

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN
TRIBUNAL SOUTH ZONE, CHENNAI**

APPLICATION NO.60 OF 2024

(Earlier O.A. No. 787 of 2023(PB))

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU based on the News Item in The News Minute dt: 11.12.2023 titled "**Cauvery basin lost nearly 12,850 sq.km. of green cover**".

Vs

Inspector General of Forest, MoEF&CC

Respondent No. 1

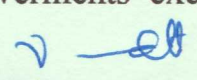
Forest Survey of India, Southern Zone, Bangalore

Respondent No. 2

**AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST
AND CLIMATE CHANGE and FOREST SURVEY OF INDIA, SOUTHERN
ZONE, BANGALORE**

I, **Venuprasad H** S/o **Hanumanthachar G**, aged about **56** years, presently working as **Senior Deputy Director** in the Forest Survey of India, Southern Zone, Bangalore, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, do hereby solemnly affirm on oath and state as follows;

1. That, I am holding the post of **Senior Deputy Director**, in the Forest Survey of India Southern Zone, Bangalore and I have made myself acquainted with the facts and circumstances of this case and I have been duly authorized and empowered by the Respondent No. 1 & 2 to make and swear this Affidavit for and on behalf of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Forest Survey of India, Southern Zone, Bangalore and I am competent to do so.
2. That, the Hon'ble Tribunal at New Delhi at Para 4 of its Order dated 10.01.2024 was pleased to direct Answering Respondent No. 1 & 2 to file an response in the present *suo moto* matter. The OA was transferred by the Hon'ble Tribunal, Principal Bench to the bench of Tribunal at Southern Zone, Chennai.
3. I have gone through the application and I have understood the contents/ averments/statements and/or tenor thereof. I deny all the averments except those that are specifically admitted herein.


वरिष्ठ उपनिदेशक / Senior Deputy Director
भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण, दक्षिण अंचल
Forest Survey of India, Southern Zone
बैंगलूर, Bangalore - 560 034.

4. That, at the outset, I state that the respondents, are the nodal agency of the Central Government for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and overseeing the implementation of India's environment and forest policies. The primary concern of the Ministry is the implementation of policies and guidelines relating to the conservation of the country's forests, lakes and rivers, its biodiversity, natural resources and wildlife.
5. That the Original Application No.787/2023 is a registered suo *motu* case and is based on a news item titled "Cauvery basin lost nearly 12,850 sq.km. of green cover" published in "The Hindu" dated 11.12.2023.
6. It is humbly submitted that the news item is based on a paper published in IISc, Bangalore. The paper referred is not available with answering respondents and therefore these answering respondent has no comment to offer on the said report.
7. That, Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun is an organization under the of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, carries out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially since 1987 and the findings are published in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The forest cover assessment is a wall-to-wall mapping exercise based on remote sensing supported by intensive ground verification and field data from the National Forest Inventory. As per the latest ISFR 2021, the total forest cover of the country is 7,13,789 square kilometer which is 21.71% of the geographical area of the country. The forest cover of the country continuously increased in past decade. An increase of 21,762 square kilometer in forest cover has been recorded in the assessment of ISFR 2021 as compared to ISFR 2011.
8. It is further submitted that the forest cover under the report includes all lands more than 01 ha in area with a tree canopy density of more than 10% irrespective of ownership and legal status. Such lands may not necessarily be a recorded forest area. It also includes orchards, bamboo, and palm. The first report was published in the year 1987 which was based on the visual interpretation of Satellite data on 1:1 million scale. The assessment of forest cover in the State of Forest Report 1989 to 1999 based on 1:2,50,000 scale having 30mts resolution initially visual interpretation which was later changed to digital interpretation. From 2001 onwards the assessment was made completely digital with scale of interpretation 1:50,000.
9. It is respectfully submitted that the boundaries and extent of the Cauvery river basin, as referenced in the said news item, are not within the knowledge or

possession of the answering respondents. Accordingly, the respondents are unable to provide any comments on this aspect.

10. It is humbly submitted that the Cauvery River basin is located in the states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The forest cover of these states have increased as per India State Forest Report 2021 compare to State of Forest Report 1987. The details of forest cover are as under:

Forest Cover Cauvery basis states

(Area in square kilometer)

State	State of Forest Report 1987	India State of Forest Report 2021
Karnataka	32264	38,730
Kerala	10402	21,253
Tamil Nadu	18380	26,419

11. Therefore, it is humbly submitted that in light of the stringent criteria and the robust mechanisms employed in the preparation of the India State of Forest Reports, including the use interpretation of Satellite data, it is evident that the data presented reflects a precise and meticulously assessed record of forest cover in the state of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

12. That, in view of the foregoing submissions, the Affidavit filed by Answering Respondents be admitted and accepted by this Hon'ble Tribunal.

13. That, the answering respondent craves leave of this Hon'ble Tribunal to file additional information, if any till pendent lite.

14. It is respectfully requested that in view of the foregoing submissions this Hon'ble Tribunal may be pleased to dismiss the present application or pass further Orders as it may deem fit in the interest of justice and proper in the given circumstances of this case.

Identified by:



(Shivanand S Talawar)
Senior Deputy Director,
FSI, SZ, Bengaluru

वरिष्ठ उपनिदेशक / Senior Deputy Director
भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण, दक्षिण अंचल
Forest Survey of India, Southern Zone
बंगलूरु, Bangalore - 560 034.


DEPONENT

वरिष्ठ उपनिदेशक / Senior Deputy Director
भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण, दक्षिण अंचल
Forest Survey of India, Southern Zone
बंगलूरु, Bangalore - 560 034.

VERIFICATION

I, the above named deponent do hereby verify that the contents of the above affidavit are true and correct to my knowledge and area based on official records and nothing material is concealed therein.

Verified at Bangalore on this 30th Day of August 2024.



DEPONENT

वरिष्ठ उपनिदेशक / Senior Deputy Director
भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण, दक्षिण अंचल
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