

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

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.108 OF 2020 (SZ)

Tribunal on its own motion
SUO MOTU Based on the
News Item in Vikatan E-Magazine edition
dated:09.07.2020 "Coonoor Misery: Increasing
waste in River Water – Elephants looking for good water

...Applicant

Versus

The Principal Secretary to Government
Department of Environment,
Chennai and 6 others.

...Respondent(s)

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**Filed by
Thiru. C. Kasirajan,
Advocate, Chennai.**



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...Applicant(s)

Versus

- 1) The Principal Secretary to Government,
Public Works Department,
Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai – 600 009.
- 2) The Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Department of Environment,
Govt. Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu – 600 009.
- 3) The Principal Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Department of Health and Family Welfare,
Govt. Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu – 600 009.
- 4) Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Municipal Administration and Water Supply Development,
Govt. Secretariat,
Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu – 600 009.
- 5) The Chairman,
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,
No.76, Anna Salai, Guindy,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu – 600 032.
- 6) The District Collector,
Nilgiris District,
Collector Office, Niligirs District,
Near Charing Cross,
Ooty, Tamil Nadu – 643 001.
- 7) Coonoor Municipality,
Rep. by its Municipal Commissioner,
Municipal Office, Mount Road,
Coonoor - 643 101.

...Respondent(s)


Official Environmental File No. 108/2020 (SZ)
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board
http://www.mandalam.org

**PROGRESS REPORT FILED BY THE DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL
ENGINEER, TAMILNADU POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD,
UDHAGAMANDALAM**

I, P S Livingston, Aged 56 years, the District Environmental Engineer, TamilNadu Pollution Control Board, Udhagamandalam, having office at Additional Collectorate Complex, Finger Post, Udhagamandalam, submit this progress report, as follows:

2. It is submitted that the District Environmental Engineer, TamilNadu Pollution Control Board, Udhagamandalam, has been nominated as the member of the Joint Committee instituted by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (SZ), vide order dated 16th July, 2020, representing TamilNadu Pollution Control Board, nominated by the 5th Respondent, the Chairman TamilNadu Pollution Control Board.

3. The Committee so instituted, carried out field inspections and collected samples, and based on the observations made during the inspection on 16th September, 2020, and filed an Interim Report, and sought more time to file the Final Report. The Hon'ble Tribunal considered the Interim Report during the hearing on 25th September and directed the individual respondents to file their responses, and posted the matter to 19th November, 2020. In compliance of the said order, the Final Report of the Committee was submitted. The Response of the District Environmental Engineer, TamilNadu Pollution Control Board, Udhagamandalam was also submitted, before the tribunal, for consideration.

4. In the Report filed, the Joint Committee furnished the inferences and the recommendations, such as survey of households by Coonoor Municipality, making every house hold to provide septic tank and soak pit arrangements, wherever possible, suspending the trade licences of commercial establishments discharging sewage directly in to water bodies, imposing penalties on those dumping garbage in to water bodies, etc. Considering the unfavourable terrain, the Committee also recommended that an expert technical team be instituted to study and recommend means of managing sewage with a view to ensure that untreated sewage is not let in to the water courses.


District Environmental Engineer
TamilNadu Pollution Control Board
Udhagamandalam

5. In the individual response filed by the District Environmental Engineer, wherein the remarks on the allegations levelled in the Report of the magazine were clarified and refuted, the other findings and recommendations of the Joint Committee were agreed with. During the hearing on 4th January, 2021, the Hon'ble Tribunal considered the response of District Environmental Engineer, observed that the steps that were being taken would taken only about 60% of sewage generated, and hence ordered that Coonoor Municipality and District Environmental Engineer were asked to submit their report, and posted the matter to 3rd February, 2021.

6. In compliance, the District Environmental Engineer filed a further report, wherein the measures taken by Coonoor Municipality on Solid Waste Management, managing the legacy wastes, about the study instituted by Coonoor Municipality on identifying, assessing the quantity and quality of sewage outfalls in to the water bodies, proposing effective measures/ options for treating the sewage, etc, were described.

7. The Hon'ble Tribunal considered the Report of the Joint Committee and the Further Report filed by the District Environmental Engineer, Udthagamandalam during the hearing on 3rd February, 2021, and directed the Coonoor Municipality to come with a proper action plan with a shorter and longer time line to resolve the issue permanently before the next hearing date.

8. Meanwhile, the agency to whom the study on identification and assessment of sewage outfalls, etc., has submitted its Interim Report on 25th of March, 2021. The said Report was scrutinised and the comments were communicated for finalising the Report along with treatment options/technology, Capital and Operating Expenditures, along with expected time duration to execute the works, with a view to prevent the entry of untreated sewage in to the water courses.

9. Moreover, Coonoor Municipality also submitted a Further Action Taken Report, wherein the revised timelines for the proposed works to be carried out was submitted along with the Report on the Outfall Study. The same is yet to be considered by the Tribunal.

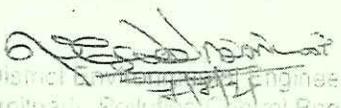

District Environmental Engineer
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board
Udthagamandalam

10. On 6th July, 2021, the agency Instituted by Coonoor Municipality submitted finalized the Report on Treatment Options along with the Costs for the recommended Technologies. The said report was originally expected to be completed/ received by third week of April, 2021. However, it is received only during the first week of July, 2021, thereby a delay of about ten weeks happened. The said delay is attributed to the complete lockdown imposed by the State for about three weeks, from 10th May, 2021 to 30th May, 2021, which was followed by lockdown with certain relaxations, which extended up to 4th July, 2021. During this period also there were restrictions on entry of persons from other Districts in to The Nilgiris District, and only those with e-pass were alone permitted.

11. In the Final Report furnished, based on the quality of the discharges, the Report recommended that the discharges from Coonoor River, Blue Hill River and Shanmugapuram River need to be collected and treated. The cumulative quantity of sewage to be treated was estimated at 2.43 MLD and hence a Sewage Treatment Plant of 3.00 MLD is suggested.

12. The Report considered various Treatment Options such as Physical Treatment Systems, Chemical Treatment Systems, Biological Treatment Systems, Combination of the above and also Phyto-Remediation, on Capital Cost, Operational Cost, Land availability, skill required for operation etc., and shortlisted three options viz. Phyto-Remediation, Chemical Precipitation, Filtration followed by Ozonation and Moving Bed Bio-Film Reactor, and evaluated. The Report concluded that for the conditions prevailing in Coonoor Phyto-Remediation is the most desired option followed by Chemical Precipitation, Filtration followed by Ozonation.

13. The Report stated that suitable adequate quantity of land for providing the Phyto-Remediation option, at the rate of 1.5 sq.m./cu.m./Day is not available near the water bodies, and however, the possibility of providing the Phyto-Remediation schemes in the Beds of water bodies be explored and confirmed with the service providers of such systems, and if feasible, the option of Phyto-Remediation be proceeded with and that of possibility of providing Chemical Precipitation, Filtration followed by Ozonation, be considered only if providing Phyto-Remediation scheme in the bed of the water bodies is not at all feasible.


District Engineer
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board
Udhaganathan, Salem

11. The Report also stated that the Chemical Precipitation, Filtration followed by Ozonation type Sewage treatment Plant is opted, the treatment units and the conveyance of outfalls from Coonoor River be executed as Phase I and the works related to providing of conveyance pipe line in Blue Hill River and Shanmugapuram river be carried out only after strengthening the banks of those water bodies.

12. The Report pointed out that the level of Dissolved oxygen in the outfalls in to Brooklands River is having very high levels of Dissolved Oxygen, over 14 mg/L, and that the spring water also mixes with the stream, thereby the flow in the river is found to be pristine, and hence the requirement of treatment of such outfalls, be decided after further detailed study over a longer duration covering all seasons.

13. The Coonoor Municipality, on receipt of the Report, scrutinized and decided to explore as to whether providing Phyto-Remediation schemes is technically feasible, and hence addressed two service providers viz. AYALA-NBS and CAMUS-SBT, to inspect the water bodies and to offer the technical feasibility together with commercials by 21st July, 2021. The same is indicated in letter dated 7th July, 2021 of the Commissioner, Coonoor Municipality. The revised timeline for execution of various works is also indicated, wherein it is stated that the technology would be finalised by 28th July, 2021, approval of the council would be obtained during the first week of August, 2021, the Government would be addressed for approval/ financial assistance during the second week of August, 2021, and on obtaining the approval from Government with fund allocation, the work would be executed within Nine months.

14. It is learned that the Coonoor Municipality is filing a Further Progress Report, along with revised Time Lines for the execution of various items/works related to the establishment of Sewage Treatment Plant, along with the Final Report received from the Study Team. From their communication, it is noted that the Proposal to the Government would be submitted by the second week of August, 2021, as against the original schedule of third week of June, 2021, thereby a backlog of about seven weeks. The delay is attributed to the COVID-19 situation, which is found to be acceptable.


District Engineer
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board
- Udhagamandalam

15. The findings of the report that the sewage discharges from Coonoor River, Blue Hill River and Shanmughapuram River need to be treated to the standards and opined that Phyto-Remediation is the most desirable option, that the discharges in Brookelands River need not be addressed at present considering its quality and available dilution, that the conveyance of the sewage from the point of outfall through conveyance pipelines need to be carried out only after the bunds/banks of the water bodies are strengthened are reflecting the scenario prevailing at the field, and hence acceptable.

16. In this backdrop, obtaining the required approval for the scheme, once the Coonoor Municipality finalizes the Technology to be adopted and allocation of the funds required for the implementation of the scheme are prime important and crucial in early completion.

17. Therefore, it is respectfully prayed that this Hon'ble Tribunal to accept the Progress Report and Revised Time Line being submitted by Coonoor Municipality and pass such other orders the Hon'ble Tribunal considers deem fit in the facts and circumstances of the case.

(Dated this 7th day of July, 2021, at Udhagamandalam)


District Environmental Engineer
Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board
Udhagamandalam

VERIFICATION

I, P S Livingston, District Environmental Engineer, TamilNadu Pollution Control Board, Udhagamandalam, do hereby verify that the contents above mentioned are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and information, and I have not suppressed any material fact.


District Environmental Engineer
Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board
Udhagamandalam

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**PROGRESS REPORT FILED BY THE
DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER,
TAMIL NADU POLLUTION CONTROL
BOARD, UDHAGAMANDALAM**

Advocate for Respondent: TNPCB
Thiru. Kasirajan
Advocate, Chennai.

Dated:07.07.2021

Date of hearing: 08.07.2021

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