

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No. 787/2023

In re : News item appearing in Hindu dated 11.12.2023 titled **“Cauvery basin lost nearly 12,850 sq.km. of green cover”**

Date of hearing: 10.01.2024

**CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON
HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR TYAGI, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON’BLE DR. AFROZ AHMAD, EXPERT MEMBER**

Respondent: Mr. Ajay Kumar Pandey, Adv. for MoEF & CC (Through VC)

ORDER

1. This original application is registered *suo motu* on the basis of the news item titled **“Cauvery basin lost nearly 12,850 sq.km. of green cover”** published in ‘The Hindu’ dated 11.12.2023. As per the said news item, natural vegetation on nearly 12,850 sq. km of land in the Cauvery basin has been lost in the 50 years from 1965 to 2016. It is also disclosed that Karnataka has lost much more than any other State in the basin. As per the said report, the natural vegetation cover went down by around 46% in these years. It has been opined that the quantum of reduction of dense vegetation was 35% (6,123 sq. km) and that of degraded vegetation was 63% (6,727 sq. km). As per the said report, areas that suffered adverse changes in the extent of forest cover include Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park and Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary.

2. The news report discloses substantial issue relating to the compliance of environmental laws, especially the Scheduled enactments.

3. The power of the Tribunal to take up the matter in *suo motu* has been recognized by the Hon’ble Supreme Court in the matter of

*“Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai vs. Ankita Sinha & Ors.”
reported in 2021 SCC Online SC 897.*

4. In the circumstances of the case, we deem it proper to implead the following as respondents in the matter:

- i. Inspector General, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- ii. Forest Survey of India, Southern Zone Bangaluru.
- iii. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Kerala Forest Department.
- iv. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Karnataka Forest Department.
- v. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Tamil Nadu Forest Department.

5. Let notice be issued to the above respondents for filing their response before the concerned Bench of the Tribunal.

6. Since the matter relates to the Southern Zone Bench, Chennai, therefore, the OA is transferred to the said bench. The Registry is directed to transfer the original record of this OA to Southern Zone Bench, Chennai for necessary further action.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Arun Kumar Tyagi, JM

Dr. Afroz Ahmad, EM

January 10, 2024
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DV