

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED BY THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL IN O.A. No.:108 OF 2020 (SZ) AS ORDERED IN THEIR ORDER DATED 03.02.2021.

Background:

Based on the News Item published on 09.07.2020, in the Vikatan E-Magazine , under the caption "Coonoor Misery; Increasing Waste in River Water!- Elephants looking for Good Water", the Honourable National Green Tribunal (SZ) took Suo-Motu cognizance of the matter and in their Interim Order dated 16.07.2020, constituted a Joint Committee, headed by District Collector, to inspect the area in question and to submit a Status and Action Taken Report to the Tribunal within a period of Two months i.e., on or before 25.09.2020.

The Joint Committee undertook an Inspection on 16.09.2020, collected samples, and based on the observations made, submitted an Interim Report during the hearing on 25.09.2020. The Honourable Tribunal, took the Interim Report filed by the Joint Committee in the record, and directed to submit the report to this Tribunal on or before 19.11.2020, and directed the respondents to file independent responses.

During the hearing on 04.01.2021, the Honourable Tribunal recorded the response of the District Environmental Engineer, Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board, Udthagamandalam and directed the Joint Committee, Coonoor Municipality and the TamilNadu Pollution Control Board to submit their further report and posted the matter to 03.02.2021.

On 03.02.2021, the Report of the Joint Inspection Committee, filed by the Public Works Department, the Nodal Agency, further report of the District Environmental Engineer, TamilNadu Pollution Control Board, Udthagamandalam and the Commissioner (i/c), Coonoor Municipality were duly considered by the Honourable Tribunal, and among other things passed the following orders, and posted the matter to 05.04.2021:

16. So under these circumstances, we direct 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.

17. The Committee is also directed to submit their further progress report and action taken report to this Tribunal on or before 5.4.2021 by e-filing in the form of Searchable PDF/OCR Supportable PDF and not in the form of Image PDF along with necessary hardcopies to be produced as per Rules.

This Progress Report is submitted in compliance of the orders of the Honourable Tribunal dated 03.02.2021, in this matter.

Further Action by the Joint Committee:

In TamilNadu, the General Elections for the Legislative Assembly were declared by the Election Commission of India on 26.02.2021, and since that day, the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is in force, and same would continue to be in force till the same is lifted by the Election Commission of India, after the declaration of the results. During the MCC, reviews or meetings could not be undertaken. As such no further meeting of the Joint Inspection Committee could be conducted.

However, the officials of the Public Works Department, Water Resources Division, Bhavani Sagar Dam Division, held discussions with the Commissioner (i/c), Coonoor Municipality, Municipal Health Officer, Coonoor Municipality to ascertain the further progress made. The officials also had discussion with the District Environmental Engineer, Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board, Udthagamandalam, on the contents of the Interim Report prepared by the consultant of Coonoor Municipality.

Progress on the Action Plan of Coonoor Municipality:

During the Hearing on 03.02.2021, the Commissioner (i/c) submitted an Action Plan before the Honourable Tribunal, The progress on each Item, as assessed from the officials of Coonoor Municipality is submitted as follows:

S. No	Activity	Time line proposed	Current Status/ Revised Time line
1	Instituting a study Second week of Identified and work 49 team to identify the Outfalls, quantify the same, feasibilities	Second week of January, 2021	Completed

	of providing decentralized sewage treatment plants, finalizing the technologies, estimation of CAPEX and OPEX.		
2	Reconnaissence survey	Last week of January, 2021	Completed
3	Detailed investigation, collection of samples	First week of February, 2021	Completed
4	Analysis of samples	Second week of February, 2021	Completed
5	Preliminary report with viable schemes based on the availability of suitable and adequate land	Third week of February, 2021	Draft Report received on 25.03.2021. The same is under scrutiny. Land availability, based on which the treatment option and the costing to be included.
6	Draft project report	First week of March, 2021	
7	Evaluation of report and communicating the comments	Third week of March, 2021	Preliminary comments communicated to the consultant.
8	Final report	First week of April, 2021	Third week of April, 2021.
9	Approval of council	First week of June, 2021	Third week of May, 2021.
10	Submission of proposal to Government for approval	Third week of June, 2021	First week of June, 2021.
11	Completion of the schemes	Nine months from the financial approval for the schemes	Those schemes which are within the financial powers of the Municipality are intended to be taken up with the approval of Council. Other works would be taken up with the approval of Government, in a time period of nine months.

Considering the progress made in this matter as against the time-line proposed by the Coonoor Municipality, the Joint Committee is of the view that the progress made is satisfactory, even though it is found that there is a delay of two weeks in receiving the draft report etc. However, in view of the General Elections in Tamilnadu, the Joint

Committee noted that there is a likelihood of completing the subsequent activities such as getting the approval of Council and submission of proposal to the Government, by two weeks.

Findings of the Draft Report:

The Study Report has identified 24 discharges in to the water-bodies, within the Coonoor Municipality, totaling 4.49 MLD. The lowest assessed quantity is estimated to be 0.08 KLD and the highest quantity being 962 KLD.

It is learnt from the Commissioner (i/c), Coonoor Municipality that the Draft Report is being studied by the Engineering and Public Health wings, and the Preliminary comments has been communicated to the consultant. He also added that the consultant has been requested to make a visit to assess the lands available and to finalize technologies suitable for the available lands, estimate the approximate CAPEX and OPEX, and to incorporate the same in the Report. The consultant is expected to make a visit during the second week of April, 2021.

It was informed that the Draft Report would be submitted to the Honourable Tribunal, by Coonoor Municipality during the Hearing on 05.04.2021.

Further Report by Coonoor Municipality:

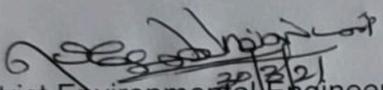
It is further informed by the Commissioner (i/c), Coonoor Municipality that they are in the process of preparing the further report, indicating the short term and long term measures, as directed by the Honourable Tribunal.

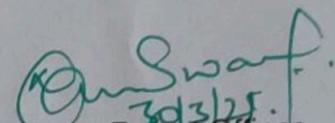
Prayer:

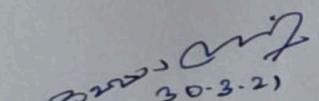
As already stated, the Joint Committee is of the considered view, that the progress made by Coonoor Municipality is satisfactory, and that the action plan, as proposed by Coonoor Municipality when implemented, the menace of sewage entering in to the water bodies could be curtailed, and the environmental health of the Water Bodies, in Coonoor Municipality could be improved.

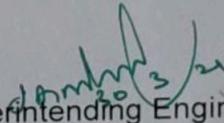
The Joint Committee, completely understands, that to achieve this goal, a persistent monitoring is required, and assure the Honourable Tribunal, that the progress would be monitored, once the Model Code of Conduct, which is in force at present is lifted, at least once in two months, and any guidance/support required by Coonoor Municipality would be extended.

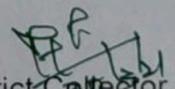
Therefore, it is kindly prayed that the Honourable Tribunal may kindly accept this Progress Report of the Joint Committee, and pass such orders that the Honourable Tribunal considers deem fit in the facts and circumstances of the case.


District Environmental Engineer,
Tamil Nadu Pollution control Board
Udhagamandalam


District Forest Officer,
Udhagamandalam


30-3-21
Commissioner,
Coonoor Municipality.


Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD.,
Bhavani Basin Circle, Erode
Nodal officer.


District Collector,
The Nilgiris.

மாவட்ட ஆட்சியர்
நீலகிரி மாவட்டம்
31 MAR 2021
உதகமண்டலம்