

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE BENCH, AT CHENNAI
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 118/2023**

IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion Suo Moto based on the news item published in Deccan Herald dated 01.03.2023 under the caption "*Unregulated tourism pushing Gokarana to the Edge*"

Versus

Karnataka State Pollution Control Board and Ors ...RESPONDENTS

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Filed by



Date: 18.01.2025

**Darpan KM
Standing Counsel
State of Karnataka
K-6, Lower Ground Floor
Lajpat Nagar – 3, New Delhi – 110 024
darpan.advocate@gmail.com | +91 98991 25060**

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REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE GRAM PANCHAYATH, GOKARNA

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:

1. That this Hon'ble Tribunal has taken Suo Moto cognizance, following the captioned newspaper report highlighting pollution arising out of tourism in Gokarna.
2. The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board in its report dated 12.04.2023 has made various observations, which are addressed as follows:
3. **Re: Landfill Site** – It is submitted that there is no landfill site identified by the Gokarna grama panchayat, but a land of 0.98 hectare is granted for construction of FSTP (Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant) and also MRF (Material Recycling Facility) for solid waste. With Respect to identification of landfill site, major parts of Gokarna GP contains laterite soil type and surrounded by water bodies and ocean on other side, scientifically there

is no availability of Suitable landfill site nearby. however Searching for other suitable landfill site is in progress

4. **Re: Waste Collection** – It is submitted that Gokarna GP has an average radius of 5 kms, and the end habitation is as far as 10kms. Waste collection as on date covers the major hotspot areas like the main beach, temple area, Om and Kudle beach area, on twice a day basis, and the habitations are covered on weekly and twice per week basis. With respect to the accumulation of waste on streets and beach area, market places, as Gokarna is known for its beach tourism and temple tourism, a lot of tourists visit Gokarna on daily basis. On weekends, the number of visitors can reach as high as 20,000 during the year end and seasonal holidays. On an average around 5,000 tourists regularly visit Gokarna, which poses a challenge to manage, yet the GP has been putting in sincere efforts to manage the waste as stated above.

5. It is submitted that the GP has 10 persons appointed for collection of waste, from which 5 people are engaged in street sweeping regularly and remaining 5 people go along with the 2 Autotippers at different scheduled areas daily. Other than this, 7 dedicated SHG women are assigned for segregation of waste at gram panchayat SWM premises manually. The waste that is seen in the SWM unit was mixed waste which is collected from street sweeping. Since waste segregation unit has little space for segregation and storage of collected waste, establishment of dedicated Material Recovery Facility (***MRF***) waste processing unit at allotted land

being Survey No. 1492/A1, **under the K-Shore Project** has been proposed.

6. The above land is a forest land. With respect to the baled waste, since the quantity of waste generated is enormous, the gram panchayat has entered into an agreement with a private party for regular disposal of waste, it is being sent regularly to concerned waste processors once 10 tonnes of baled waste is collected.
7. **Re: Solid Dry Waste Management** – With respect the solid dry waste collection, an MoU was signed between TIPS Sessions Charitable Trust and Gokarna GP. However, because of the incompetency of the vendor, especially during December 2022 and January 2023, lots of issues were raised by public and local newspapers. As a result of the same, the GP terminated the contract with the trust. Now, the GP is handling the Solid waste management with agreement with private vendor for waste co processing under **Green Gokarna Initiative**.
8. **Under the Green Gokarna initiative**, wet waste is also being collected from hotels, households, resorts etc. separately and is being processed to compost. the gram panchayat had an agreement with M/s Omkar Enterprises, however the same has been withdrawn by the said private contractor. However, the wet waste collection is now being done by the gram panchayat by putting additional labour, and manure is being generated under Green Gokarna Initiative. However, because of issues

pertaining to marketing, the gram panchayat is facing difficulties in selling the manure.

9. Regarding the dumping of the mixed waste at GP premises, due to the huge floating population and enormous quantity of waste generation per day, the street swept waste which contains the cow dung, wet papers, food waste thrown by tourists, which is difficult to segregate, is collected and dumped at premises for segregation.
10. **Re: Forest Clearance** – The compensation for diversion of forest land has been paid, and the clearance is under further process. The diverted land will be used for establishment of Material Recovery Facility and Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant.
11. The GP has started constructing permanent compound wall in the forest area, in order to extend the SWM unit, as the waste being generated is increasing day by day. The dumping of the waste is now stopped at the area.
12. **Re: Public Awareness** – It is submitted that public awareness activities about waste management are being carried out by the GP regularly by playing audio clips on waste collection vehicles. The large scale movement is organized by GP, with the help of KSPCB officials, GP members, local NGOs, youth unions and local clubs.
13. **Re: Waste Dumping on the Main Beach** – It is submitted that the main beach area is cleaned and the waste is not being dumped in the mentioned

area near the beach. From Sankranthi till Mahashivaratri, the number of tourists increases manifold and during this period, the waste generation is also considerably high. Hence, observations made during the said time of the year cannot be taken to be true for the entire year.

14. **Re: Dumping of Waste and other issues during Jathra** – It is submitted that during the said time, bins are placed at the main beach as a part of Green Gokarna Initiative to avoid dumping of waste on the beach. It is submitted that more bins will be installed at main beach and other high tourist traffic areas along with the public message about Waste management.
15. **Re: Open Defecation** – It is submitted that dedicated community Sanitary Complexes/Community Toilets have been established by the gram panchayat at the main beach area. Board signs are installed to discourage people from littering at various places in Gokarna. The number of the same will be increased on high tourist traffic areas. It has also been proposed for CCTV cameras to be installed at various tourist hotspots to avoid such activities and to identify the offenders.
16. **Re: UGD Network** – It is submitted that due to inflow of sea water back to the Sangam Nala during high tide, which stays back and mixes with sewage, creating a challenging scenario, which was again addressed under Green Gokarna initiative and a Detailed Project Report was prepared consulting the experts and the same has been sent to State for Approval of Grants under K-Shore Project.

17. It is hence submitted that steps are being taken by the District Administration to curb pollution. With the above information being placed on record, it is submitted that the answering Respondent will be duty bound to implement any further directions passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal.

K. Sakuntla
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
U.K. DISTRICT
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
UTTAR KANNADA DISTRICT

Darpan Km THROUGH
A. S. S.
DARPAN KM
STANDING COUNSEL
STATE OF KARNATAKA

Date:18-01-2025