

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
(SOUTHERN ZONE BENCH, CHENNAI)  
IN  
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 15 OF 2020 (SZ)**

BETWEEN

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU  
based on the News Item in Malayala Manorama,  
Malayalam Newspaper dated 20.01.2020,  
"Burning Banks of Bharathapuzha". Anti Social elements  
Continue to burn dried riparian grassland .... Applicant

AND

Government of Kerala and others ... Respondents

**PRESENT STATUS REPORT FILED BY ADDITIONAL CHIEF  
SECRETARY, ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT / 1<sup>ST</sup>  
RESPONDENT**

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Dated at Chennai on this the 09<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.

  
M /s. E.K.KUMARESAN

Standing Counsel for State Government of Kerala - NGT(SZ) Chennai Bench

**Half – yearly progress report ending December 2022, filed on behalf of the first respondent in compliance with Order dated February 24, 2022, of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Southern Zone, Chennai, in OA No.15 of 2020**

It is submitted that, in compliance with the order dated February 24, 2022, of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, the District Collector, Palakkad, is coordinating the various activities at district level with the cooperation of the Irrigation, Agriculture, Police Departments, LSGIs, Harithakarmasena and Biodiversity Management Committees. The following activities were carried out in coordination with various departments:

**(a) Irrigation Department**

A joint site inspection was conducted on July 26, 2022, for implementing the phase II work of planting Ramacham, bamboo plants, Kaitha, etc on the banks of the area. This Joint inspection was simultaneously carried out at Lekkidi -Perur Panchayath and Anakara Panchayath with concerned secretaries of panchayaths and municipalities, village officers, forest officers, and police, along with irrigation department engineers. During this joint site inspection, various locations for planting the type and number of plants are identified, which are then communicated to the Director of Kerala, Forest Research Institute Peechi, and the Assistant Conservator of Forest, Social Forestry Division, Palakkad, in order for these plants to be delivered to the appropriate location. It was found during the site inspection that bamboos and other plants have already been planted along the shore of Bharathappuzha at Shornur by Panchayath through MGNREGS as and when the plants are supplied from the Forest Department.



**(b) Revenue Department**

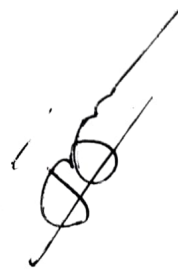
A survey squad is deployed to revalidate the boundaries of Bharathappuzha, which run through Lakkidi - Perur Ottappalam 1 and 2, Vaniyamkulam 2, and Shornur 1 and 2 villages of Ottappalam taluk. A primary survey was initiated in Lakkidi Perur and Shornur, and the survey has been completed in Pattamby Municipality and Pattithara Panchayath. According to the Tahsiladar of Ottappalam, 146 sub divisions share boundaries with Bharathappuzha, which covers an area of 25 kilometers, and these boundaries must be revalidated. A survey team has also been deployed to stop encroachments.

**(c) Agriculture Department**

The District Collector, Palakkad reported that no complaints have been received about crop damage in the said area due to the burning and destruction of grasslands on the banks of Bharathappuzha and its tributaries by anti-socials. The district administration also coordinates the work of riverbed cultivation, fallow land cultivation, bamboo planting, vegetables, and paddy farming, which are being done in Pattambi, Ottappalam, Anakkara, Pattithara Thrithala, Vaniyamkulam Municipalities and Grama Panchayaths, so as to preserve the bio diversity of Bharathappuzha and prevent coastal erosion.

**(d) Police Department**

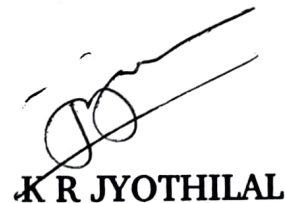
To prevent encroachment and ensure biostability on the banks of Bharathappuzha, regular inspections are being carried out by beat officers during the day and patrols are being carried out in the evening and at night. Eco-friendly sign boards have been placed on the banks of Bharathappuzha and its tributaries, and the Superintendent of Police has reported that the concerned Station House Officer has been instructed to take strict action against the accused who are trying to burn the grasslands.



**(e) Local Self Government Department**

To prevent the practice of encroachment on the river banks of Bharathapuzha and the burning of grasslands there, teams under the leadership of Grama Panchayath ward members of the ten Grama Panchayaths through which Bharathapuzha flows have been constituted. The teams have conducted an awareness campaign among the inhabitants of the river banks in this matter. The team also conducted periodic surveillance through the banks to prevent grasslands from being burned. 28 sign boards have been installed giving instructions against the burning of grasslands and illegal encroachments. According to the decisions made at the various meetings, 40 projects totaling Rs. 61,73,237/- have been taken over for the side protection of river banks and enriching the planting of tree seedlings through MGNREGS. An amount of Rs. 69,909/- has been spent for plantations by Lakkidi Perur and Pattithara Grama Panchayath. Directions were given to all the Grama Panchayaths concerned for the timely completion of the projects. Grama Panchayaths reported that no encroachment had occurred.

It is submitted that necessary steps are being taken in compliance with the order dated February 24, 2022, of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in OA No.15 of 2020, with the coordination of various departments for the preservation and enrichment of the river bank ecosystem of Bharathappuzha in a phased manner.



**K R JYOTHILAL**

**ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY**

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**ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT/ 1<sup>ST</sup>**  
**RESPONDENT**

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