



# Policy Brief 1.1

Water Series

Translating Practices into Policy and Practice Changes

## Encroachment of small scale water bodies: Emerging solutions for eviction

### Encroachment is a Sin

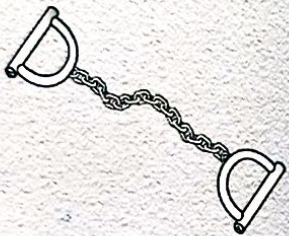
Athikarikulam tank is located in Kothaluthur village in Theni district. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the people here. The tank receives water from a rivulet across which an anicut was constructed. A 6 km-long feeder channel from the anicut brings water to the tank. Fifty years ago, the tank received sufficient water. In addition, the farmers had constructed open wells for supplementary irrigation. The farmers did not pay attention to the upkeep of the supply channel. About eight upper caste farmers, who owned land adjoining the supply channel gradually encroached it for cultivation.

The farmers made efforts in 1972 to desilt the supply channel. But the encroachers prevented them. Despite several attempts by the villagers, the encroachers could not be evicted. Since agriculture became uncertain, many families migrated to other areas in search of employment.

The sycoutdars did not give up their efforts. They sent hundreds of petitions to various government officials and personally approached them. The sycoutdars organized a road blockade in 1980. The Tahsilidar ordered the surveyors with knives. In 1985, people conducted a 'protest march'. In 1994, they filed a case at the Petyakulam court. In 1995, they organised another road blockade. But it was in vain. The people had spent more than Rs.2 lakhs during the past years for this purpose.

The Collector's intervention resulted in the eviction of the encroachment. After that, the supply channel rehabilitation work was carried out. Now the farmers are able to cultivate three crops every year.

**Encroachment is a sin, fight against it.**



### Rules for protection of tank lands notified

Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI:** The State Government has notified the rules for the protection of tanks from encroachers.

It has also outlined the procedure for evicting encroachers from tank lands. The 'Protection of Tanks and Eviction of Encroachment Act', which came into effect on October 1, states that people encroaching on poromboke tank lands are liable to serve up to three months in prison or face a fine of Rs. 5,000.

Minister for Public Works Durai Murugan had stated during the budget session of

**People encroaching on poromboke tank lands liable to serve up to three months in prison**

the Assembly that encroachment of tank lands and pollution arising from encroachments could not be tackled in the absence of a specific law.

The act stipulates that the Public Works Department will appoint a survey officer to map the boundaries of poromboke tank lands - defined as the land area liable to submergence when a tank is

full as well as any land components connected to the tank. The boundaries will be marked on the basis of original records available with the Revenue department in taluks and districts.

Encroachments of not only water spread areas of tanks, but also of foreshore areas - usually sites of most encroachments - and any supply channel connected to the tank will be considered. People encroaching on these areas will be served notices and the encroachments will have to be removed within a period of 21 days.

Failure to do so will subject them to the above penalties.

### Encroachments on waterbodies: law soon

Proposal to be presented in Assembly



'SAVE WATER' CAMPAIGN: Schoolchildren taking out a rally to drive home the message of water conservation, near Rajaji Hall. - PHOTO: R. RAGU.

Staff Reporter

**CHENNAI:** A law to prevent encroachments on waterbodies and protect the available resources in the State will be enacted soon, Public Works Department and Law Minister Durai Murugan said here on Thursday.

Participating in a meeting organised by the PWD to commemorate World Water Day, he said the issues relating to enactment of the law would be deliberated upon and proposed in the current Assembly session.

He said the Rs.2,547-crore World Bank-aided Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water Bodies Restoration and Management project would be launched in April. It aimed to enhance the irrigation system and increase the crop yield in

about six years. About Rs.1,240 crore has been allotted to the PWD for improving water bodies, repairing canals and building infrastructure.

Minister for Agriculture Veerapandi S. Arumugam stressed the need to include waterbodies in Cauvery delta districts under the World Bank-aided project. He also highlighted the significance of drip irrigation system.

PWD secretary S. Rajarethinam said better water management was imperative as the State did not have a perennial water resource. PWD Advisor (schemes) M. Deenadayalan spoke about the PWD officials' recent visit to Australia to inspect the irrigation system. Despite less rainfall, there was more crop yield in Australia because of water management practices.

சென்னை 3.2007

### சரி, குளங்களை ஆக்கிரமிப்போர் மீது கடும நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க முயல் சட்டம்

சென்னை: குளங்களில் ஆக்கிரமிப்பை தடுக்கவும், குளங்களின் சுற்றுச்சூழலை பாதுகாப்பதற்கும் சட்டம் தயார் செய்து அதை நடைமுறைப்படுத்தும் நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க அரசு முன்வருமா? என்று கேள்வி எழுப்பிய சட்டமன்ற உறுப்பினர், அதற்கான விடையை கேட்டார்.

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## 1. Encroachment Eviction Process continues.....experiences from field action

The encroachment eviction is an ongoing programme of DHAN Foundation under its flagship programme of Tank Rehabilitation work. During the year 2007, DHAN Foundation had approached the District Administration for Encroachment Eviction in seven tanks in Madurai district. Out of these seven, four tanks have been rehabilitated after evicting the encroachments from them. This resulted in the increase of the water holding capacity of the tanks and thereby increased agricultural production. The impact of the eviction is very much visible and it can be seen in some of the successful case studies which have been documented and summarised below: