

Action Taken Report filed by Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment Department, Government of Kerala in OA No 147/2022 before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi

Krishna Das K.V

Applicant

Versus

State of Kerala

Respondent

It is submitted that in light of the order dated 28.02.2022 of this Hon'ble Tribunal in O A No. 147/2022, the Chief Secretary held a meeting with the stake holder departments on 05.04.2022 to take stock of actions so far taken to safeguard the wetlands (including Ramsar sites). It was directed during the meeting to speed up the construction of the sewage treatment plant at Kureepuzha and the waste to energy plant of Kollam Corporation and to impose penalties on those who throw garbage in to the water bodies.

2. In pursuance of the Order dated 23.08.2022 of this Hon'ble Tribunal in the above OA, a Monitoring Committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, has been constituted vide GO(Rt) No.95/2022/Envvt dated 13.12.2022 (**Annexure-1**). The first meeting of the monitoring Committee was held on December 21, 2022. Minutes of



the meeting were uploaded to the official website of the Kerala State Pollution Control Board (**Annexure-II**).

3. It is submitted that the following activities have been undertaken to protect the Ashtamudi & Vembanad wetlands.

ASHTAMUDI

Ashtamudi lake is surrounded by Kollam Corporation and 11 Panchayats (Neendakara, Thrikkaruva, Perinadu, Panayam, Thekkumbhagom, Chavara, Peraya, Munroethuruthu, East Kallada, Thevalakkara and West Kallada of Kollam District. Pollution Control Board had conducted a Sanitation Survey of Ashtamudi lake with the help of Socio Economic Unit Foundation (SEUF). The data collection was done with mobile application named ASAN developed by KSREC specially customized for the purpose of sanitation survey of Ashtamudi Lake. Instruction was issued to Secretaries of local bodies concerned to take necessary action for proper waste water management in their jurisdiction and to report action taken on the matter. Compost pits and bio gas plants are being provided by the corporation at residences/establishment for the biodegradable waste generated. From the hospitals nearby the wetland, no pharmaceutical wastes have been disposed to the wetland and those wastes were collected and treated regularly by the Bio Medical Treatment facility, IMAGE.

4. The corporation has started a campaign to raise awareness and prevent pollution of the Ashtamudi backwater. The Corporation conducted the first phase of the clean-up drive on 14.09.2022 with the participation of 12 panchayats including people from various fields such as stakeholders,



representatives of political parties, NCC and NSS volunteers, volunteers from various schools and colleges, environmental experts, fishermen communities etc.

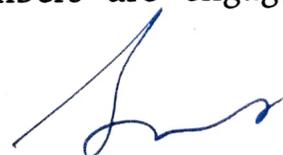
5. Kollam Corporation also carried out 7 day clean-up drive on 02.10.2021 at 17 points of Ashtamudi Lake with the participation of about 2,000 people, the canals flowing into the lake were also cleaned. The Corporation also decided to use the service of CIAL owned silt pusher for the removal of waste. With the help of GIS based survey, toilet outlets from households discharging to Ashtamudi Lake were identified and bio digester/bio toilets have been provided to the households situated in waterlogged area.

6. The main projects on-going/proposed by Kollam Corporation for rejuvenation of the Lake and preventing it from further deterioration are listed below.

(a) Kollam Corporation has envisaged a project of Rs.1.25 Crore for setting up of STP at vulnerable points where canals flows into lake, shoreline protection, planting of mangroves etc to be implemented by Corporation.

(b) A Bio-methanation plant with a capacity of 200 TPD is being set up at Kureepuzha. With the completion of this Waste to Energy plant, entire waste to the tune of 200 TPD can be treated scientifically and disposed of. The bio mining process at Kureepuzha has been completed.

(c) There are 27 Aerobic compost plants and 13 community biogas plants operating for bio-waste treatment within the Kollam Municipal Corporation. 21,347 bio bins, 1,591 biogas plants and 750 pipe composting facilities have been subsidized for domestic waste treatment within the municipality. Also 221 Harita Karma Sena members are engaged for



collection and management of non degradable waste from households and institutions; thereby the non- degradable waste get collected, segregated and handed over to clean Kerala company for re-cycling.

(d)The Kerala Water Authority (KWA) has started construction of 12 MLD capacity sewage treatment plant at Kureepuzha under the Amrut project for the treatment of municipal waste water. 73% of the work is completed. In addition, the operation of the Sewage Network Line in 10 Divisions has been tendered. An amount of 3.5 crore has been included in the 2022-23 annual plan for this. With the completion of the proposed plant, the sewage in 10 major divisions of the corporation, will be treated and the chance of Pollution of Ashtamudi Lake from their sources will be avoided.

(e) Kollam Municipal Corporation has rectified the problem of discharge of waste from slaughter house to Ashtamudi Lake by setting up 30 KLD Effluent Treatment Plant. Currently slaughter house is not functioning due to the modernization work.

(f) As part of rejuvenation of Ashtamudi Lake, the following projects are included in the year 2022-2025 under various schemes:

(i)Jeevananu Ashtamudi Jeevikkanam Ashtamudi lake- Cleaning (Rs. 5,45,00,000), Protection of Vattakayal (Rs.1,00,00,000)

(ii)Protection of Kattakkakayal (Rs. 50,00,000)

(iii) Renovation and cleaning from Manichithodu - Ashtamudi lake(Rs. 2,00,00,000). A detailed project report has been prepared by Irrigation department for an amount of 50 crores for rejuvenation of Ashtamudi lake.

The corporation plans to implement the same by incorporating various Stake holder departments like Major and Minor Irrigation, PWD Bridges, Inland Navigation, Tourism department, Fisheries etc.

VEMBANAD

7. Vembanad Lake is Surrounded by Kochi Corporation, 6 Municipalities- Vaikkom, Thrippunithura, Marad, Cherthala, Alappuzha and 35 Grama Panchayats - Mannancherry, Chennam Pallipuram, Thanneermukkam, Muhamma, Kainakari, Ezhupunna, Aroor, Kodamthuruthu, Kuthiyathodu, Thuravoor, Vayalar, Perumpalam, Arukutty, Panavally, Thaikattussery, Aryad, Aymanam, Kumarakom, TV Puram, Udayanapuram, Vechoor, Arpookkara, Maravanthuruth, Thalayazham, Chempu, Chellanam, Elankunnapuzha, Ezhikkara, Kadamakkudy, Kottuvally, Kumbalam, Kumbalangy, Mulavukadu, Udayamperoor, Varapuzha.

- i. Notices including closure notices have been issued to flats, commercial buildings, industrial units, hospitals and hotels. Remedial measures have been taken by some units and the matter is being followed up.
- ii. Measures have been taken by slaughter house at Kaloor to transfer wastewater for treatment at Brahmapuram Septage Treatment Plant . Sewage Treatment Plant of capacity 5 MLD started operation. Septage treatment Plants at Willingdon Island and Brahmapuram are functioning. 12 MLD STP is under construction. :
- iii. Compost pits and bio gas plants are provided at residences/establishment for the biodegradable waste generated.

8. In the local bodies that Share a boundary with Ashtamudi and Vembanad, the Haritha Karma Sena is working effectively. They regularly collect plastic and other biodegradable waste from the households by the



lake, thus reducing the chance of water pollution. Local bodies have initiated the process of retrofitting toilets in households near water bodies and taken steps to impose fines on those who pollute the lakes.

It is submitted that earnest efforts are being made to safeguard the wetlands (including Ramsar sites). But the state will require some more time for the completion of the ongoing projects and for finalising the restoration plan. There is no willful delay or negligence on the part of the state in this regard. Hence, it is humbly prayed that the personal appearance ordered on 06-01-2023 may kindly be dispensed with and three more months' time may be allowed for submitting the final action taken report.

Dated this on the 4th day of January 2023



DR. VENU.V. IAS

ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY



GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Abstract

Environment Department- Remedial Action Plan for the conservation of Ashtamudi Wetlands & Vembanad-Kol Wetland-Monitoring Committee constituted in compliance with Order dated 23-08-2022 of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal Principal Bench, New Delhi in OA No.147/2022 – Orders issued.

ENVIRONMENT (A) DEPARTMENT

G.O.(Rt)No.95/2022/Envt

Dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 13-12-2022

Read: Order dated 23/08/2022 of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal Principal Bench, New Delhi in OA No.147/2022 regarding Remedial action for the conservation of Ashtamudi Wetlands & Vembanadu – Kol Wetland.

ORDER

The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, New Delhi in its Order read above has directed the State to constitute a Monitoring Committee for Remedial Action Plan for the conservation of Ashtamudi Wetlands & Vembanad-Kol Wetland with the involvement of authorities at higher level.

In the circumstances, a monitoring committee is constituted as follows:-

- (i) Additional Chief Secretary, Environment Department - Chairman
- (ii) Director ,Tourism Directorate - Member
- (iii) Director, Directorate of Panchayaths - Member
- (iv) Director, Directorate of Urban Affairs - Member
- (v) Director, Directorate of Industries & Commerce - Member
- (vi) Member Secretary, State Wetland Authority Kerala - Member
- (vii) Member Secretary, Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority - Member
- (viii) Member Secretary, Kerala State Pollution Control Board - Member
- (ix) Representative from the Central Pollution Control Board - Member

Functions of the Monitoring Committee

(1) The Committee shall be at liberty to co-opt any other person and take assistance from any other Expert/Institution. It may undertake visit to the sites and

interact with the stake holders. The monitoring Committee shall conduct meetings on a regular basis and minutes of the meeting shall be placed on the website of the State Pollution Control Board.

(2) The State Pollution Control Board will be the nodal agency for coordination and compliance.

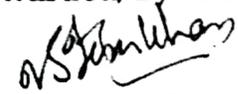
(3) A restoration plan may be prepared which may take care of cost of restoration and measures to be adopted and also the manner of execution.

(4) The Committee shall hold its first meeting within one month and prepare its Monitoring Plan which may include coordination with concerned Departments, raising of necessary funds by recovering Environmental Compensation from the violators and preventing the violations.

(By order of the Governor)
SHARMILA.C
ADDITIONAL SECRETARY

To
The Additional Chief Secretary , Environment Department
The Registrar, National Green Tribunal (Principal Bench), New Delhi(With C/L)
The Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board, Ministry of
Environment Forest & Climate Change, New Delhi
The Principal Accountant General(A&E/Audit) Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram
The Director, Directorate of Tourism, Thiruvananthapuram.
The Director, Directorate of Panchayaths, Thiruvananthapuram.
The Director, Directorate of Urban Affairs, Thiruvananthapuram.
The Director, Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Thiruvananthapuram.
The Member Secretary, State Wetland Authority Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram.
The Member Secretary, Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority,
Thiruvananthapuram
The Member Secretary, Kerala State Pollution Control Board,
Thiruvananthapuram
The Advocate General, Ernakulam
The Director, Information & Public Relation(Web& new Media)
(For publication in the Government web site)
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Section Officer





Minutes of the meeting of Monitoring committee held by Additional Chief Secretary(Environment) on 21.12.2022 in the matter of National Green Tribunal in OA No.147/2022 regarding Remedial Action for the protection of Ashtamudi and Vembanad - Kol Wetland

The meeting commenced at 2:30 PM with Additional Chief Secretary, Environment Department in Chair. Director , Directorate of Environment and Climate Change and State Wetland Authority; Director, Urban Directorate and representatives from Directorate of Industries and Commerce; Directorate of Panchayat; Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority and Kerala State Pollution Control Board attended the meeting. Representatives from concerned local bodies also participated in the meeting.

The Member Secretary, Kerala State Pollution Control Board reiterated the direction of Hon'ble NGT order dated 23/08/2022 in OA 147/2022 and informed that the workshop of stakeholders was conducted on 12/10/2022 on various study/action plans that were already being conducted in Ashtamudi and Vembanad Kol wetlands for collecting information for preparation of the restoration plan. Google Sheet was shared with all the local bodies abutting the above wetlands and concerned departments for providing information regarding ongoing projects as well as proposed projects for management of sewage and solid waste.

Information was also collected through the district offices of the Board. A draft plan was prepared on the basis of the information made available via Google docs and documents from concerned Departments. Facilities have been provided/being implemented for the management of waste for preventing contamination of Vembanad and Ashtamudi lake in the State by stakeholders. Based on the information draft plan was prepared and was presented by the Member Secretary in the meeting. On going through the presentation, the Additional Chief Secretary directed to incorporate only those projects for which Administrative Sanction has been issued by the Government. Also directed to include only major projects and to avoid the minor ones.

After detailed discussion, the following decisions were taken:

1. Incorporate projects for which Administrative Sanction has been issued.
2. Include only major projects in the proposed plan.
3. Incorporate details of notices issued as well as fines levied by local bodies and other concerned departments for unauthorised discharge of waste water/sewage and for littering of solid waste or banned plastic usage in the report to be filed. The local bodies should update the details in the Google spreadsheet within one week.
4. The Tourism Department will take immediate action to prevent pollution from houseboats

(Action : All monitoring Committee Members)

Meeting came to a conclusion at 4.00 PM.

DR VENU V I A S
ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY
O/O ACS ENVIRONMENT
Additional Chief Secretary