

Item No. 03

Court No. 1

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No. 240/2024

Singrauli Pradooshan Mukti Vahini & Ors.

Applicant(s)

Versus

Union of India & Ors.

Respondent(s)

Date of hearing: 15.03.2024

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON
HON'BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER
HON'BLE DR. AFROZ AHMAD, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant: Ms. Srishti Agnihotri, Ms. Sanjana Srikumar & Ms. Tara Elizabeth
Kurien, Advs.

ORDER

1. In this original application, residents of Sonbhadra District of Singrauli had claimed the compensation on account of the health issues faced by them due to pollution caused by the industrial units in that area. The plea of the Applicant is that there are 359 industries including highly polluting industries such as thermal power plants, coal mines, etc. and the industries have been set up beyond the carrying capacity as a result of which the residents have faced serious health hazards. Applicant has summarized following five main issues:

- I. The main source of water, the Rihand reservoir is severely polluted with the discharge of fly ash and other effluents from the industries. The water is unfit for consumption.
- II. Detailed environmental studies have concluded that Singrauli was one of the Critically Polluted Areas identified by the Central Pollution Control Board.

- III. There is a high prevalence of fluorosis in the region, in addition to indications of lead and mercury toxicity.
- IV. There is a need to assess the carrying capacity of the region and to halt further industrialization/expansion of existing industries.
- V. There is a need for industries to contribute towards compensation for damage to victims of the pollution in the region as well as restoration of the environment.

2. Further issues which are required to be remediated are stated by the applicant as under:

- I. There is heavy metal pollution in the region including toxic heavy metals such as mercury, chromium, lead and arsenic, which are attributable to the thermal power plants and coal mining in the region.
- II. Singrauli experiences at least 95 days of very poor or critical air quality throughout the year.
- III. The lung function of the residents is severely affected, being on average 42.7% less than the average Indian.
- IV. There is a high prevalence of fluorosis, yellowing of teeth, blue line on gums (indicating exposure of heavy metals) and a higher rate of miscarriages in the region.

3. Learned Counsel for the Applicant has submitted that the Core Committee constituted by the Tribunal had submitted the report in the year 2015, wherein the gravity of the situation and extent of pollution

from various sources and various elements was reflected and that even the basic healthcare facilities are not available in the area concerned to take care of the various health problems faced by the residents due to the industrial pollution.

4. The OA raises substantial issue relating to compliance of the environmental norms.

5. Issue notice to the respondents. Applicant is directed to serve the respondents and file affidavit of service at least one week before the next date of hearing.

6. Respondent No. 2 will file a comprehensive report disclosing the extent of pollution in the area concerned and its effect on the health of the local residents and also the truthfulness of the allegations made in the present OA. Let the reply/report be filed by the respondents at least one week before the next date of hearing by e-mail at judicial-ngt@gov.in preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.

7. List on 22.05.2024.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

Dr. Afroz Ahmad, EM

March 15, 2024
Original Application No. 240/2024
DV