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New Delhi

Public Information on Letter petitions/e-mails

In a bid to improve access to justice for common citizens battling environmental issues the National Green Tribunal has **in exceptional cases admitted genuine complaints/grievances received through post/e-mail** as duly filed applications.

The initiative that began in July 2018 is an acknowledgement that ordinary citizens who cannot afford costs of litigation must be empowered to seek remedy for environmental harm. They cannot be hassled with the process and costs of engaging advocates, filing a case and following it up subsequently.

Grievances received through post/email is registered and subjected to preliminary scrutiny at the Registry level. The grievances then are examined in-house and are carefully studied and the substantive issue (if any) is identified.

After technical scrutiny, genuine grievances raising substantive issues are listed for hearing as Original Application (Letter/e-mail Petition) as per the **discretion of the Tribunal**.

Between July 2018 and January 2019, the Tribunal received 1691 Letters/E-mails from across the country.

The environmental issues identified in the letters/emails include:

- i. Encroachment in Parks, Lakes and the Water Bodies
- ii. Tree cutting and felling.
- iii. Sand Mining in Rivers.
- iv. Stone quarrying and stone crushers.
- v. Operation of service/tiny industries causing water and air pollution in residential areas (Jeans manufacturing, Dyeing units, Lock manufacturing, Steel polish, etc.)
- vi. Air pollution from industries including rubber/tyre burning (Rice mills, Bricks, Rubber burning, Fly ash, etc.)
- vii. Ground Water depletion, illegal use of ground water etc.
- viii. Illegal constructions.
- ix. Environmental impact due to Mobile towers.

Some of the key issues in particular are:

- i. Guidelines to be developed/review on Noise/Emissions by Motorcycles
- ii. Shoe industries in Agra
- iii. Oil drilling extraction industries
- iv. Pollution issues relating to Railway sidings
- v. Bringing issues relating to river pollution (Panchganga, Bold, Krishna, etc.)

Observations

The Tribunal's careful examination of issues in the letters/emails shows that the grievances in letters/emails are raised mostly because citizens did not approach concerned statutory authorities that are first-responders to day-to-day issues or because such authorities did not act in an effective manner.

For examples, such authorities include local municipal bodies, Fire Department, Police, Pollution Control Boards, Town & Country Planning, Flood and Irrigation departments, Sewerage and Drainage departments, Slum Development and Encroachment Removal bodies etc.

This clearly shows that enforcement and local level vigilance/monitoring in these statutory bodies are deficient. It would be appropriate that Local Agencies strengthen their Public Grievance Redressal Division (PGRD) to be equipped with required infrastructure to provide remedy expeditiously.

Statistics

- Between July 2018 and January 2019, the Tribunal received 1691 Letters/E-mails out of which 321 have been admitted as ‘Petitions’.
- Out of 321 petitions, 239 have been disposed of.
- The action taken on the 239 petitions are as follows:

S.No	Action Taken	Sum
1	Petitions disposed with ‘No Action’ ¹	68
2	Petitions disposed with ‘Action’ ²	70
3	Petitions ordered for receiving Action taken Report ³	139
4	Petitions linked with already pronounced orders ⁴	02

¹ Upon finding ‘no substantive cause’ in the grievance, these petitions were dismissed.

² These petitions were referred to the concerned Agencies with the direction to take required action within one month. The authorities may have not been moved previously or no effective action was taken.

³ These are petitions requiring monitoring of execution. Orders were passed on petitions under this category with directions to concerned statutory bodies to take action and submit an Action Taken Report to the Tribunal. These petitions will be listed again for scrutiny of the reports and further action (if necessary).

⁴ These petitions have been linked with previous petitions where orders on similar issues have already been passed by the Tribunal.