

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE**

[THROUGH PHYSICAL HEARING (WITH HYBRID OPTION)]

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.222 OF 2023 (WZ)

Mrs. Mangal w/o Vishnu Bodkhe & 4 Ors.

.....Applicants

Versus

M/s Matrix Life Science Pvt. Ltd. & 3 Ors.

....Respondents

Date of hearing: 18.06.2025

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DINESH KUMAR SINGH, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON'BLE DR. VIJAY KULKARNI, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant	:	Ms. Shriya Awale, Advocate h/f Mr. Asim Sarode, Advocate
Respondents	:	Mr. Sachin Gore, Advocate along-with Mr. R. B. Mahabal, Advocate for R-1/PP Ms. Manasi Joshi, Advocate along-with Ms. Pooja Natu, Advocate for R-2/MPCB Mr. Aniruddha Kulkarni, Advocate for R-3/CPCB Mr. Pushkal Mishra, Advocate for R-4/MoEF&CC Mr. V.V. Gujar, Advocate for R-5/Agri. Deptt.

ORDER

1. In compliance with our previous order dated 03.04.2025, the Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur's report could not be filed through the MPCB by 11.04.2025 and that the same could be filed by Respondent No.2- MPCB through their affidavit dated 16.06.2025, relevant part of which is quoted herein below:-

"4.3 Observations:

Based on the results, the following observations can be made:

- 1. The baseline concentrations of the metals Arsenic. Cadmium, Manganese. Mercury and Nickel are higher than the permissible limit. The presence of these metals may be due to natural geogenic sources. The application of metal rich pesticide. herbicides and fungicides in the agricultural*

fields also serves as a potential metal source in the groundwater. Since the study area lies in an agricultural belt, the large-scale use of fertilizers and fungicides in the cultivated fields is common. As can be seen from the photographs, all the wells are open dug wells without any protection. Therefore, the possibility of these metals entering into dug wells through surface run-off cannot be ruled out.

- 2. Most of the groundwater samples show high level of faecal coliform concentration. This indicates that the well water has been contaminated by animal and human waste.*
- 3. Most of the well water has high concentration of chlorides and TDS. Discharge from septic systems may contribute to elevated chloride levels in the well water. Further, as seen from the map, the high levels of chloride are found in the vicinity of the MIDC boundary. Thus, there is a possibility that the elevated chloride levels may also be due to industrial activities, particularly those involving chemical processes can release chloride-containing wastewater.*

5. Conclusion

A team from VNIT Nagpur comprising Dr. Dilip H. Lataye, Professor, Dr. Ashwini B. Mirajkar, Associate Professor and Dr. Karthik Balasundaram. Assistant Professor, from Department of Civil Engineering visited the site MIDC Paithan along with MPCB officials on 24th August 2024 and 6th January 2025. Based on the observations the following conclusions can be made:

- 1. There have been significant changes in land cover over the past 27 years.*
- 2. The change in land use made linked to environmental policies, urban development, and climate change factors.*
- 3. Further in-depth study is recommended to assess the underlying causes and implications of these shifts, particularly the decline of bare land and urban settlement fluctuations.*
- 4. Most of the dug wells do not meet the required standards for the sanitation and protection. The wells do not have boundary walls to prevent surface run-off and other organic matter from mixing with the well water.*

5. *The groundwater in the vicinity of the site contains high concentrations of Arsenic. Cadmium, Manganese, Mercury and Nickel. The elevated concentrations could be due to natural geogenic origin or mixing of agricultural run-off and industrial wastewater well water.*
6. *The well waters contain significant concentration of faecal coli forms. This indicates that human and animal waste is getting mixed with well water. This also highlights the poor sanitation aspects of the wells.*
7. *Most of the well water has high concentration of chlorides and TDS. The high levels of chloride are found in the vicinity of the MIDC boundary. Thus, there is a possibility that the elevated chloride levels may be due to industrial activities, particularly those involving chemical processes, that can release chloride-containing wastewater.*
8. *Discharge from septic tank systems may contribute to elevated chloride levels in the well water.*
9. *Based on the current study, it is not possible to pin point the exact reason for the elevated concentrations of various contaminants. Both the insanitary conditions of the wells and industrial activities in the vicinity of the wells could be the reason for the elevated concentrations of various contaminants.*

6. Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. *It is highly recommended that all the wells be constructed as per the "OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE MANUAL FOR RURAL WATER SUPPLIES" published by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India. This is necessary to prevent the runoff and debris from entering into the well.*
2. *An in-depth audit be conducted on all the industries to assess the groundwater pollution causing potential of the industries. This is necessary to identify the source of pollution from industries and to suggest effective remediation efforts."*

2. In view of the above report, learned counsel for Respondent No.2 submits that the said Institute could not identify the source of pollution from the industries and in order to suggest effective measures, an order is required to be passed by this Tribunal for conducting inspection of all these industries to assess the ground water pollution. She further submits that the above cited report has already been forwarded to the Joint Committee, which was constituted by this Tribunal vide order dated 22.04.2024 comprising the District Collector, Aurangabad; the District Agricultural Officer, Aurangabad; and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and that the said Committee has to make an in-depth appraisal of this report and thereafter, they shall file final report regarding the crop damage. For the said work to be completed, one month's time has been prayed to be allowed by learned counsel for Respondent No.2, which is being vehemently opposed by learned counsel for the applicant saying that already lot of time has been granted to the MPCB earlier, but they are not taking appropriate steps in this regard. We are inclined to grant one month's time to Respondent No.2 by way of last opportunity and by then, it will be ensured by learned counsel for Respondent No.2 that the said report comes on record.

3. Put up this matter for further consideration on 05.08.2025.

Dinesh Kumar Singh, JM

Dr. Vijay Kulkarni, EM

June 18, 2025

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.222 OF 2023 (WZ)

P.Kr