

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

Original Application No.132 of 2021 (SZ)

(Through Video Conference)

IN THE MATTER OF

SUO MOTU - "illegal mining undermines
desilting work"

..... Applicant(s)

Versus

1. Union of India,
Rep. by its Secretary,
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change,
Indira paryavaran Bhawan,
Jorbagh Road, New Delhi - 110 003.
2. The Chief Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Govt. Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600 009.
3. The Principal Secretary to Government,
Public Works Department,
Govt. Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600 009.
4. The Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Revenue and Disaster Management Department,
Govt. Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600 009.
5. The Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change,
Govt. Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600 009.
6. Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department,
Govt. Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600 009.
7. The Principal Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Industries Department,
Govt. Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600 009.
8. Engineer in Chief (Water Resources Organisation)
And Chief Engineer (General),
Public Works Department,
Chepauk, Chennai - 600 005.
9. Directorate of Geology and Mining,
Rep. by its Commissioner,
Alandur Road, Guindy Industrial Estate,
Guindy, Chennai - 600 032.

10. State Environment Impact Assessment Authority Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by its Member Secretary,
3rd Floor, Panagal Maaligai,
No.1, Jeenis Road, Saidapet,
Chennai - 600 015.
11. The District Collector,
Ariyalur District,
District Collectorate,
Jayankondam Road,
Ariyalur - 621 704.
12. The District Collector,
Karur District,
District Collectorate,
First Floor, Karur - 639 007.
13. The District Collector,
Pudukottai District,
District Collectorate,
Second Floor, Pudukottai - 622 005.
14. The District Collector,
Tiruchirappalli District,
District Collectorate,
Tiruchirappalli - 620 001.
15. The District Collector,
Thanjavur District,
District Collectorate,
Thanjavur - 613 010.
16. The District Collector,
Thiruvarur District,
District Collectorate,
First Floor, Thiruvarur - 610 004.
17. The District Collector,
Nagapattinam District,
District Collectorate,
First Floor, Nagapattinam - 611 001.
18. The District Collector,
Mayiladuthurai District,
District Collectorate,
Mayiladuthurai Keelavidhi,
Mayiladuthurai - 609 001.
19. The District Collector,
Cuddalore District,
District Collectorate,
First Floor,
New Collectorate Building,
Manjakuppam - 607 001.

..... Respondent(S)

REPORT FILED BY THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, CUDDALAORE.

In the matter of O.A.No.132/2021 (SZ) suo-motu issued concerned with a news item published in The Times of India, Chennai on June 3, 2021. The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal while observing that there arises a substantial question of environment which requires the interference of the tribunal has directed the District Collectors of the respective districts to submit their independent reports regarding the allegations made in the newspaper report and remedial measures that are to be taken to restore the damage if any caused to the river due to unscientific desilting and illegal mining. In compliance with the above direction I submit my report as follows.

In the above mentioned news item published on 03.06.2021 it was alleged that the illegal sand mining has lowered the surface level of the rivers than that of canals water cannot flow into the branch rivers and the channels which are on the higher level. Even, after desilting the desired results cannot be achieved. In this regard, a report from the Executive Engineer, PWD (WRO), was called for. The Government have accorded administrative sanction in G.O.2(D)/57 Public Works Department, dated:17.05.2020 for Rs.2.20 Crores for desilting of the channels in Cauvery delta area in the Cuddalore District. Accordingly an estimate had been prepared for desilting 58 channels to a total length of 202 kms in Cuddalore District which includes 42 irrigation channels and 16 drainage channels. The works were taken up for execution and the silt was removed till proper bed level and deposited in the banks. In the Coleroon river which receives water from Kallanai and runs in the Cuddalore District, a Lower Anicut is constructed and water is stored upto 9 feet height. The headed up water is allowed for irrigation through Vadavar Channel, North Rajan Channal, Khan Sahib Canal and Paasimuthan Odai.

A. Vadavar Channel

The total length of Vadavar Channel is 22 kms. and the entire length of 22 kms. of Vadavar Channel is fully lined. Hence, there are no possibilities for illegal mining activities in this channel. The bed level of this channel remains

unchanged as it is lined and there is no possibility of illegal mining or lowering of the bed level in the channel. Since the proper sill level is maintained, with every off taking sluices the water freely reaches up to the tail end and an ayacut of 11352 acres is benefited from the channel.

B. COLEROON NORTH RAJAN CHANNEL.

The total length of Coleroon North Rajan Channel is 45 kms and is having 85 branch channels. All the branch channel and canals found in clay and black cotton soil. Hence, there is no illegal mining and the bed level remains unchanged. With every off taking sluices and with proper sill level the water from this channel freely reaches till the tail end and irrigates and ayacut of 24439 acres.

C. KHAN SAHIB CANAL

The total length of Khan Sahib main canal is 31 km and consists of 34 branch canals. The bed of the canal is found only in clay and black cotton soil. Hence, there is no illegal mining activities in the canal and the water reaches upto the tail end and benefits and ayacut of 8344 acres.

D. PAASIMUTHAN ODAI

Paasimuthan Odai originate from Ponneri Tank in Ariyalur District and the total length of this Odai is 13 kms with 5 branch channels. The channel is found only in clay soil and there is no illegal mining activities in this channel. From the branch channels the water freely reaches upto the tail end and irrigates 360 acres of land.

In the Cuddalore District the 42 irrigation channels having 03 to 05M in delta area are fed only through canal from regulator arrangements and as such there is no possibilities for illegal mining activities in the irrigation feeder canal and the water flowing in the canal and branch channels reaches the tail end without any disturbance.

Regarding the activities taken to control illegal mining it is submitted that the Taluk Level Task Force Meeting is being held in every month to control illicit mining and transport in every Taluk in Cuddalore District. The Team discusses about illegal mining both in Government poramboke lands such as

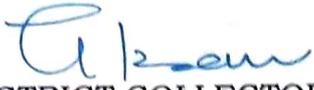
Rivers, Lakes and Ponds and also in Private lands which affects the Farmers and leads Revenue loss to the Government. The permitted quarries are inspected regularly to check whether the quarry holder abides by the rules. It is inspected to ascertain if any quarry work is done without permission and that proper sill level is maintained. Rivers and Canals are also being inspected consistently to check the illegal sand mining whether the permitted depth of the earth and sand is only dug.

District Level Task Force is being held every month to control the illicit mining and transport in every Taluk in Cuddalore District. In this meeting, the action taken by Taluk Level Task Force meeting agendas is reviewed by the DLTF Chairperson, the District Collector, Cuddalore.

Permission to desilting Lakes, Ponds and Rivers to quarry earth and sand for National and State Highways activities is given with strict instruction to the petitioners not to deepen more than 01 meter and also to maintain 50 meters safety distance from the bund. Regular inspection is done to ensure the same.

Team consisting of Police Department officials, Revenue Department officials and Geology and Mining Department Officials is consistently inspecting the Quarries and Vehicles to curb illegal activities of mining/ transportation of minerals.

It is humbly concluded that as far as the District of Cuddalore is concerned while desilting proper sill level is maintained ensuring the water from the channel reaches the tail end and irrigates the ayacut area. Further, the District Administration is keen in protecting the mineral wealth of the district and as such it is ensured that illegal mining activities doesn't undermines the desilting work and the same is curbed.


DISTRICT COLLECTOR, 4/4
CUDDALORE.