



Environmental Social
Justice
&
Governance Initiatives

Organization in Special Consultative Status with the
Economic and Social Council since 2011

1572, 36th Cross, 100 Feet Ring Road,
Banashankari II Stage,
Bangalore 560070. INDIA
Tel: 91-80-26713559-3561
Voice / Fax: 91-80-26713316
Email: esg@esgindia.org
Web: www.esgindia.org

22nd April 2014

An Urgent Appeal to Help Verify Claims of BBMP about Tree Planting in Bangalore City

Yesterday, the Counsels of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP: Greater Bangalore City Corporation) placed before the Hon'ble Chief Justice Mr. D. H. Waghela and Justice Mrs. B. V. Nagarathna a compilation of tree planting activities in Bangalore. The document claims that during the years 2007-2013, the forest wing of the BBMP has planted 10,75,388 trees in the city and that on an average (across 6 years) 63.5% of the saplings have survived.

The document was supplied as part of the *suo moto* proceedings initiated by the Hon'ble High Court in Writ Petition 7288/2011, responding to concerns over mass tree felling in Bangalore raised by Justice D. V. Shylendra Kumar who was Judge of the Karnataka High Court (now retired). This petition is being heard in connection with Environment Support Group's PIL (W.P. No. 7107/2008) that challenges road widening as being illegal, causing mass felling of trees (the living heritage of Bangalore), resulting in massive displacement of residential and commercial communities and jeopardising the rights of pedestrians, cyclists, differently abled, street vendors, etc.

The document on tree planting by BBMP provides various details of the number of saplings planted in almost every neighborhood across the city. Details of the streets, neighborhoods and localities where planting has taken place has been provided.

The Hon'ble High Court will continue hearing these matters on Friday, 25th April 2014. Prior to this we would need to verify the claims of tree planting made by BBMP. Considering the scale and spread of the exercise, it would be impossible for a small group that we are to undertake this exercise in a couple of days. However, we are confident that with the enthusiastic response of the residents of Bangalore, it is certainly possible to verify the claims of BBMP.

What we need Bangaloreans to do:

Please download the document accessible at ESG's website (www.esgindia.org). It has many sheets providing details of trees planted in different divisions. Pick one or more rows from any of these sheets that provides details of the number of trees planted and that have survived: in a neighborhood or locality or street. Count all trees that appear to be 6 years or younger. A thumb rule is to measure at chest height – 4.5 feet from ground – the circumference of the tree and it would be approximately 12 inches or less. Once you complete your count, please email your report to shashi@esgindia.org with the subject: *Bangalore Tree Count* (Its important you retain this subject). Your report should provide accurate details of the particular rows from the document you verified and how many young trees you found in that particular street, neighborhood, etc. Please also provide your full name, address and contact details.

We need this information latest by noon of Thursday, 24th April, giving us sufficient time to compile and present the findings to the Court. This could be a fun and healthy exercise for all. Please note that your assistance could go a long way in making Bangalore the greenest city in India, once more.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Leo F. Saldanha, Bhargavi S. Rao, Shashikala Iyer, Mallesh K. R., Davis Thomas, Pushpalatha and Prashanth
Environment Support Group