



## **ABSTRACT**

Forests – Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board – The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 – Notification of Arittapatti Biodiversity Heritage Site in Madurai District – Notification under Section 37 (1) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 – Orders – Issued.

### **ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOREST (FR.5) DEPARTMENT**

**G.O.(Ms).No.201**

Dated: 21.11.2022

சுபகிருது, கார்த்திகை-5

திருவள்ளூர்ஆண்டு- 2053

Read:

1. Section 37(1)of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
2. G.O.(Ms.) No. 38, Environment and Forests (FR.5) Department dated 29.4.2008.
3. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden Proceedings No. 42542/2018, dated 4.6.2019.
4. Minutes of the meeting of Expert Committee on Biodiversity Heritage Site on 28.12.2020
5. From the Secretary, Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board, Chennai Ref No TNBB /63/2018, dated 03.11.2021.
6. From the Commissioner, Archeology Department, Chennai letter ந.க.எண். இ.4/1520/22, Dated.31.03.2022.
7. Resolution dated 15.07.2022 passed by Arittapatti & Meenakshipuram villages.
8. From the District Collector, Madurai letter C. No. 100109/2022/71, dated 23.8.2022.
9. From the District Forest Officer, Madurai Letter C. No.A4/388/2018, dated 24.8.2022.

### **ORDER:-**

The Tamil Nadu State Biodiversity Board was set up in the Government Order second read above. Identification and Notification of "Biodiversity Heritage Sites" (BHS) is an important role of State Biodiversity Boards under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

2. Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS) are well-defined areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems – terrestrial, coastal and inland waters and marine – with a high diversity of wild and domesticated species or intra-specific categories, high endemism, presence of rare and threatened species, keystone species, species of evolutionary significance, and wild ancestors of domestic and cultivated species.



3. The significance and aims of Biodiversity Heritage Sites are outlined in Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. In their guidelines, the National Biodiversity Authority has outlined the relevance and purposes of Biodiversity Heritage Sites, among which are the following:

- a) Biodiversity is closely linked to ecological security and therefore, human welfare. To strengthen the biodiversity conservation in traditionally managed areas and to stem the rapid loss of biodiversity in intensively managed areas, such areas need special attention.
- b) Such areas also often represent a positive interface between nature, culture, society and technologies, such that both conservation and livelihood security are or can be achieved, and positive links between wild and domesticated biodiversity are enhanced.
- c) To have a Biodiversity Heritage Sites in or around a community should be a matter of pride and honour to such community and this virtuous act of community may work as an example to the entire nation apart from ensuring availability of the resources to their own future generation. The areas like existing sacred groves in general and those existing in Western Ghats in particular can straight away be declared and notified as Biodiversity Heritage Sites.
- d) It is necessary to instill and nurture conservation ethics in all sections of society. The creation of Biodiversity Heritage Sites will ensure bringing home these values in the society and thereby put an end to over-exploitation of natural resources and avoid environmental degradation.
- e) The creation of Biodiversity Heritage Sites may not put any restriction on the prevailing practices and usages of the local communities, other than those voluntarily decided by them. The purpose is to enhance the quality of life of the local communities through this conservation measure.

4. In the proceedings third read above, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, had constituted an Expert Committee to identify and report on Biodiversity Heritage Sites in the State. In the minutes 4<sup>th</sup> read above, the Expert Committee presented its report on the identified Biodiversity Heritage Site. In response to the Report, the Secretary, Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board sent a proposal to declare Arittapatti village in Madurai District as a Biodiversity Heritage Site.

5. The village Arittapatti consists of a chain of seven barren granite hillocks. The distinctive landscape of rocky hills acts as a watershed and supports 72 lakes, 200 natural spring pools, and 3 check dams. One of the water bodies, the Anaikondan tank, was built under the reign of Pandiyas in the sixteenth century.

6. Hillocks in Arittapatti village have rich biological and historical significance with the presence of around 250 bird species, including 3 flagship Raptor species – laggar Falcon (*Falco jugger*), Shaheen Falcon (*Falco peregrines*), and Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*) and wildlife such as Indian Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*), Python (*Python molurus*), and Slender Loris (*Loris spp*). Arittapatti is also home to several other bird and animal species.



7. The site also features various megalithic structures, Tamil Brahmi inscriptions, Jain Beds, and 2200-year-old rock-cut temples, lending it historical value.

8. On recommendation of the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board, the Government have deemed it necessary to declare the area as the Bio Diversity Heritage Site in order to improve species conservation and protect the region from a rapid loss of biodiversity.

9. In the letter eighth read above, the District Collector, Madurai has recommended the proposal along with resolution passed by Village Panchayats of Arittapatti and Meenakshipuram Villages regarding their consent to declare the area in survey No.379/1 and 379/2 of Arittapatti village and survey No.137 of Meenakshipuram Village as a Biodiversity Heritage Site in the letter seventh read above.

10. The Commissioner, Department of Archaeology, has recommended that the site be declared as a Biodiversity Heritage Site, vide his letter sixth read above.

11. After careful examination of all the above, the Government of Tamil Nadu have decided to Notify the area in survey No.379/1 and 379/2 of Arittapatti village and survey No.137 of Meenakshipuram Village in Madurai District, as Biodiversity Heritage Site under Section 37(1) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 considering the rich biodiversity in the area. Accordingly, the Notification appended to this order will be published in English in the Tamil Nadu Government Gazette and in Tamil in the District Gazette of Madurai district.

12. The Works Manager, Government Central Press, Chennai is requested to send 25 copies of each of the Notification to Government, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden and to the District Collector, Madurai district as soon as the Notification is published.

13. The Tamil Development and Information Department is requested to send immediately a Tamil translation of the Notification to the Works Manager, Government Central Press, Chennai for publication in the Tamil Nadu Government Gazette and in the District Gazette of Madurai District.

(BY THE ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR)

**SUPRIYA SAHU**  
**ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT**

To

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

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden,  
Chennai-15.

The Secretary,

Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board, Chennai

The Secretary, National Biodiversity Authority,

5<sup>th</sup> Floor, TICEL Bio Park, CSIR Road, Taramani, Chennai - 600 113

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan Jorbagh Road, New Delhi – 110 003

**Copy to:-**

The Tamil Development and Information Department,  
Chennai – 9.

The Principal Secretary – IV to Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Chennai – 9.

The Special Personal Assistant to Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Chennai-9.

The Special Personal Assistant to Hon'ble Minister (Forests),  
Chennai-9.

The Private Secretary to Additional Chief Secretary to Government,  
Environment, Climate Change and Forest Department,  
Chennai-9.

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

The District Collector, Madurai

The District Forest Officer, Madurai

The Commissioner, Department of Archology,  
Egmore, Chennai – 8.

/FORWARDED BY ORDER/

*P. Selvi*  
*21.11.22*  
**SECTION OFFICER**