

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

Original Application No. 34 of 2024(SZ)

In the matter of:

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU

Based on the news item in The New Indian

Express Dt. 14.09.2023 titled “Ramakkal lake

In Tamil Nadu polluted & emits foul smell residents

Demand rejuvenation”

With

Central Pollution Control Board,

Rep. by its Regional Director,

Chennai and Others

...Respondent(s)

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Through

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National Green Tribunal

Southern Zone, Chennai

**ACTION TAKEN REPORT PURSUANT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE
REPORT IN THE MATTER OF O.A.NO.34 OF 2024 FILED BEFORE
THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (SZ).**

1.0 Preamble

The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (Principal Bench), New Delhi had registered a Suo Motu Original Application No. 607 of 2023 based on a news item published in the New Indian Express dated 14.09.2023 titled "Ramakkal lake in TN polluted & emits foul smell, residents demand rejuvenation" and passed an order dated 09th October, 2023 inter alia that *to form a Joint committee to ascertain the status of pollution in the Ramakkal Lake and to submit the action taken report.*

2.0 CONSTITUTION OF JOINT COMMITTEE

In compliance to the above mentioned order, the District Collector, Dharmapuri has nominated the Revenue Divisional Officer, Dharmapuri as one of the committee member as well as to act as a Coordinating Officer for the Joint Committee vide Proc dated 14.11.2023. Accordingly, the Revenue Divisional Officer, Dharmapuri constituted a Joint Committee with the following officials vide Proc. dated 19.02.2024.

1. Revenue Divisional Officer, Dharmapuri.
2. Regional Director, Central Pollution Control Board, Chennai
3. District Environmental Engineer, Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board, Dharmapuri
4. Executive Engineer, Water Resources Division, Pennaiyar Basin Division, Dharmapuri
5. Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality, Dharmapuri.

3.0 JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee has inspected the site on March 01, 2024 and the Joint Committee Report was submitted before the Hon'ble NGT (SZ) with the following suggestions

- Required to delineate the water tank area and steps to be taken to construct proper bund with fence wherever necessary, to protect the water body from human intervention to serve the purpose of improving ground water in the surrounding area as well as to meet the irrigation water demand of the nearby villages.
- Municipal authority may be directed to provide Under Ground Drainage system to collect all domestic sewage/sullage of Dharmapuri Municipality and to install Sewage Treatment Plant to treat the same and not to allow any discharge of domestic sewage/sullage into Ramakkal Lake.
- Panchayat Union authority may be directed to collect all domestic sewage/sullage generated from the habitation located near Ramakkal Lake and to treat the same and shall not allow any discharge of domestic sewage/sullage into Ramakkal Lake.
- The concerned local body shall ensure proper collection of solid waste from residential and commercial areas in their jurisdiction and process it as per the Solid Waste Management Rules,2016 and not to let any public or local body to throw any solid wastes / garbage into Ramakkal lake or any nearby water bodies.
- Municipality Authority may be directed to process the Municipal Solid Waste inside the shed of MCC at Harichandran burial ground and shall not segregate, store and dispose the same outside the MCC i.e Bed of Ramakkal Lake

- Municipality Authority may be directed to explore the possibility of relocation of MCC constructed at the lake bed at Harichandran burial ground with proper storage facility to collect, segregate, store and dispose the Municipal Solid Waste inside the MCC.
- Municipality Authority may be directed to revamp the existing filter bed and to provide new filter bed in all drains joining the Ramakkal Lake to filter/screen the rainwater/surface water runoff.
- Periodical maintenance of water tank and channels shall be carried out by removing silt and water weeds from the lake so as to increase water storage capacity of Lake.

Further, the Hon'ble NGT(SZ), O.A.No.34 of 2024, in its order dated 05.08.2024 has directed the following

“1.The report of the Joint Committee is filed.

2.The District Collector – Dharmapuri District and the Municipal Commissioner – Dharmapuri Municipality are directed to file their respective action taken report pursuant to the Joint Committee report.”

Further, the Hon'ble NGT(SZ), O.A.No.34 of 2024, in its order dated 11.09.2024 has directed the following

“1. To comply with our earlier order, the learned counsel seeks time.”

4.0 PRESENT STATUS ON THE OBSERVATIONS OF JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT

In this regard, an action taken report has been called from the following officials vide letter dated 09.10.2024

1. The Commissioner

Dharmapuri Municipality, Dharmapuri

2. The Block Development Officer, Dharmapuri Panchayat Union.
3. The Executive Engineer, Upper Pennaiyar Basin Division,
Water Resource Department, Dharmapuri.

The action taken report as received from the above said officials is as follows.

- **The Executive Engineer, Water Resource Department, Upper Pennaiyar Basin Division, Dharmapuri has reported that**

In Ramakkal Lake, fencing is provided wherever necessary especially park area. Remaining portion of bund are in good condition and there is no necessary to provide fencing arrangements for entire tank bund.

Solid Wastes were cleared. Photos and newspaper cutting is enclosed for kind information. Also, Dharmapuri Municipality was asked not to dump solid waste in Ramakkal bund area.

The Supply Channels usually desilted whenever necessary. The Sewage from nearby residents is flowing continuously to the supply channels. Dharmapuri Municipality was asked to take necessary action to stop the sewage let in to the supply channel

- **The Block Development Officer, Dharmapuri Panchayat Union has reported that**

The solid waste from Hale Dharmapuri panchayat has been collected from every house by the sanitary workers and segregated in the garbage yard. No waste or garbage is dumped into the Ramakkal Lake from Hale Dharmapuri panchayat.

Further, waste generated from the houses located in Sogathur panchayat, A. Reddihalli are collected through Door-Door Collection system by sanitary workers. Segregated plastic waste is sent to the plastic grinding machine located

in Elakkampatti panchayat. Other waste is being processed to produce organic manure. Over 2,000 people resides in this area. The panchayat has constructed a sewage channel approximately 3,000 meters long through which sewage confluences near the Ramakkal Lake till date. To prevent sewage inflow, proposals will be prepared under the SBM (Swachh Bharat Mission) scheme for Grey Water Management. On obtaining the administrative approval, necessary actions will be taken to implement these measures.

- **The Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality has reported that**

Dharmapuri was upgraded as Special Grade Municipality in 2019 with 33 wards having an area of 11.65 Sq km. According to the 2011 census, the population is 68,619 Nos. with 22,658 households.

In the year 2006, Administrative sanction has been obtained for the construction of underground sewerage scheme in Dharmapuri Municipality by considering the base year as 2008 of population 65000 Nos., intermediate year as 2023 and peak year as 2038 of population of population 1,00,000 and 1,44,000 respectively. In the first phase, Underground sewerage system has been established for 19 wards of Dharmapuri Municipality and sewage collected from those wards are treated in the sewage treatment plant of capacity 4.86 MLD, located in Chettikari and at present 3.86 MLD of sewage is being collected, treated and disposed into the Sanathkumar river.

Hence, the sewage generated from 19 wards is being treated in the above sewage treatment plant and remaining sewage from 14 wards is being collected in the septic tanks set up in each houses, which may mix in the Ramakkal Lake along with storm water drains.

Now, administrative sanction has been obtained to establish underground sewerage system for Rs.82.15 crore to treat sewage from remaining 14 wards of Dharmapuri Municipality vide G.O.(MS) No.94 dated 12.07.2023 and work orders issued for laying pipes and the same is about to start.

Further, work order will be issued to establish sewage treatment plant of capacity 5.18 MLD. Therefore, in the near future, waste water generated from 14 wards will be properly collected and treated.

In this juncture, a Joint Committee formed with Revenue Divisional Officer, Dharmapuri, Regional Director, Central Pollution Control Board, Chennai, District Environmental Engineer, TamilNadu Pollution Control Board, Dharmapuri, Executive Engineer, Water Resource Department, Dharmapuri and commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality has organised meeting on 01.03.2024 at Office of TamilNadu Pollution Control, Dharmapuri committee and discussed about the preventive measures to be taken by the municipal administration to prevent the mixing of untreated sewage in the Ramakkal Lake. At present sewage is being mixed in the Ramakkal Lake in three places namely Harichandran burial ground and Vattara valarchi Colony in the 9th Ward and New Tiruppathur Road junction in the 1st Ward of Dharmapuri Municipality.

At present, a consultant has been appointed for the cultivation of plantains through Wetland Based Sewerage Treatment System for the treatment of sewage at the point of discharge into the lake and currently the preparation of proposals of estimation Rs.1.50 crore is under progress and it is informed that it will be sent to the government at the earliest for further necessary action


5.0 ACTION TAKEN REPORT

On perusal of the above, the officials namely, the Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality, Dharmapuri, the Executive Engineer, Water Resource Department, Upper Pennaiyar Basin Division, Dharmapuri and the Block Development Officer, Dharmapuri Panchayat Union have been issued with the following instructions

- Periodically maintain the bunds and fencing surrounding Ramakkal Lake to protect the water body from human interference and ensure its conservation

- Monitor and take necessary steps to prevent the disposal of Municipal solid waste along the banks of Ramakkal Lake, and ensure the removal of all solid waste within a month's time
- Maintain the water tank and channels by removing silt periodically, and submit a quarterly report on the actions taken.
- Install permanent display boards at Ramakkal Lake within a month, displaying warnings and information about the prohibition of solid waste disposal on the lake and its banks
- The Dharmapuri Municipality shall take immediate and necessary action to expedite the installation of a sewage treatment plant and prevent sewage inflow from nearby habitations, and furnish a quarterly progress report.
- Upgrade the existing filter bed and provide new filter beds or appropriate treatment systems in all drains leading to Ramakkal Lake to effectively filter and screen rainwater and surface water runoff.
- The Dharmapuri Panchayat Union shall furnish a quarterly progress report on the implementation of Grey Water Management under the SBM scheme
- Process the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) within the designated shed at the Harichandran burial ground's MCC (Micro Composting Centre), and ensure that it is not segregated, stored, or disposed of outside the MCC, particularly in the Ramakkal Lake Bed.
- Explore the possibility of relocating the Micro Composting Centre (MCC) currently situated near the lake bed at Harichandran burial ground to a new site with adequate storage facilities, enabling the efficient collection, segregation, storage, and disposal of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) within the MCC.

- Dharmapuri Municipality shall comply with the Directions issued by TNPCB and furnish status of compliance with time bound action plan.



**District Collector,
Dharmapuri.**

DATE: 12.12.2024