



Environmental Social
Justice
&
Governance Initiatives
*Organization in Special Consultative Status with the
Economic and Social Council since 2011*

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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5 reasons why your money is better invested supporting ESG



Protecting 38,000 lakes of Karnataka: Lakes and their canals have always been protected as commons and maintained by local communities. In recent decades though they have been neglected, and hundreds of lakes have been encroached and polluted, especially in cities like Bangalore. The Government in a misdirected move began to privatise these lakes by farming them out to private corporations on long term leases, claiming this will stop the destruction. The private companies, instead, decided to put hotels inside the lakes. ESG mobilised public opinion against privatisation of lakes. A public interest litigation was also initiated against the destruction of lakes and the

Karnataka High Court in an unprecedented decision directed the government to set up District Lake Protection Committees to stop ongoing mayhem of lakes. There is plenty to do now in making these committees work to protect the remaining 38000 lakes in Karnataka (10,000 lakes disappeared in the past three decades). Saving these lakes and their canals will help build water and ecological security for millions and shelter us from the worst excesses of climate change. More details [here](#).



Tackling Biopiracy and protecting India's Biodiversity: When we raised concerns that India's first genetically modified food, B.t. Brinjal, advanced by Mahyco/Monsanto in collaboration with various public universities, is a product of biopiracy, few took us seriously. We persisted in our efforts though and secured the support of Parliament and Ministry of Environment and Forests, and also ensured that the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and Karnataka Biodiversity Board (KBB) initiated criminal proceedings against those guilty for this egregious crime. Efforts to stop this first ever case against



biopiracy, have recently been dismissed by Karnataka High Court. Our efforts are also focussed on certain weaknesses in the Biodiversity Act which allow backdoor entry for corporate plunder of our bioresources resulting in loss of highly valuable plant species and loss of thousands of crores in revenue. We have brought this to the attention of the Karnataka High Court in a public interest litigation and outcome of this case will determine security of India's biodiversity. More details [here](#).



Saving Homes, Businesses, Trees and Livelihoods in Bangalore from needless destruction: Traffic congestion can only be tackled by advancing the right type of public transport, and forcing people to walk, cycle and take a bus. Yes buses are plenty now, but they can't move because policies incentivise purchase of cars. The ill-designed and super-expensive Metro, being pushed through without public consultations, is unlikely to resolve this mess. Meanwhile, thousands of trees have been felled, resulting in massive loss of urban greenery, biodiversity and the sylvan spaces that made walking and cycling a pleasure in Bangalore. And now the

Government intends to expand 600 roads of Bangalore that would destroy thousands of homes and businesses, dislocation hundreds of street vendors and cause massive job losses. For years now we have mobilised public opinion to stop this madness and help promote wise choices in urban mobility, and found support to our public interest litigations in the Karnataka High Court. More details [here](#) and [here](#).



Making Bangalore a "waste" less city: For ten years we worked with communities impacted by dumping of Bangalore's waste in Mavallipura village, and succeeded in stopping two landfills there. Even as we advanced the idea that it is possible by segregating waste at source to resolve this massive burden of waste and developed a variety of community educational books and films. Last year we joined several others in a public interest litigation on this issue in the Karnataka High Court. Based on several unprecedented directions of the Court, ward committees have been established finally to

allow citizen oversight over municipal functioning, segregation of waste at source and composting locally is official policy, and efforts are on to ensure recycling efficiencies increase and there is no need to transport "waste" out to landfills. The Court also accepted our contention that the Indian Environment Ministry's recent proposals to replace existing municipal solid waste management laws are regressive, and has directed the Ministry to fall in line with progressive efforts developing in Karnataka. This might well result in a nation-wide change in how we handle "waste". More details [here](#) and [here](#).



Saving habitat of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard: 10,000 acres of Amrit Mahal Kaval grasslands in Challakere, Chitradurga was secretly diverted a few years ago to locate nuclear enrichment, weaponised drone building, space, science and tech and other facilities. The Government claimed it was degraded and useless land. The fact though is it is highly productive grazing pastures supporting thousands of livestock and associated livelihoods in over 70 villages. The grasslands also form critical habitat for the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard, with less than 250 individuals of this

species left in India and Pakistan combined. ESG supported efforts to question this diversion including in the National Green Tribunal which has stayed ongoing project activities. Recently, the Indian Environment and Forests Ministry has supported ESG's stand in court and in an unprecedented step has termed conservation of these grasslands as "forests" and their protection critical to the survival of the Bustard and other endangered species. More details [here](#) and [here](#).

And there are many more reasons why you would want to contribute on [ESG's website](#).

Our best wishes to you, your family and friends on this festive occasion.