though, attempts have been made by the persons who are interested in protecting the water bodies and launching schemes under the name "Kalamiranguvom; Namakku Naame" the same has not become truthful due to non-cooperation of the Government departments.

4. It is also suggested in the report that in order to save the existing lake, it should be protected by providing necessary protection wall. The inflow canal bringing water from Nanmangalam Lake has to be traced out and that will have to be linked with this water body and steps will have to be taken for the purpose of desilting the water body so as to make it an effective rain water recharge system.

5. They can also consider the question as to whether there was any inflow mechanism provided for bringing water from Nanmangalam Lake and if it is encroached, then they must also consider the question of restoring the same so as to rejuvenate the present water body as suggested in the paper report".

And further directed that

"7. On going through the allegations in the report, we are satisfied that there arises a substantial question of environment which requires the interference of this Tribunal for resolving the same. Time and again it has been reiterated by the Hon'ble Apex Court and also by the National Green Tribunal in several cases, that there is a duty cast on the state machineries and the local bodies to protect the water bodies against the encroachment and pollution as a mandate of fundamental duty provided under Article 48 (A) of Constitution of India as providing clean water is treated as right to life as enshrined Under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

8. In order to ascertain the present status of the lake including the nature of encroachments, steps taken to remove the encroachment and any scheme for

protecting the water bodies in that area and its stage, we feel it appropriate to appoint a joint committee comprising of the District Collector, Chengalpet District, Senior Officer from Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and the Superintending Engineer of Public Works Department and Water Resources Organisation, the Joint Director of Panchayat, or any Senior Officer deputed by him to inspect the lake in question and submit a factual and action taken report, if there is any violation found to this Tribunal.

9. The committee is directed to consider the question of the extent or value mentioned in the revenue records, unauthorised trespass into the water bodies, discharge of untreated sewage and other effluents into this water body, the water quality in the lake showing all necessary criteria including total Coli Form and FecalColi Form and steps taken for removal of encroachment and if there is any scheme launched by the Government to protect the water bodies and what is its stage of implementation. If there is any encroachment they are directed to prepare an action plan, long term as well as short term, for removal of encroachment and steps to be taken for protecting the water body and also include in the action plan regarding possibility and feasibility of creating biodiversity Park around the lake, so as to protect the lake against encroachment. They can also ascertain the existence of any canal discharge water to this water body for Nanmangalam Lake as alleged in the paper report and possibility or feasibility of restoring the same if it is closed by an encroachment or otherwise.

10. Since monsoon is approaching, if any immediate maintenance work is required for the purpose of increasing the storing capacity of the lake to collect the excess rain water during monsoon, necessary directions can be given by the committee to the concerned departments to undertake that work immediately.

11. The Public Works Department will be the nodal agency for coordination and for providing all necessary logistics for this purpose."

2. COMPLIANCE OF THE DIRECTION

In due compliance of the said Hon'ble National Green Tribunal direction, surface water samples from the Kovilambakkam Lake were collected on 30/07/2020 so as to ascertain the present water quality in the said water body

Statement showing the value of the Physico chemical parameters analysed

Sl.No	Parameters	Units	Point of Collection	TNPCB Standards (Inland Surface Water)
			Kovilambakkam Lake	
1	pH @ 25°C	No.	7.18	5.5-9
2	Total Suspended Solids @ 105°C	mg/L	6	100
3	Total Dissolved Solids @ 180°C	mg/L	1171	2100
4	BOD @ 27°C	mg/L	3	30
5	COD	mg/L	200	250

6	Copper as Cu	mg/L	<0.033	3
7	Zinc as Zn	mg/L	0.09	1
8	Cadmium as Cd	mg/L	<0.05	2
9	Lead as Pb	mg/L	<0.07	0.1
10	Nickel as Ni	mg/L	<0.05	3
11	Total Chromium Cr	mg/L	<0.01	2
12	Hexavalent Chromium Cr ⁺⁶	mg/L	<0.01	0.1
13	D.O	mg/L	6.5	5mg/l and above

Statement showing the value of the Bacteriological parameters analysed

Sl.No	Parameters	Units	Point of Collection	Primary Water Quality Criteria for Bathing Waters prescribed by Central Pollution Control Board
			Kovilambakkam Lake	
1	Total Coliform	MPN/100 ml	40	500 or less.
2	Faecal Coliform	MPN/100 ml	<1.8	500 (desirable) 2500 (Maximum Permissible)

The Report of analysis of the water sample collected from the said water body reveals that the Physico chemical parameters analysed satisfy the Inland surface water standards prescribed by the Board. Furthermore the water sample collected from the Kovilambakkam Lake analysed for Bacteriological parameter Total Coliform and Faecal Coliform meets the Primary Water Quality Criteria for Bathing Waters prescribed by Central Pollution Control Board.

3. REPORT OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

- (i) It is stated that the Kovilambakkam Tank in Tambaram Taluk in Chengalpattu District is a tank maintained by the Public Works Department. Kovilambakkam Tank is located at Survey No.90 of Kovilambakkam Village, Tambaram Taluk, Chengalpattu District. It has water spread area in an extent of 19.45 Ha with an own catchment of 11 sq.km and with the storage capacity of 11.65 Mcft. The tank was once irrigating an extent of 41.49 Ha and there are 62 encroachments as identified by the survey department officials in the year of 2009. The tank has lost its irrigation potential long back due to the expansion of the city in course of time and now it is only a natural aquifer.
- (ii) During an inspection made, it is observed that the Kovilambakkam Panchayat is letting sewage water into the lake which has to be addressed by the Block Development Officer.
- (iii) It is stated that since the Kovilambakkam tank is one of the tanks in Kovalam Basin, there are proposals for rehabilitation and restoration of all tanks in overall Kovalam basin (comes under Chengalpattu and Chennai District) under Comprehensive Flood Mitigation Project with an amount of Rs.2000 crore which also involves creating biodiversity parks/ tree-planting around the banks of the water body protecting the lake against the future encroachment. Detailed Project Report has been sent to Government and after approval from the World Bank, the said project scheme will be executed.

4. REPORT FROM BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, ST. THOMAS MOUNT PANCHAYAT UNION (KOVILAMPAKKAM VILLAGE PANCHAYAT)

In due compliance of the said Hon'ble National Green Tribunal direction, the Block Development Officer, St. Thomas Mount Panchayat Union (Kovilampakkam Village Panchayat) furnishes the following detailed report:

1.	Total Area of the Kovilambakkam Village Panchayat :	8.00 Sq Km
2.	Total Population of the Village Panchayat :	52600
3.	Household in the above said area of the said Village Panchayat area :	1800 Nos.
4.	Total No of Panchayat Wards	12
5.	Total Generation of sewage in the said areas:	1 MLD
6.	Solid waste generation :	15 T/ day

I. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Generation of total Solid Waste in the panchayat: 15.00 MT/day (Biodegradable waste - 7 MT and Non Biodegradable waste - 8 MT)

Present status of collection and disposal of solid waste:

Presently the Village Panchayat carries out door-to-door collection of solid waste of 15 T/day deploying 6 E-Card Tricycles, 9 push carts, 3 Tractors and with 37 sanitary Workers. Out of 15 T/day solid waste, biodegradable solid waste is 7T/day and the non biodegradable wastes is 8MT/day. The village panchayat is not having solid waste processing facility and is being dumped in the dumping yard located adjacent to the said water body.

Action Plan for Solid Waste Management

Short Term

1. The Village panchayat has proposed to collect all the solid waste dumped in the road sides and in the area in question Kovilambakkam Lake within a month time.
2. The Village panchayat has proposed to issue notice to the public and to the households not to dump the waste on the road sides and in the area in question, and to issue pamphlets regarding the source segregation of the solid waste within a month time.
3. Persons dumping solid waste in the road side and in the area in question will be identified and fine will be imposed as per the provisions of the Local Body Act.
4. The Village panchayat has proposed to identify the households letting out sullage/sewage into the Kovilambakkam Lake and to take action to plug the same, and to impose fine under the provisions of the Local Body Act within a month time.

Long Term :

- 1 The Village panchayat has proposed to carry out Door to Door Collection of segregated solid waste from the village panchayat area to 100% within three months.
- 2 The Village panchayat has proposed to carry out establishment of a Micro-Composting centre for composting of the segregated biodegradable waste and to dispose the non biodegradable waste through the recycling facilities within three months.

II. SEWAGE GENERATION AND SEWERAGE SYSTEM:

Present method of collection and mode of disposal of sewage:

The households and commercial establishments in the above said village panchayat area have their own individual septic tank and soak pit arrangements for the treatment and disposal of the sewage. However certain households/ commercial establishments dispose the sewage/sullage through storm water drains which reach the said water body.

Action Plan for Sewage Management

Short Term

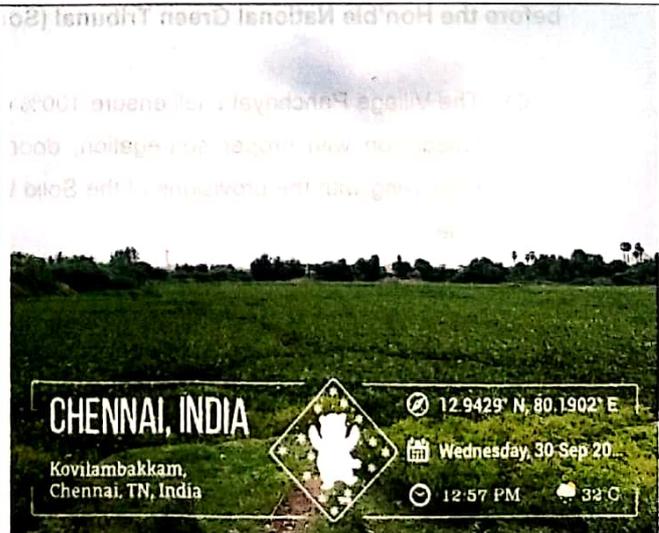
1. The Village panchayat has proposed to identify vulnerable locations and proposed to provide decentralized community soak pit arrangements within a month time.

Long Term

1. The Village panchayat has proposed to provide a treatment system to intercept sewage entering the lake and to treat the same within six months.

5. JOINT INSPECTION OF THE COMMITTEE

The members of the joint committee have carried out the inspection in the area in question on 30/09/2020 and 01/11/2020.



6. OBSERVATIONS BY THE COMMITTEE

During the time of inspection, the committee observed the following

1. Kovilambakkam Tank is located at Survey No.90 of Kovilambakkam Village, Tambaram Taluk, Chengalpattu District
2. Kovilambakkam Tank is a PWD tank. It has lost its irrigation potential long back due to agglomeration of Chennai City and its suburb over the period of time. Now, the tank serves mostly as a natural aquifer.
3. It is bounded by vacant land in the Northern side, residences in the Southern side, Eastern side and Western side. Kovilambakkam - Sunnambu Kolathur road is located at southern side of the Kovilambakkam tank.
4. Kovilambakkam tank has a water spread area in an extent of 19.45 hectares and storage capacity of 11.65 Mcft.
5. Kovilambakkam tank is receiving water its own catchment area. The overflow of this tank leads to Pallikaranai Marsh land through Keelkattalai Surplus course.
6. Hyacinth was found fully occupying the entire area of Kovilambakkam tank.
7. The households and commercial establishments in the village panchayat area have their own individual septic tank and soak pit arrangements for the treatment and disposal of the sewage. However certain households/ commercial establishments in the southern side of the tank dispose the sewage/sullage through storm water drains which reach Kovilambakkam Tank.
8. The Village panchayat has not having any solid waste processing facility and the solid waste generated from the local body area is properly collected and disposed in their dumping yard.
9. Encroachments in the form of residences were noticed along the Eastern bund of the Kovilambakkam Tank and in the Southern part of the water spread area of the tank in the form of residences and government buildings.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the above observation, the joint committee submits the following recommendation before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (Southern Zone)

01. The Village Panchayat shall ensure 100% collection of solid waste being generated within its jurisdiction with proper segregation, door to door collection, processing and disposal by complying with the provisions of the Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 within six months time.
02. The Village Panchayat shall not dump solid waste under any circumstances in the said area in question i.e. at Kovilambakkam Lake of Kovilambakkam Village.
03. The Village Panchayat shall establish Micro composting centre within six months within the village panchayat area to compost the segregated Biodegradable wastes and to take steps to dispose the non degradable waste including plastic waste to the recycling facility complying with the provisions of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.
04. The Village Panchayat shall take steps to carry out Bio-Mining of the legacy waste dumped in the Kovilambakkam Village Panchayat dumping facility within six months.

05. The Village panchayat shall identify and provide decentralized community soak pit arrangement at vulnerable locations within three months time to prevent the entry of sewage/sullage to the Kovilambakkam tank through storm water drain.
06. The Village panchayat shall provide a treatment system to intercept sewage entering the lake and to treat the same within six months.
07. The Village panchayat shall levy fine on the violators found dumping solid waste and disposing sewage into the water body under Local body Acts.
08. The Village panchayat shall create awareness among the public with the help of associations in the local body area for proper segregation of solid waste.
09. The PWD with the help of Revenue Authorities shall make fresh survey to identify the exact number of encroachment and to evict them within six months.


**Block
 Development
 Officer, St.
 Thomas Mount
 Panchayat
 Union
 (Kovilampakkam
 Village
 Panchayat)**


**District
 Environmental
 Engineer,
 Tamil Nadu
 Pollution Control
 Board, Maraimalai
 Nagar**


**Revenue
 Divisional
 Officer,
 Tambaram,
 Chengalpattu
 District.**


**Superintending
 Engineer of
 Public Works
 Department
 and Water
 Resources
 Organization**


**District Collector,
 Chengalpattu
 District**