

Ocean Outfall for Pondicherry Papers Ltd. - A case Study - U.T. of Pondicherry

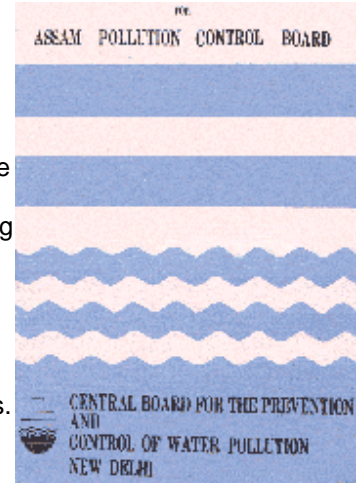
Foreword

A Paper-Mill with an installed capacity of 9000T/year of paper and with provision for a pulping unit to be added in the Phase II was commissioned in May, 1978 in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. In the early stages, untreated highly coloured trade effluents from the paper making sections which had been commissioned were allowed to flow in near-by drain to cause severe problems of visible pollution of the tanks and wells in the vicinity and of degradation of agricultural land through overflow. There was a furore among the near-by villages forcing the factory to close down and with the intervention of the Pondicherry Administration, the Mill hurriedly laid a 1.5 km High Density Poly-Ethylene (HDPE) pipe line to pump the untreated effluents to the edge of the sea. This only shifted the pollution from inland waters to the coast, which in the absence of adequate treatment and a proper diffuser ocean outfall, severely fouled the beach and the coastal waters. The Central Board for the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution, which is the statutory authority for the control of water pollution in the Union Territories sought and obtained an injunction

under Section 33 of the Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act 1974, restraining the Mill from causing the pollution. The Mill went in appeal to the Madras High Court against the ex-parte injunction restraining the pollution which was dismissed by the High-Court in a judgement that could become a trend-setter and asked the Mill to fully comply with the requirements laid down by the Central Board for installing an adequate effluent treatment plant and a proper ocean-outfall.

Onwards from the High Court judgement in 1980 started a period when the Mill management had to take active measures and the Central Board provided guidance and helped as and when necessary. A properly designed clariflocculation unit with necessary ancillaries was completed by April, 1981 and a diffuser outfall launched in February, 1982. The Central Board, in its efforts to ensure that the effluent treatment and disposal systems are designed and built expeditiously and properly maintained an involvement in all phases of the work, through its team headed by Shri T. Venugopal, Environmental Engineer.

This report gives some associated and relevant facts and details of the case including the surveys and design for the marine outfall. It is anticipated that the country would be requiring more such properly designed marine outfalls in the near future.



Nilay Chaudhur
Chairman, CPCB