

Press Release

A Policy Review with regulatory impact and Panel discussion on implementation of the “**Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended in 1978 & 1988 (New)**” was held under the Chairmanship of **Thiru. C. Ponnaiyan, Hon’ble Vice Chairman, State Development Policy Council (SDPC), Chennai** with Thiru. Anil Meshram, I.A.S., Member Secretary, State Development Policy Council, Dr. B.C. Archana Kalyani, IFS., Head of Division (Land Use), Senior officials from Secretariat Department, Stakeholder Departments and domain experts on 09.10.2020 from the SDPC Video Conference Hall.

The topics discussed includes ‘Functions of TNPCB’, ‘Water pollution prevention and control area’, ‘Establishment of common effluent treatment plants’, ‘Ground water level, quality & pollution in Tamil Nadu’, ‘River Restoration’ and ends with the presentation on ‘Role of water users association in coverage of water policy target’.

The Hon’ble Vice Chairman in his opening remarks recalled Thirukural

“மணிநீரும் மண்ணும் மலையும் அணிநிழற்
காடும் உடைய தரண்.□

Tamil Nadu constitutes 4 percent of India’s land area and is inhabited by 6 percent of India’s population, but has only 2.5 percent of India’s water resources. The demand for water in Tamil Nadu is increasing at a fast rate both due to increasing population and also due to larger per capita needs

triggered by economic growth. The State is heavily dependent on monsoon rains. The annual average rainfall is around 930 mm (47 percent during the north east monsoon, 35 percent during the south west monsoon, 14 percent in the summer and 4 percent in the winter). Since the State is entirely dependent on rains for recharging its water resources, monsoon failures lead to acute water scarcity and severe droughts. It is estimated that the flood water in India which is not harvested properly can cater to the needs of raising paddy worth Rs.30 Lakh Crores, or otherwise it will suffice the daily requirements of the people of Tamil Nadu for the next 476 years.

The Hon'ble Vice Chairman, SDPC has highlighted the initiatives taken by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami in water harvesting, following the footsteps of Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma and realizing her dreams.

One such scheme is "Kudimaramathu" which is for the people and by the people to harness water in waterbodies. For the year 2020-2021, an amount of Rs.500 Crores has been allocated to take up 1387 works in 34 districts under "Kudimaramathu".

The following points were discussed.

To conserve the natural resources of water the Government of Tamil Nadu established Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) in pursuance to the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. One of its main duty is to intervene and stop activities such as Pollution of Water, Air and Land. The Government has taken many steps to protect water bodies, prevent

encroachments and resolve water sharing issues between States like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

Based on pollution index the industries are Categorized and Classified as Non-polluting industries under **White** Category (36 types); Less polluting industries under **Green** Category (70 types); Moderate polluting industries under **Orange** Category (99 types); Highly polluting industries under **Red** Category (87 types).

Highly polluting industries are in 17 Categories which includes 226 industries in Tamil Nadu viz. Power Plants and Power Generation Plants (72), Sugar (43), Cement (200 TPD and above), (25) Basic Drugs & Pharmaceuticals (23) and Distillery(17).

For establishing Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP), Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu have each sanctioned 25% of the project cost as subsidy in order to encourage the small scale industries to provide CETPs. Tamil Nadu has 46 CETPs which cater to the needs of many small industries effluent waste treatment.

Even after providing ETPs or CETPs, the standards prescribed by the Board could not be achieved by the highly polluting industries. Especially the standard for Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) could not be achieved, hence Zero Liquid Discharge System has been insisted to

the industries like Textile (19 unit), Tannery (11 unit) and Electro plating (2 unit).

Under Indian National Aquatic Resources (MINARS) programme, in Tamil Nadu 55 monitoring stations have been installed at Cauvery & its tributaries (33), Tamirabarani (12), Palar (1), Vaigai (1) and other Lakes (8).

In Tamil Nadu there are 28 Air Quality Survey stations established under National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP).

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board has planted about 333 lakhs seedlings during the years 2012-2019 at a cost of Rs.61.522 Crores. Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board has supported Forests Department to implement various environmental schemes to the tune of Rs.90.36 Crores.

Every year India receives 4200 Cubic Km of water through rain and from the melting snows; in which 1123 Cubic Km of surface water is being used and in addition 263 Cubic Km of ground water is being pumped out. Ground water level is declining at a rate of 1-2 m every year. For increasing the surface water there are constraints like availability of land and environmental issues.

It is no longer possible to construct lakes or dams for storing water. Declining ground water level has caused a large empty space underground. If that space can be used more quantity of surface

water can be stored and can be utilized when needed. Now the focus has to shift towards ground water recharge so that full potential of available water can be made use of. At every surface water streams like lakes, ponds etc., drilling of bore holes upto 1 or 2 fracture zones below Ground Level may be an option. During 1970's much emphasis was made on providing contour bunds across agriculture lands by agriculture engineering department for harvesting rain water. Now this can be further improved by digging trenches upstream of contour bunds and providing ground water recharge boreholes upto next fracture zones.

Section 3 of Tamil Nadu Farmers Management of Irrigation Systems Act 2000 mandates the formation of water users Association. But 755 Water User Associations were formed already by Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act 1975.

Integrated Cooum River Eco-restoration Projects and Adyar River Restoration Projects aims at River Restoration which is implemented through the following departments, Public Works Department, Greater Chennai Corporation, Commissionerate of Municipal Administration, Directorate of Rural Development, Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board and Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust.

In the concluding remarks the Hon'ble Vice Chairman appreciated the speakers Thiru. Venkatachalam, IFS, (Retd), Thiru. Raja, Thiru. Sajid Hussan, Thiru. Gopalakrishnan, Thiru. Viswanathan and Thiru. Sudharshan for presenting the need for Ground Water its protection water pollution and its treatment, importance of Pollution Control Board and its power to penalize the offenders who pollute Air, Water and Land.

Hon'ble Vice Chairman further requested the departments and institutions for coordination among the line departments to achieve Vision 2030 and SDG goal 6.

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