



ABSTRACT

Forests – Announcement – Policy on ecological restoration of forest areas infested with invasive plant species in Tamil Nadu – Constitution of a Committee for formulating the Draft Policy – Orders issued.

Environment, Climate Change and Forest (FR.6) Department

G.O.(D).No.158

Dated: 01.11.2021

பிலவ, ஐப்பசி - 15

திருவள்ளூர் ஆண்டு-2052

Read:

Announcements made by Government on the floor of
Legislative Assembly on 03.09.2021 on Forest Demand.

ORDER:

Invasive alien species of plants, cause serious economical and environmental damage and can adversely impact the ecosystem health. Invasive plant species in particular, adversely impact biodiversity, leading to the decline or elimination of native species through competition, predation or transmission of pathogens and cause disruption of local ecosystems and ecosystem functions. The invasion of these species is regarded as one of the major threats to biodiversity.

2. The threat of invasive alien species can be direct or indirect. Indirectly the non-native species suppress native species by disrupting the food web in an ecosystem by restricting or replacing native food sources. Invasive species can also alter the abundance or diversity of species that are important habitat for native wildlife. The invasion by such species is known to cause significant changes in the structure and function of forests by obstructing potential succession processes, interfering with fire regimes and pollination services, and displacing native flora and fauna.

3. Most of the exotic tree species were introduced in forest areas of Tamil Nadu like Wattle, Pine and Eucalyptus to satisfy industrial/commercial needs. However, they have had adverse impact on the ecology of the area, particularly in terms of modifying/affecting hydrology, forest/grassland community, wildlife and can lead to intensified man-wildlife conflict.

4. In order to address the growing threat of invasive plant species in forest areas of Tamil Nadu, there exists a serious and pertinent need to prioritize problematic species and develop strategies to manage the proliferation of the invasive alien species. In the past, there have been efforts

(P.T.O)

to compile lists of invasive plant species in India and to study the impact of invasive species in different parts of the country. However, a comprehensive policy framework for invasive species management in forest areas of Tamil Nadu is much needed keeping in view the serious threat. The Policy to control and eliminate invasive alien species needs to be developed taking stock of the invasive species cover in forest areas (species and area wise) and ongoing weed management practices in the field thereby incorporating learnings from best practices elsewhere.

5. The Policy will address highly invasive, habitat degrading plant species in the forest areas of Tamil Nadu for removal and management simultaneously. Principal focus has to be laid upon developing / elaborating strategies, methodologies and protocols for management of the most problematic weeds in forest areas viz., *Lantana camara L.*, *Acacia mearnsii*, *Prosopis juliflora*, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, *Parthenium hysterophorus L.*, *Mucuna bracteata*, *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Salvinia molesta*, *Ipomoea carnea*, *Leucaena leucocephala*, *Cuscuta Sp.*, *Opuntia Sp.*, *Celosia argentea*, *Ulex europaeus*, *Cytisus scoparius*, *Cestrum spp.*, *Hypothenemus hampei etc.*, It is critical to pay an immediate attention to restore the habitat health to support wildlife survival as well as to avoid straying out of wild animals.

6. Considering the importance and necessity, an announcement was made by the Government of Tamil Nadu on 3rd September, 2021 on the floor of Legislative Assembly that, a separate policy will be formulated on "Removal of alien species in forest areas of Tamil Nadu for eco restoration of forest areas infested with invasive weed species". In accordance with the announcement, the Government shall come out with a Policy on control and elimination of invasive alien species in Forest areas in Tamil Nadu.

7. Accordingly, the Government after careful examination, accord administrative sanction for framing a Policy on control and elimination of invasive alien plant species and eco restoration of forest areas already infested. Further, the Government constitutes an expert committee as below to formulate a Draft Policy on Removal of alien species in forest areas of Tamil Nadu for eco restoration of forest areas infested with invasive weed species:-

1. Thiru V.Naganathan. I.F.S.,
Additional Principal Chief Conservator
of Forests (Forest Conservation Act),
Office of the Principal Chief Conservator
of Forests (HoD), Chennai 15. ...Chairman
2. Thiru S.Anand. I.F.S.,
Deputy Director,
Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve,
Theni. ...Member

3. Thiru. Vismiju Viswanathan. I.F.S.,
Deputy Conservator of Forests, (Project
Formulation),
Office of the Principal Chief Conservator
of Forests(HoD),
Chennai-15.

...Member

8. The Committee shall also consult and get inputs from experts in this area by outsourcing, co-opting them to prepare the Draft Policy. Funds required shall be met out from Tamil Nadu Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management Planning Authority (TN CAMPA).

9. The Committee shall include the following in the Draft Policy,

- i) Identify, demarcate & assess the extent of area infested with invasive alien species in forest areas of Tamil Nadu,
- ii) Formulate Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for removal, disposal and eco-restoration of infested area.
- iii) Suggest permanent measures to eliminate invasive alien species.

10. The Committee shall submit a detailed Draft Policy within three months from the date of issue of this order.

(BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR)

SUPRIYA SAHU
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Department),
Chennai-15.

The Members of the Committee

(Through the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
(Head of Department).

The Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Executive Officer, Tamil Nadu State Compensatory
Afforestation Fund Management Planning Authority,
Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
(Head of Department),

Chennai-15.

The Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Secretary,
Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board,
Medavakkam, Chennai - 100.

The Accountant General, Chennai-18.

The Pay and Accounts Officer, Chennai-9.

The Resident Audit Officer,
Secretariat, Chennai-9.

(P.T.O)

Copy to:

The Finance (AHD&F) Department, Chennai-9.

The Private Secretary to Principal Secretary to Government,
Environment, Climate Change & Forests Department,
Chennai-9.

The Private Secretary to Special Secretary
(Environment, Climate Change)

Environment, Climate Change & Forests Department,
Chennai-9.

The Private Secretary to Special Secretary (Forests),
Environment, Climate Change & Forests Department,
Chennai-9.

SF/SC.

//FORWARDED BY ORDER//

M. G. Senthil
SECTION OFFICER
01/11/2024