

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, CHENNAI.

Present: Thiru Vinod Kumar I.F.S.,
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (I/c.)

Proc.No.WR1/7028/2014

Dated 26 .3.2014

Sub: WP.(MD)No. 3633/2014 filed by M.Saravanan, in the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court - Constitution of Committee - Orders issued - Reg.

The W.P.(MD) No. 3633/2014 was filed by M.Saravanan as Public Interest Litigation in Hon'ble Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, Madurai with the following prayer:-

"directing the Respondents to take appropriate measures to remove the wattle, eucalyptus trees grown in the forests of the Respondent No.3 department in the western Ghats in the Tamil Nadu Region within the time period stipulated by this Hon'ble Court and pass any further or other orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper under the circumstances of the case and thus render justice."

2) The Hon'ble Madurai Bench of Madras High Court in the interim order dated 27.2.2014 was pleased to pass the following orders:-

4. In order to ensure that the valuable shola forests and grass lands are maintained, effective steps have to be taken by the Department of Forests and Environments and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai to ensure that Shola forests and tropical rain forests are restored to its original state. In this regard, the authority concerned has to be take steps to annihilate wattle and eucalyptus trees in the forests of Kodaikanal hills, Palani hills and in the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu region and save the forests.

5. Taking serious note of the matter, the respondent authorities are directed to formulate a comprehensive scheme, if not already framed, for restoration of Shola forests and tropical rain forests in the Kodaikanal hills, Nilgiris, Palani Hills and the Western Ghats. This should be done in a systematic and Phased Manner.

6. An action taken report in this regard should be filed before this court along with proper records on or before 7.4.2014.

7. Since the restoration of Shola forests as well as the tropical rain forests in the Kodaikanal Hills, Palani Hills, Nilgiris and the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu is a long drawn process, we are of the view that this petition will have to be listed periodically so as to issue directions from time to time, so that, the above stated object is achieved in public interest.

8. Admit. Notice to the respondents returnable by 7.4.2014.

9. This writ petition shall be listed on the first working day of every month before this court to ensure continuous monitoring and for passing appropriate orders as may be necessary.

10. List the matter on 7.4.2014 under the caption "Kodaikanal Shola Forest Restoration".

3) The Additional Chief Secretary was pleased to conduct a meeting on 18.3.2014 along with Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Principal Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, other Senior Officers and District Forest Officers of the Nilgiris and Kodaikanal Division on the removal of wattle park, Eucalyptus in the Kodaikanal and Nilgiris Hills, in pursuance to the orders of the Hon'ble Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, Madurai dated 27.02.2014 in W.P(MD).No.3633/2014.

4) In pursuance to the decision arrived out the meeting held at government level on 18.3.2014, it is decided to constitute an expert committee comprising with the following officers:-

Sl.No.	Name and Designation.	Position in Committee.
1.	Thiru. Basavaraju, I.F.S., Chief Conservator of Forests, (Research)	Chairman
2.	Conservator of Forests, Coimbatore.	Member and co-ordinator in respect of Nilgiris Hills.
3.	Conservator of Forests, Dindigul.	Member and Co-ordinator in respect of Kodaikanal Hills.
4.	District Forest Officer, Nilgiris North Division.	Member
5.	District Forest Officer, Nilgiris South Division.	Member
6.	District Forest Officer, Kodaikanal Division.	Member

5) The Expert Committee is assigned with the following terms of references:-

- (i) To study the wattle and Eucalyptus menace in the Shola and other forests of Tamil Nadu.
- (ii) Suggest possible methods to eliminate the wattle and eucalyptus trees from the forests of Tamil Nadu.
- (iii) Post for the conservation, protection and rejuvenation of the forests in Western Ghats Region within the State of Tamil Nadu.
- (iv) The Chairman of the Expert Committee may pursue necessary action and issue direction to the Committee members as deemed fit and proper from time to time and send action taken report to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests at least on bimonthly basis.
- (v) A separate comprehensive study report comprising all the above aspects for restoration Shola and rain forest separately in respect of Kodaikanal and Nilgiris District may be submitted in 10 copies.
- (vi) The study report shall consists the entire area of region shola area of the earlier period / shola area in the present / area planted invaded by wattle / eucalyptus and pine.
- (vii) Period of operation to replant the area to restore the shola forest and rain forest with indigenous species.
- (viii) The study report shall also contains the present methodology and project being implemented and its impact and results.
- (ix) The financial implication which includes revenue by the sale of wattle / eucalyptus / pines and also the expenditure for replanting / maintenance with replacement of causality conservation / protection for 2/3 plan period (Working Plan/Management Plan period)
- (x) The committee may co-opt any person based on the need for formulation of strategy for eradication of Wattle/removal of Eucalyptus.
- (xi) The Committee may also examine the various methodology (removing the seeds at present in the field, clear felling wattle plantations, felling the wattle and eucalyptus plantations and replanting with indigenous species, after removal exotic species, the area may be conserved by fencing to facilitate the natural generalists regrowth of indigenous species and other methods). The plan for removal of wattle/Eucalyptus may be worked out for 2/3 Working plan /Management Plan period. Committee may suggest strategy under (a) short strategy (b) Long strategy on scientific ecological principle.

(xii) Any other related issue for removing the exotic species and restoring shola and rain forests.

6) The Chairman of the Committee is requested to pursue necessary action in terms of the above reference and give his preliminary report on or before 31.5.2014 to enable Principal Chief Conservator of Forests to file counter in court and apprise the Hon'ble Court on the development made, when the case is taken up for hearing 7.4.2014.

7) All the Conservator of Forests and District Forest Officers mentioned below are requested to give effective and material in part and co-operation with top priority to this matter.

Sd/-G.Vinod Kumar,
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (I/c.)

To

- 1) Thiru. Basavaraju, I.F.S., Chief Conservator of Forests, Research - Chairman.
- 2) Conservator of Forests, Coimbatore Member and co-ordinator in respect of Nilgiris Hills.
- 3) Conservator of Forests, Dindigul - Member and Co-ordinator in respect of Kodaikanal Hills.
- 4) District Forest Officer, Nilgiris North. - Member
- 5) District Forest Officer, Nilgiris South. - Member
- 6) District Forest Officer, Kodaikanal. - Member.

Copy to the Learned Additional Advocate General, Madurai bench of Madras High Court (for kind information).

Copy to the Special Government Pleader (Forests), Chennai for kind information.

Copy to the Chief Conservator of Forests, (GIS) O/o the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Chennai.

The Chief Conservator of Forests, is requested to upload this order in the Tamil Nadu Forest Department official website.

/True Copy/By order/

for Principal Chief Conservator of Forests