

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

**Original Application No.34 of 2024 (SZ)
Earlier O.A. No. 607/2023 (PB)**

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 TN polluted & emits foul smell residents
demand rejuvenation"

With

Central Pollution Control Board,
Rep. by its Regional Director,
Chennai and Ors.

...Respondents.

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**Filed by
Thiru.S. Sai Sathya Jith,
Advocate, Chennai.**

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SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

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demand rejuvenation"

With

Central Pollution Control Board,
Rep. by its Regional Director,
Chennai and Ors.

...Respondents

REPORT FILED ON BEHALF OF THE SECOND RESPONDENT

TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

I, K.Nalini, Daughter of Thiru.K.Krishnasamy, Hindu, aged about 59 years having office at No.76, Mount Salai, Guindy, Chennai 600 032, do hereby solemnly affirm and sincerely state as follows:

1. I am the Joint Chief Environmental Engineer, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, Chennai and I am authorized to file this report on behalf of the Second respondent and as such I am well acquainted with the facts of the case from the records available at our office.
2. It is respectfully submitted that on 2.11.2023, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (PB) has taken up a Suo Motu case vide O.A No.607 of 2023 based on the news item appeared in Express News Series dated 14.09.2023 entitled "Ramakkal Lake in Tamil Nadu polluted & emits foul smell residents demand rejuvenation". On 9.10.2023, the Hon'ble Tribunal passed an order in O.A No. 607 of 2023 has directed the following among inter alia,

"3.we deem it proper to constitute a joint committee comprising of the nominee of the Regional Director, CPCB; Member Secretary, State PCB; Director, State Development Authority and the concerned District Magistrate. The District Magistrate will act as a coordinating officer.


 JOINT CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER
 TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
 No.76, MOUNT SALAI, GUINDY,
 CHENNAI-600 032.

4. The joint committee will visit the site and ascertain the status of pollution in the Ramakkal Lake and will submit the action taken report

5. Let the action taken report be submitted before the concerned Bench of the Tribunal. Since, the matter relates to the Southern Zone Bench of the Tribunal, therefore, it is transferred to the said Bench.

6. The original application is accordingly disposed of with a direction of re-registration at the Southern Zone Bench, Chennai.”

3. It is respectfully submitted that the O.A.607 of 2023 (PB) was renumbered as O.A.No.34 of 2024 by the Hon'ble NGT (SZ) on 9.2.2024. The Hon'ble Tribunal issued notices to all the respondents and directed to file their respective reports. As per the direction the report is submitted herein.
4. It is respectfully submitted that in compliance of the orders passed by the Hon'ble NGT (PB), a Joint Committee was formed by the District Collector, Dharmapuri vide Proc. dated 14.11.2023. The Joint Committee inspected the site on 01.03.2024 around the Ramakkal Lake, starting from all drains joining the Lake & the feeder inlet and outlet sluice of the Lake and during the inspection the following were observed,
- The surplus water of Sogathur Lake is the source to Ramakkal Lake and it is the only feeder line to Ramakkal Lake. Ramakkal Lake gets water through this feeder channel during rainy season only. The surplus of Ramakkal Lake flows into the Sanathkumar River, which ultimately joins the River Thennpennaiyaru.
 - Domestic Sewage from the nearby habitations such as Tirupathur road junction, Vattaravalarchi colony-9th ward, Kumarasampettai-savulupatti road, A.Reddihalli village (near burial ground) and A.Reddihalli village (near mariamman temple) were found draining into Ramakkal lake through 5 channels which includes the Sogathur surplus channel.

h. d. n. 15/12/24
 JOINT CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER
 TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
 No.76, MOUNT SALAI, GUINDY,
 CHENNAI-600 032.

- c. Fencing along the bunds of Ramakkal Lake was provided about 30 m only near park area, in which some are found to be in damaged condition. The remaining banks of Ramakkal Lake was not provided with any fencing arrangements.
- d. The physical appearance and odour of drains joining to Ramakkal Lake confirms the presence of domestic sewage.
- e. Presence of Eutrophication and heavy Algae growth noticed in the lake water.
- f. Solid wastes were found dumped on the banks of Ramakkal Lake at the Tirupathur road junction and Harichandran burial ground.
- g. Filter bed structures in the channels at Tirupathur road junction and Harichandran burial ground joining the Ramakkal Lake are not in operable condition and not maintained. The Municipal authorities had informed that there are no records maintained for the same.
- h. There is a Micro Composting Centre functioning in Ramakkal Lake Bed at Harichandran burial ground to manage the Municipal waste from 9 to 16 wards of Dharmapuri Municipality. The dry solid wastes are not properly stored inside the closed shed of Micro Composting Centre and the same was stored/disposed outside the Micro Composting Centre, near the Lake bed in haphazard manner.
- i. Improper disposal of Municipal Solid wastes on the banks of the Ramakkal Lake causes odour nuisance.
- j. Birds were found in the lake area which indicates the presence of fish in the Ramakkal Lake and fishing activity is also being carried out in the Ramakkal Lake.
- k. There is no industrial activity in the vicinity as well as no industrial waste water discharged into the Ramakkal Lake.
- l. There is no surplus flow of water noticed in the surplus weir of the lake.
- m. Samples were collected at all inlets of the drains into the Ramakkal Lake, at the point of confluence of drains into lake and water inside lake.


JOINT CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER
TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
No.76, MOUNT SALAI, GUINDY,
CHENNAI-600 032.

5. It is respectfully submitted that the Report of Analysis (ROA) of water samples collected on 1.3.2024 are as follows:

- a. BOD of the water samples flowing through drains ranges between 120-280 mg/l. Due to natural oxidation, in an average, the BOD value reduces to 76.4 mg/l after confluence & 46.5 mg/l inside the Lake.
- b. However, the average BOD (46.5 mg/l) inside the Lake water indicates that the quality of lake water is not meeting any class of designated best use Water quality criteria of CPCB classification and confirms the accumulation of domestic sewage in the lake.
- c. As per the analysis report, presence of total coliform, fecal coliform and BOD confirms the drain carrying domestic sewage flows into the Ramakkal Lake.
- d. The accumulation of solid waste in the bank of the Ramakkal lake as well as in the draining channels and also water weeds in the Ramakkal Lake confirms the poor maintenance and least importance given to water body.
- e. The disposal of sewage and Municipal solid waste in the bank of Ramakkal lake leads to odour nuisance.

6. It is respectfully submitted that the DEE, TNPCB, Dharmapuri as recommended to the Board to issue certain directions under Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended to the Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality is enclosed as annexure-I

- a. It is respectfully submitted that as per the recommendation by the DEE, TNPCB, Dharmapuri, the Board has issued following directions on 3.5.2024 to the Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality under Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended for strict compliance is enclosed as annexure - II. To take action to stop domestic sewage from the nearby habitation entering into Ramakkal Lake through 5 channels immediately.


JOINT CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER
TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
No.76, MOUNT SALAI, GUINDY,
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- b. 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 discharge any domestic sewage/sullage into Ramakkal Lake.
- c. To 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.
- d. To process the Municipal Solid Waste inside the shed of MCC at Harichandran burial ground and not to segregate, store and dispose the same outside the MCC i.e Bed of Ramakkal Lake.
- e. To revamp the existing filter bed and to provide new filter beds in all drains joining the Ramakkal Lake to filter/screen the rainwater/surface water runoff.
- f. To furnish the time bound action plan with implementation schedule for the above directions within one month.

Failure to comply with the above said directions, necessary steps will be initiated as per the provisions of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended.

Under the above circumstances, it is humbly prayed that this Hon'ble National Green Tribunal(SZ), may be pleased to pass such further order or other orders as this Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstance of this case and thus render justice.

VERIFICATION

I, K.Nalini, Daughter of Thiru.K.Krishnasamy, working as Joint Chief Environmental Engineer, No.76, Mount Salai, Guindy, Chennai 600 032, do hereby verify that the contents of above report are true to the best of my knowledge through records.


 JOINT CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER
 TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
 No.76, MOUNT SALAI, GUINDY,
 CHENNAI-600 032.


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The first part of the report is devoted to a general description of the work done during the year. It is followed by a detailed account of the various experiments conducted, and the results obtained. The report concludes with a summary of the work done, and a list of references.

The second part of the report is devoted to a detailed description of the various experiments conducted. It is followed by a detailed account of the results obtained, and a discussion of the various factors which influence the results. The report concludes with a summary of the work done, and a list of references.

The third part of the report is devoted to a detailed description of the various experiments conducted. It is followed by a detailed account of the results obtained, and a discussion of the various factors which influence the results. The report concludes with a summary of the work done, and a list of references.

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O.A. 34/2024

-6.

Annexure - I



TAMILNADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

From
Er.A.Nithyalakshmi, M.Tech,
District Environmental Engineer,
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board
Adiyamankottai-Hosurbyepass Road,
Sogathur Post; A.Reddihalli,
Dharmapuri -636 809
Tamil Nadu.

To
The Member Secretary,
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,
No.76,Mount Salai, Guindy,
Chennai - 600 032.

Ltr No :DEE/TNPCB/DMP/NGT/2023 Dated: 03.04.2024

Sir,

Sub: O/o.DEE- TNPCB- DMP- Hon'ble NGT (PB), New Delhi- Suo Motu vide OA No.607 of 2023 - Express News Series dated 14.09.2023 titled " Ramakkal Lake in TamilNadu polluted & emits foul smell residents demand rejuvenation"- Renumbered as O.A No:34 of 2024 in, NGT (SZ)- Recommendation for issue of Directions under Section 33 A of Water Act (P&CP) - Submitted- Reg

- Ref:**
1. NGT(PB) Suo Motu vide O.A. No: 607 of 2023 received through TNPCB OLMMS on 06.10.2023.
 2. T/o. Ltr No: DEE/TNPCB/DMP/NGT(PB)/2023 Dated: 06.10.2023 & 19.01.2024.
 3. The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (Principal Bench), New Delhi-Suo Motu Vide OA.No.607 of 2023 order dated 09.10.2023.
 4. The District Collector's Proc.No.F.NGT/DEE/TNPCB/DMP/2023 dt 14.11.2023.
 5. The RDO, Dharmapuri Ltr.Roc No.932/2024/A5 dated 19.02.2024.
 6. Joint committee inspection of the Ramakkal Lake on 01.03.2024..

I submit to inform that the National Green Tribunal (Principal Bench), New Delhi has taken up Suo Motu case vide O.A No.607 of 2023 based on the news appearing in Express News Series dated 14.09.2023 titled " Ramakkal

Lake in TamilNadu polluted & emits foul smell residents demand rejuvenation".

On the above, the Ramakkal lake and its surroundings was inspected along with Municipal Engineer, Assistant Engineer & Sanitary Officer of Dharmapuri Municipality on 06.10.2023 and the report dated 06.10.2023 & 19.01.2024 was submitted to the Board. Also, a letter was addressed to the Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality vide T/o. letter dated 07.11.2023. **(copy enclosed)**

In this regard, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (Principal Bench), New Delhi in its order dated 09th October, 2023 in the matter of O.A No. 607 of 2023 has directed the following inter alia that;

"1. This original application is registered on the basis of 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". The news item discloses that the pollution level has arisen in the Ramakkal Lake with a foul smell causing distress to the nearby residents. The view expressed in the news item is that Ramakkal Lake is the most prosperous lake in the district but the water is extremely polluted with sewage water draining into the lake. The news item also discloses that a filtration unit has been set up but filter beds have not been functioning for the last eight months resulting in increased pollution level.

2. The Learned Counsel for CPCB has also informed that the filtration unit is not working as a result of which the pollution in the lake has increased.

3. Considering the grievance raised in the news item, we are of the view that substantial issue relating to the environment is involved, hence, at this stage, we deem it proper to constitute a joint committee comprising of the nominee of the Regional Director, CPCB; Member Secretary, State PCB; Director, State Development Authority and the concerned District Magistrate. The District Magistrate will act as a coordinating officer.

4. The joint committee will visit the site and ascertain the status of pollution in the Ramakkal Lake and will

submit the action taken report before the next date by e-mail at judicial-ngt@gov.in preferably in the form of searchable PDF/ OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.

5. Let the action taken report be submitted before the concerned Bench of the Tribunal. Since, the matter relates to the Southern Zone Bench of the Tribunal, therefore, it is transferred to the said Bench.

6. The original application is accordingly disposed of with a direction of re-registration at the Southern Zone Bench, Chennai."

In the meantime, samples were collected in the inlet drains identified i.e., one at Mathikonpalayam junction (which is commonly named as thirupathur road junction during joint committee inspection) & Harichandran burial ground and in the two outlet points (at two weirs) of Ramakkal Lake on 08.02.2024.

RoA Remarks:

The RoA of the Samples taken at the above two drains reveals that the concentration of Total Dissolve Solids (TDS) is 896 mg/L and 1148 mg/L, Oil & Grease is less than 3 mg/L for both points, BOD is 180 mg/L & 210 mg/L and COD is 360 mg/L and 440 mg/L respectively.

Further, the presence of Total Coliform (260 & 120 MPN/100ml) & Fecal Coliform (470 and 330 MPN/100ml) respectively indicates the presence of Domestic sewage in both the drains and further confluences into Ramakkal Lake.

The report of analysis of samples taken at both outlet points reveals that the TDS is 1024 mg/L and 1044 mg/L, BOD is 90 mg/L and 80 mg/L, COD is 280 mg/L and 272 mg/L, Total Coliform is 270 and 110 MPN/100ml and Fecal Coliform is 140 and 45 MPN/100ml respectively.

The concentration of Boron (<0.002mg/L) and Sodium Absorption Ratio (SAR) (1.31 and 4.78), Electrical Conductivity (1701 µmhos/cm and 1766 µmhos/cm) and Free ammonia (0.6832 mg/L) respectively are well within the irrigation water quality.

JOINT COMMITTEE FORMATION

In compliance to the Hon'ble NGT(PB) order dated 09.10.2023, 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 as nominated by the Regional Director, CPCB, Member Secretary, State PCB and District Magistrate vide Proc dated 19.02.2024 **(copy enclosed)**

1. Tmt.R.Gayathri, Revenue Development Officer, Dharmapuri.
2. Smt. H.D. Varalaxmi, Regional Director, Central Pollution Control Board, Chennai.
3. Er.A.Nithyalakshmi, District Environmental Engineer, Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board, Dharmapuri.
4. Er.S.Senthil Kumar, Executive Engineer, Water Resources Division, Pennaiyar Basin Division, Dharmapuri.
5. Thiru.S.Bhuvaneshwaran, Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality, Dharmapuri.

The committee met on 01.03.2024 at the office of District Environmental Engineer, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), Dharmapuri for Pre-discussion. The committee discussed in detail and concluded to visit the area in question and also decided to inspect and verify the (a) quality of water in the drains joining Ramakkal Lake (b) quality of water after confluence of drains into Ramakkal Lake (c) the quality of water stored in the Ramakkal Lake.

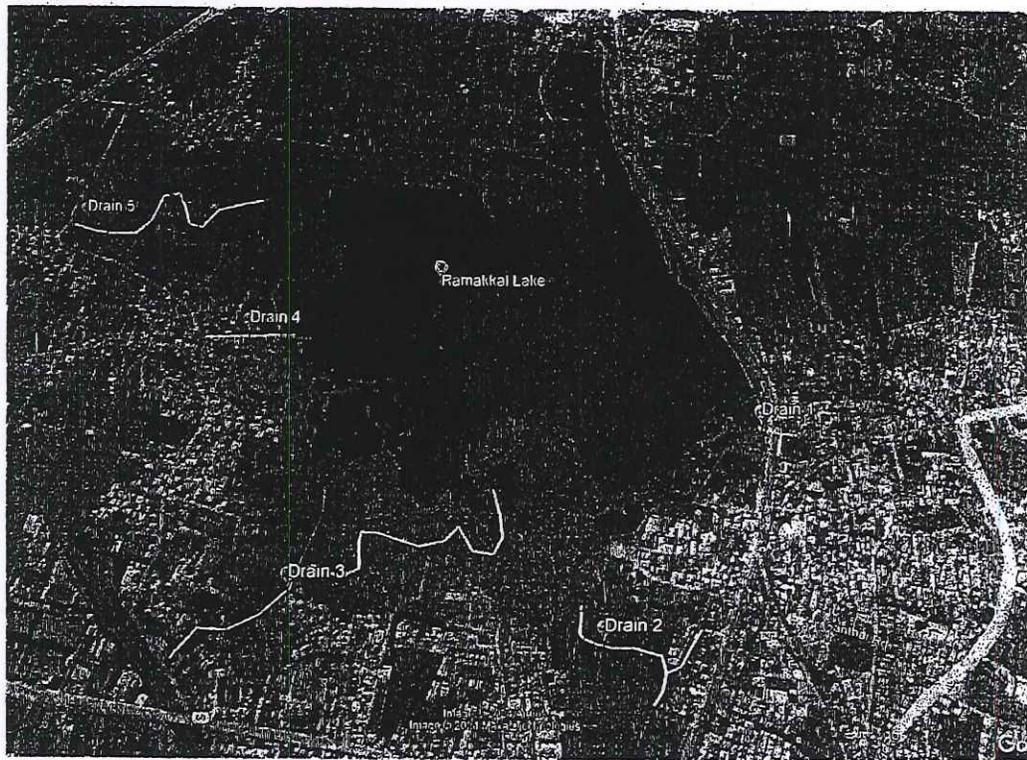
The Committee had inspected the site on 01.03.2024 around the Ramakkal Lake starting from all drains joining the Lake & the feeder inlet and outlet sluice of the Lake. The Joint committee report is under preparation and after finalization of the Report by the committee members, the same will be submitted before the Hon'ble NGT(SZ) through Joint Committee Coordinator (District Collector, Dharmapuri).

JOINT COMMITTEE INSPECTION OBSERVATION

The observations made during the inspection are submitted below

- The surplus water of sogathur lake is the source to Ramakkal lake and it is the only feeder line to Ramakkal Lake. Ramakkal lake gets water through this feeder channel during rainy season only. The surplus of Ramakkal Lake flows into the Sanathkumar River, which ultimately joins the River Thennpennaiyaru.
- Domestic Sewage from the nearby habitations such as Tirupathur road junction, Vattara valarchi colony-9th ward, Kumarasampettai-savulupatti road, A.Reddihalli village (near burial ground) and

A, Reddihalli village (near mariamman temple) were found draining into Ramakkal lake through 5 channels which includes the sogathur surplus channel.



Google earth map showing inflow of the drains into Ramakkal Lake

Sewage Inlet Drain Detail:

- Drain 1 : Tirupathur Road Junction***
- Drain 2 : Vattara valarchi Colony 9th ward***
- Drain 3 : Kumarasampettai, Sovulupatti Road***
- Drain 4 : A.Reddihalli Village (near burial ground)***
- Drain 5 : A.Reddihalli Village (near mariamman temple)
(i.e., feeder channel from sogathur lake)***

- Fencing along the bunds of Ramakkal Lake was provided about 30 m only near park area, in which some are found to be in damaged condition. The remaining banks of Ramakkal Lake was not provided with any fencing arrangements
- The physical appearance and odour of drains joining Ramakkal lake confirms the presence of domestic sewage.
- Presence of Eutrophication and heavy Algae growth noticed in the lake water.
- Solid wastes were found dumped on the banks of Ramakkal Lake at the Tirupathur road junction and Harichandran burial ground.
- Filter bed structures in the channels at Tirupathur road junction and Harichandran burial ground joining the Ramakkal Lake are not in

operable condition and not maintained. The Municipality authorities had informed that there are no records maintained for the same.

- There is a Micro Composting Centre functioning in Ramakkal Lake Bed at Harichandran burial ground to manage the Municipal waste from 9 to 16 wards of Dharmapuri Municipality. The dry solid wastes are not properly stored inside the closed shed of Micro Composting Centre and the same was stored/disposed near Lake bed outside the Micro Composting Centre in haphazard manner.
- Improper disposal of Municipal Solid wastes on the banks of the Ramakkal Lake causes odour nuisance.
- Birds were found in the lake area which indicates the presence of fish in the Ramakkal Lake and fishing activity is also being carried out in the Ramakkal Lake.
- There is no industrial activity in the vicinity as well as no industrial waste water discharged into the Ramakkal Lake.
- There is no surplus flow of water noticed in the surplus weir of the lake.
- Samples were collected at all inlets of the drains into the Ramakkal Lake, points after confluence of drains into lake and water inside lake. (ROA Enclosed)

ROA INFERENCE:

Sample Collected in the drains joining Lake:

- From the report of analysis of Sample collected in the drains joining Ramakkal Lake, it is ascertained that the concentration of Total Dissolve Solids (TDS) ranges from 904 mg/L to 1924 mg/L, Oil & Grease ranges from 8 mg/L to 14 mg/L, BOD ranges from 120mg/L to 280mg/L and COD ranges from 304 mg/L to 720 mg/L. Further, the presence of Total Coliform ranges from 1200 MPN/100ml to 4700 MPN/100ml & Fecal Coliform ranges from 680 MPN/100ml to 2200 MPN/100ml indicates that the drains carrying domestic sewage and confluences with the Ramakkal Lake.

Sample Collected after confluence of the drain into Ramakkal Lake:

- The report of analysis of samples taken after confluence of the drain into Ramakkal Lake reveals that the concentration of TDS ranges from 1064 mg/L to 1908 mg/L, DO ranges from 4.98mg/L to

5.96mg/L In spite of BOD ranges from 60 mg/L to 96mg/L due to interference of Algal growth and Eutrophication.

- Total Coliform ranges from 32 MPN/100ml to 47 MPN/100ml and Fecal Coliform ranges from 11 MPN/100ml to 21 MPN/100ml. That BOD concentration confirms the interference of domestic sewage and not meeting any of the designated best use water quality criteria.
- The Free Ammonia concentration is 1.3664 mg/L is due to the influence of BOD concentration in the drains carrying sewage.
- The concentration of Boron (<0.002 mg/) and Sodium Absorption Ratio (SAR) (2.47- 4.38 mg/L) are well within the irrigation water quality.

Sample Collected inside the Ramakkal Lake:

- The report of analysis of samples taken in the Ramakkal Lake (Away from the Confluence point) reveals that the concentration of pH ranges between 8.66-8.83 Numbers, TDS ranges from 1072 mg/L to 1136 mg/L, DO ranges from 6.28 mg/L to 7.10 mg/L in spite of BOD ranges from 40 mg/L to 54 mg/L due to interference of Algal growth and eutrophication
- Total Coliform ranges from 20-39 MPN/100ml and Fecal Coliform ranges from 11-20 MPN/100ml.
- The BOD value of samples taken in the lake (away from the confluence of drain) is not meeting with the designated best use water quality criteria of Class A, B & C.
- The concentration of Boron (<0.002 mg/) and Sodium Absorption Ratio (SAR) (4.02- 4.39 mg/L) are well within the irrigation water quality.

Discussion:

- BOD of the sewage flowing through drains ranges between 120-280 mg/L. Due to natural oxidation, in an average, the BOD value reduces to 76.4 mg/l after confluence & 46.5 mg/l inside the Lake.
- However, the average BOD (46.5 mg/l) inside the Lake water indicates that the quality of lake water is not meeting any class of designated best use Water quality criteria of CPCB classification and confirms the accumulation of domestic sewage in the lake.
- As per the analysis report, presence of total coliform, fecal coliform and BOD confirms the drain carrying domestic sewage flows into the Ramakkal Lake.
- The accumulation of solid waste in the bank of the Ramakkal lake as well as in the draining channels and also water weeds in the

Ramakkal Lake confirms the poor maintenance and least importance given to water body.

- The disposal of sewage and Municipal solid waste in the bank of Ramakkal lake leads to odour nuisance.

In view of the above facts, it is submitted and recommended that, the Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality may be issued with the following directions under the Section 33A of Water Act (P&CP) as amended to comply with.

1. 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 discharge any domestic sewage/sullage into Ramakkal Lake.
2. Municipal authority 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.
3. Municipal 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.
4. Municipal Authority may be directed to revamp the existing filter bed and to provide new filter beds in all drains joining the Ramakkal Lake to filter/screen the rainwater/surface water runoff.
5. Municipal authority shall furnish the time bound action plan for the above directions at the earliest.

This is submitted for kind information and further necessary action please.

Encl: As above.


District Environmental Engineer,
TamilNadu Pollution Control Board,
Dharmapuri.

Annexure - II

O.A. 34/2024



011279

TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

Proc. No. T3/TNPCB/LAW/NGT/Sewage Disposal/F.007478/2024, Dated: 03.05.2024

Sub: TNPCB – Industries – Hon'ble NGT (PB) O.A No. 607 of 2023 renumbered as O.A.No.34 of 2024 in Hon'ble NGT (SZ) – Directions under Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended – Orders Issued – Regarding.

Ref: 1. The Hon'ble NGT (PB) O.A.No.607 of 2023 order dated: 22.08.2023.
2. Lr.No.DEE/TNPCB/DMP/NGT/2023 dated: 03.04.2024.

Whereas, the Hon'ble NGT (PB) taken up a Suo Motu case vide O.A No.607 of 2023 based on the news item appeared in Express News Series dated 14.09.2023 entitled "Ramakkal Lake in Tamil Nadu polluted & emits foul smell residents demand rejuvenation". The Hon'ble NGT (PB) in its order dated: 09.10.2023 in O.A No. 607 of 2023 has directed the following among inter alia,

"3.we deem it proper to constitute a joint committee comprising of the nominee of the Regional Director, CPCB; Member Secretary, State PCB; Director, State Development Authority and the concerned District Magistrate. The District Magistrate will act as a coordinating officer.

4. The joint committee will visit the site and ascertain the status of pollution in the Ramakkal Lake and will submit the action taken report

5. Let the action taken report be submitted before the concerned Bench of the Tribunal. Since, the matter relates to the Southern Zone Bench of the Tribunal, therefore, it is transferred to the said Bench.

6. The original application is accordingly disposed of with a direction of re-registration at the Southern Zone Bench, Chennai."

Whereas, the Hon'ble NGT (PB) O.A.607of 2023 was renumbered as O.A.No.34 of 2024 in the Hon'ble NGT (SZ). Further, in compliance to the orders of the Hon'ble NGT (PB), a Joint Committee was formed by the District Collector, Dharmapuri vide Proc.dated:14.11.2023. The Joint Committee inspected the site on 01.03.2024 around the Ramakkal Lake, starting from all drains joining the Lake & the feeder inlet and outlet sluice of the Lake and during the inspection the following were observed,

- The surplus water of Sogathur Lake is the source to Ramakkal lake and it is the only feeder line to Ramakkal Lake. Ramakkal lake gets water through this feeder channel during rainy season only. The surplus of Ramakkal Lake flows into the Sanathkumar River, which ultimately joins the River Thennpennaiyaru.
- Domestic Sewage from the nearby habitations such as Tirupathur road junction,

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Vattaravalarchi colony-9th ward, Kumarasamypettai-savulupatti road, A.Reddihalli village (near burial ground) and A,Reddihalli village (near mariamman temple) were found draining into Ramakkal lake through 5 channels which includes the sogathur surplus channel.

- Fencing along the bunds of Ramakkal Lake was provided about 30 m only near park area, in which some are found to be in damaged condition. The remaining banks of Ramakkal Lake was not provided with any fencing arrangements
- The physical appearance and odour of drains joining Ramakkal lake confirms the presence of domestic sewage.
- Presence of Eutrophication and heavy Algae growth noticed in the lake water.
- Solid wastes were found dumped on the banks of Ramakkal Lake at the Tirupathur road junction and Harichandran burial ground.
- Filter bed structures in the channels at Tirupathur road junction and Harichandran burial ground joining the Ramakkal Lake are not in operable condition and not maintained. The Municipality authorities had informed that there are no records maintained for the same.
- There is a Micro Composting Centre functioning in Ramakkal Lake Bed at Harichandran burial ground to manage the Municipal waste from 9 to 16 wards of Dharmapuri Municipality. The dry solid wastes are not properly stored inside the closed shed of Micro Composting Centre and the same was stored/disposed near Lake bed outside the Micro Composting Centre in haphazard manner.
- Improper disposal of Municipal Solid wastes on the banks of the Ramakkal Lake causes odour nuisance.
- Birds were found in the lake area which indicates the presence of fish in the Ramakkal Lake and fishing activity is also being carried out in the Ramakkal Lake.
- There is no industrial activity in the vicinity as well as no industrial waste water discharged into the Ramakkal Lake.
- There is no surplus flow of water noticed in the surplus weir of the lake.
- Samples were collected at all inlets of the drains into the Ramakkal Lake, at the point of confluence of drains into lake and water inside lake.

Whereas, the District Environmental Engineer (DEE), Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), Dharmapuri furnished the inference of the Report of Analysis (ROA) of water samples as follows,

- BOD of the sewage flowing through drains ranges between 120-280 mg/L. Due to natural oxidation, in an average, the BOD value reduces to 76.4 mg/l after confluence & 46.5 mg/l inside the Lake.
- However, the average BOD (46.5 mg/l) inside the Lake water indicates that the quality of lake water is not meeting any class of designated best use Water quality criteria of CPCB classification and confirms the accumulation of domestic sewage in the lake.



TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

- As per the analysis report, presence of total coliform, fecal coliform and BOD confirms the drain carrying domestic sewage flows into the Ramakkal Lake.
- The accumulation of solid waste in the bank of the Ramakkal lake as well as in the draining channels and also water weeds in the Ramakkal Lake confirms the poor maintenance and least importance given to water body.
- The disposal of sewage and Municipal solid waste in the bank of Ramakkal lake leads to odour nuisance.

Whereas, the DEE, TNPCB, Dharmapuri has recommended to issue certain directions under the Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended to the Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality.

In the light of the above said facts, the Board decided to issue directions to the Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality under Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended .

Now therefore, in the exercise of the powers vested under Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended the Board hereby issues the following Directions to the Commissioner, Dharmapuri Municipality for strict compliance.

1. To take action to stop domestic sewage from the nearby habitation entering into Ramakkal Lake through 5 channels immediately.
2. 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 discharge any domestic sewage/sullage into Ramakkal Lake.
3. To 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.
4. To process the Municipal Solid Waste inside the shed of MCC at Harichandran burial ground and not to segregate, store and dispose the same outside the MCC i.e Bed of Ramakkal Lake.
5. To revamp the existing filter bed and to provide new filter beds in all drains joining the Ramakkal Lake to filter/screen the rainwater/surface water runoff.
6. To furnish the time bound action plan with implementation schedule for the above directions within one month.

Failure to comply with the above said directions, necessary steps will be initiated as per the provisions of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended.

The receipt of this proceeding shall be acknowledged.

For Chairperson
03/05/2024

To
The Commissioner,
Dharmapuri Municipality,
Kandasamy Vathiyar Street,
Municipal Office,
Dharmapuri-636 701.
commr.dharmapuri@tn.gov.in.

Copy To

1. Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department,
Secretariat,
Chennai – 600009
2. The Joint Chief Environmental Engineers (Monitoring),
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, Vellore.
3. The District Environmental Engineer,
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, Dharmapuri
4. File Copy.

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

**Original Application No.34 of 2024 (SZ)
Earlier O.A. No. 607/2023 (PB)**

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 TN polluted & emits foul smell residents
demand rejuvenation"

With

Central Pollution Control Board,
Rep. by its Regional Director,
Chennai and Ors.

...Respondents.

**REPORT FILED ON BEHALF OF THE
SECOND RESPONDENT- TAMIL NADU
POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD.**

**Advocate for Respondent: TNPCB
Thiru.S. Sai Sathya Jith,
Advocate, Chennai.**

Date:22.07.2024

Date of hearing on:05.08.2024.

