

Industrial Pollution in Noyyal River and Interventions that Worked

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ABSTRACT

The Noyyal river is a tributary of the Cauvery river which originates in the Vellaian Giri hills of Western ghats. A dam called Orathupalayam dam was completed in the year 1992 with a capacity of 17.44 Mm³ (616 Mcft). There are around 727 dyeing and bleaching units abutting the Noyyal river and a majority of them are located in and around Tirupur town, which is famous for knitwear industry. Majority of these industries were discharging their effluents without any treatment into the Noyyal River. The effluents that got into the river were getting stored in the Orathupalayam reservoir. The quality of water discharged from the dam was so bad that the crops were not giving desired levels of production. The groundwater downstream of the dam also got polluted and the farmers downstream of the dam could not use the groundwater wells for Irrigation.

When the farmers of the Noyyal River moved the High Court of Madras praying for relief. The High Court of Madras appointed an Expert Committee to study the pollution problem and come out with the suggestions. Based on the recommendations of the Expert Committee, the High Court of Madras passed certain orders. The line departments took a number of measures to clean the Noyyal River and also prevent polluted effluents entering into the river as directed by the Court. The Farmers Associations were involved in the cleaning work. The Expert Committee interacted with the affected farmers, public representatives, representatives of the dyeing industries and officers concerned. The paper explains the various interventions and the results of such interventions.