

CHENNAI RIVERS RESTORATION TRUST

**(As per Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Southern Zone, Chennai
Order dated 07.07.2021 in OA No. 144/2021)**

The case has been Suo Motu registered by the Hon'ble Tribunal on the basis of the series of Newspaper reports published in the Times of India, Chennai Edition dated 15.04.2021, under the caption "(Squatters gone, but Cooum still a dump." Some stretches fenced off to stop Dumping) and another newspaper report published in the same newspaper dated 01.06.2021, under the caption "waste is generated, but not cleared from Cooum in Otteri" and also another newspaper report published in the Hindu newspaper English edition dated 20.6.2021, under the caption "(Encroachments are back along the Cooum in Chetpet".

REPLY SUBMITTED:

R. 10. The Member Secretary, Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust, 6.103, Dr. D.G. S. Dinakaran Salai, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai - 600 028.

Before the National Green Tribunal (NGT), Southern Zone, Chennai in the Original Application No. 144 of 2021 (SZ) Order dated: 07.07.2021 in the "Newspaper, Chennai edition dated: 15.04.2021,

under the caption "(Squatters gone, but Cooum still a dump." Some stretches fenced off to stop Dumping)

Integrated Cooum River Eco restoration Project

The Project area presently being covered for restoration comprises the stretch from Paruthipattu anicut to the river mouth in the Bay of Bengal. In this stretch, various pollution abatement measures are proposed such as Interceptors and diversion of sewage to improve the water quality, river channel improvement to enhance ecological flow of the river, Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Project Affected Families within the Right of Way of river, Solid waste removal, River bank vegetation and mangrove plantations to enhance the diversity of flora and fauna in the Cooum riverine system.

2. While CRRT is the coordinating body, the responsibility of maintenance and upkeep of river and water bodies falls on the shoulders of various Line Departments namely, Public Works Department (WRO), Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (CMWSSB), Greater Chennai Corporation, other ULBs / RLBs. River restoration thus requires actions to be taken by all Line Departments and the approach is to integrate activities of all the Line Departments so as to achieve restoration. CRRT has been doing

the role of the Coordinating, while all the Line Departments are the implementation arms for the eco-restoration projects.

3. All the line departments viz., Public Works Department (PWD), Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), Commissionerate of Municipal Administration (CMA), Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (DRD), Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB), Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board and Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust have commenced the implementation of the sub-projects entrusted with them and they are under various stages of implementation. The status of the progress as on June 2021 is detailed below:

4. The desilting has been completed thus far for a length of 28.6 km out of the total 29.5 km and the formation of baby canal has been completed fully for 17.66 km. Thus far, 109517 MT of debris and garbage have been cleared from the banks and the work is fully completed by GCC, DMA & DRD. Fencing work has been fully completed for a length of 22.77 km out of a total length of 36.62 km. Out of a total identified 14257 Project Affected Families (PAFs) within the river boundary, 12302 PAFs have thus far been resettled. Regarding plugging of outfalls, out of 10 packages under Interception and Diversion pipelines, six packages have been fully completed; three in progress are in various stages and the works

are expected to be completed by September 2021 except for the Nerkundram UGSS which will be completed by June 2022. The construction of 4 Modular STPs is under progress and it is expected to be completed by May 2022. All the restoration works are expected to be completed by June 2022.

5. Although considerable works has been completed under Integrated Cooum River Eco restoration Project such as one time removal of accumulate solid waste from the river banks, laying of interception pipelines for diverting the sewage, the illegal dumping of solid waste and disposal of sewage during odd hours pose a threat to the restoration activities undertaken by the Government. To curb this menace, monitoring mechanism must be strengthened among the regulatory departments and also to create more awareness on protecting the Cooum riverine ecosystem.

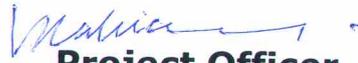
In the "Newspaper, Chennai edition dated: 20.06.2021, "Encroachments are back along the Cooum in Chetpet."

6. The Resettlement & Rehabilitation (R&R) of Project Affected Families (PAFs) within the Right of Way (RoW) / boundary of the Cooum River has been jointly carried out by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), Public Works Department (PWD) / Water

Resources Department (WRD) & Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB).

7. All commercial encroachments with the Cooum River boundary are evicted / demolished by the Land Owning Department i.e. Public Works Department (PWD) / Water Resources Department (WRD). The stretches retrieved from encroachments are secured with fencing / compound wall along the River boundary by respective ULBs like Greater Chennai Corporation.

8. With regard to the "Newspaper, Chennai edition dated: 20.06.2021, "Encroachments are back along the Cooum in Chetpet.", it is submitted that the stretch along the Cooum River at Spurtank Road had been free from any encroachments and no slum habitations were identified under the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project (ICRERP). Further, the respective ULB i.e. Greater Chennai Corporation has been informed to take necessary action regarding the removal of encroachments in the particular stretch and requested to expedite the ongoing fencing works in this stretch to secure the river stretch.


Project Officer

Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust

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(Wholly owned by Govt. of Tamilnadu)