

Minutes of the 4th Monitoring Committee meeting constituted in connection with O.A.Nos. 395/2013, 396/2013 & 242/2016, convened by Additional Chief Secretary, Environment Department on 05.04.2023.

The meeting commenced at 03.00 PM with Additional Chief Secretary, Environment Department in chair. Member Secretary, Kerala State Pollution Control Board; Principal Director of LSGD; Director DUA, Secretaries of various LSGIs and other officers concerned were present in the meeting.

ACS, Envt. Dept., requested the Member Secretary, KSPCB, to explain the present status of the action taken with regard to the abatement of pollution in the river.

The MS explained that the details of inspections done in the month of March 2023 has been updated in the Google Spreadsheet provided by the Environment Department. Ernakulam office has done 119 inspections, Thrissur has done 56 inspections and Idukki district has done 34 inspections. 230 units has been identified and notices issued.

Since the spread sheet circulated from the Environment Department could not be shared during the meeting, ACS requested Urban Affairs Director to take over the meeting. It was explained by the Director that the updations were taken in two ways, initially all the data of enforcement activities and steps taken by local bodies, along the banks of river Periyar, were collected for over last one year and secondly monthly details for Feb 2023 & March 2023 were collected which was displayed in the meeting.

The Director further explained that Kochi Corporation has done the maximum number of inspections, out of the total 717 inspections, 423 inspections were done by Kochi Corporation. It was also pointed out that the lowest performer is Angamaly. The total fine imposed is Rs.11,47,000/- and Kochi is the highest, amounting Rs.72000/-. Lowest amount collected is North Paravoor Municipality with Rs.4000/-. Second highest is Eloor Municipality. Night Squad inspections are also highest in Kochi Corporation, Thripunithura being the 2nd highest. Lowest is Perumbavoor and Eloor. Aluva has closed the highest number of illegal outlets which is 42 and the lowest is Kalamasserry Municipality ,which is 8. It was pointed out by the director that Eloor and Angamaly are generally poor performers and also that none of the LSGIs have initiated prosecution procedures except for Aluva which has started prosecution procedures against 2 units.

As requested by ACS, the Director, DUA, reviewed all the Municipalities

and Kochi Corporation regarding the updated action taken. Kochi Corporation Secretary and Secretaries of Aluva, Eloor, Perumbavoor, North Paravoor and Kalamasserry explained the work done by them. The director pointed out some discrepancies in the data updated in the spreadsheet and that explained by the officers.

The Principal Director, LSGD pointed out that there is no specific format or method to collect the details on regular basis and that this is done as and when demand arises.

The ACS, Emt. Dept, commented that this is a glaring weakness since NGT pays utmost attention on the enforcement and monitoring mechanisms of LSGIs.

After hearing the reviews of various LSGIs, made the following comments:

The Google spreadsheet prepare by Environment Department has to be refined and maintained by the Head of the Department, LSGD. Inspections and connected steps are the bread and butter work of LSGIs. All the circuits provide authority and powers to local bodies. Head Quarters has to ensure whether the authorities and powers given to LSGIs are properly utilized by them. The inspection mechanisms of the LSGIs has to be monitored properly. Data collection can be done in the template provided or modify it accordingly. All the important data points has to be checked by the Principal Director, LSGD.

In the first week of every month, data of the previous month has to be uploaded in the data sheet which has to be ensured and reviewed by the Directors. ACS shall review the directors during the 2nd week of every month.

It was also made clear by ACS, Emt. Dept., that the fine imposed by the Courts/Tribunals has to be borne by the local bodies itself and shall not be borne by the Government. Unless we provide a credible data, NGT will continue imposing fines in each and every case. For that it has to be taken care that the enforcement work is going on well, strict action is being taken against defaulters, ensure that the water bodies are not getting polluted, solid waste is being disposed in scientific manner. It has to be noted that NGT is paying attention on each and every action done by LSGIs.

It is mentioned that ACS, LSGD is taking appreciable measures with regard to Solid Waste Management. Same sought of work needs to be carried out in case of liquid waste management also.

Inspections and further steps needs to be done on a time bound manner and prosecution procedure against the defaulters has to be ensured.

It has been pointed out strongly by ACS that how strong or powerful a polluter is, it has to be made clear to the public that not even a drop of polluted water shall be allowed to be discharged into the water body.

It has also been pointed out that details regarding FSTP has also to be included in the next meeting.

After detailed discussion, the following decisions were made:

1. By the first week of May, the spread sheet has to be refined/more data points to be added and to be updated by the Directors of DUA, Panchayaths and Principal Director of LSGD.

[Action: DUA, Director of Panchayath, Principal Director of LSGD]

2. DUA and Director of Panchayath has to review their respective LSGIs regarding the progress made with regard to the action taken in connection with this Original Application.

[Action: DUA, Director of Panchayath, Principal Director of LSGD]

3. ACS, Environment Department, shall review the inputs of the directors during the 2nd week of every month.

[Action: Environment Department, DUA, Director of Panchayath, Principal Director of LSGD]

4. Details of FSTP has to be included in the data sheet provided.

[Action: DUA, Director of Panchayat, Principal Director of LSGD]

5. Substantial progress in the action taken has to be filed before the NGT during the Month of May, 2023.

[Action: Environment Department, all implementing Agencies]

6. ACS, Environment Department shall conduct a meeting on 2nd week of May in the presence of ACS, LSGD, wherein the Directors of LSGIs and other implementing agencies has to ensure that the Secretaries of various institutions/other authorities are working properly and the data presented during this meeting is precise and complete to be filed before NGT.

[Action: All the implementing agencies]

The meeting concluded at 03.45PM.

Dr. Venu. V.