Webinar Series

Bengaluru's Climate Action Plan- *Making it Participatory and Inclusive*

ESG is initiating a webinar series "Bengaluru's Climate Action Plan- Making it Participatory and Inclusive" to discuss and debate what it takes for Bangalore to become a climate friendly metropolis, particularly in terms of BBMP's recent commitment to meet the targets of Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In this webinar series, we will engage with multiple thematic issues, concerns and imaginaries involving leading officials of various agencies whose functioning impacts the city, with subject matter experts, youth, representatives of various sectors and residents from diverse sections of the city. The inaugural session will be on 22nd March 2021 on the theme: Developing a Participatory and Inclusive Climate Action Plan for Bengaluru. Thereafter, the webinar series will continue every Monday 6 pm to 7.30 pm. Register to Participate. More details here.

WEEK 1

Mr. Gaurav Gupta, IAS
Administrator, BBMP

Ms. Sowmya Reddy, MLA
Jayanagar

Dr. B.R. Ravikanthe Gowda, IPS
Joint Commissioner, BCP Traffic

Mr. Srinivasalu, IFS
Member Secy., KSPCB

Ms. Kavitha Lankesh
Filmmaker & Director

Ms. Anjali Dalmia
YUGMA Network

ESG Features

Making Turahalli a model for urban forests

Bhargavi S Rao, Citizen Matters, 10 March 2021

ESG has been highlighting the crucial need for imagining ways to protect forests in the age of urbanisation. Towards this end, the organisation has engaged with tens of communities and groups, and also the forest department, in imagining Turahalli Minor forest in South Bangalore as a community conserved forest. In this opinion piece in the Citizen Matters, Bhargavi Rao of ESG deliberates on the meaningfulness of such spaces in highly concretised urban landscapes like Bangalore, and calls for appreciating natural forests and saving them for posterity.

Decentralise for Net Zero Bengaluru

By Malvika Kaushik, Deccan Herald, 4 March 2021

Bangalore has become the first city in India to explicitly commit to meet the target of the Paris Agreement. In this opinion piece, Malvika Kaushik from ESG discusses the need to adopt a decentralised approach in developing this Climate Action Plan; for the "rejuvenation of local governance, based on decentralised democracy as envisaged in the Constitution" to make 'Namma Bengaluru' carbon neutral by 2050.

Climate

Almost [two-thirds of tropical rainforest](#), which are natural buffers against climate change, have been lost in recent decades. There are rare exceptions, however, such as in Nepal where the forest cover has expanded. This has drawn attention to research on methods of [forest management](#), so the collective effort to mitigate climate crisis globally can succeed.

Meanwhile, a recent [report by the United Nations](#) reveals wasting food contributes 10% of global emissions. The urgency to act also has drawn arguments to [increase steeply](#) carbon pricing, if the climate mechanism has to succeed. There are also growing calls to support [youth-led climate activism](#) and [climate movements](#), not crush them, especially given [countries are already falling short](#) of meeting their Paris Agreement targets. Yet, governments across the world are resorting to [finger pointing](#) rather than take clear steps to tackle climate change.

Energy and Agriculture

The increasing environmental impact of growing and supplying food is leading to a global awareness of the needs to shift to a [plant-based diet](#). Interestingly, a new concept evolving is [agro-voltaics](#) which is leading to imaginative ways of growing food and also harvesting the sun.

Environmental Governance

Over 650 million people around the world live within 100 kms of the coast, and this includes about 10% of India's population. As sea level rise swallows massive swathes of coastal areas and Indian cities continue to be amongst the most polluted, one expects the Indian Environment Ministry to get serious about acting on climate change. Instead, the Ministry failed to note that the ordinance to tackle air pollution in Delhi lapsed, and the Government continues to relax coastal rules or even replace them with weaker norms. Such dilutions are making it easier for industrial and infrastructure development to come all over India's coastline, which is directly threatening coastal communities and their livelihoods.

Recent orders from Telangana High Court and National Green Tribunal also highlight deep-rooted systemic failures and the utter lack of administrative will power in tackling the environmental crisis. The International Institute for Sustainable Development in its recent State of Global Environmental Governance 2020 highlights how the pandemic has resulted in regression in progressive environmental governance.

Law and Society

Farmers protesting at the gates of Delhi are refusing to engage with various electronic and print media outlets, as they are well aware of their biased and manipulative reporting. They are instead opting to [engage with social and independent media](). Troubled by this, the Indian Government is coming out with new rules to restrict social and independent media from covering the protests freely, by attempting to regulate down freedoms of internet intermediaries (like OTT) and digital news media platforms. [The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021]() has already been [challenged]()in Delhi High Court. The recently released Freedom House's [Freedom in the World report]() exposes rising censorship in India, and has degraded India's position from 'Free' to 'Partly Free'. Sweden's [Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute]()'s has also termed [India an 'electoral autocracy']() highlighting the widespread abuse of sedition, defamation, and counterterrorism laws by the Indian government.

Public Health

The ongoing vaccination drive in India is reporting a slow increase in vaccination coverage. However, access to vaccination is heavily determined by [class](). The focus on COVID, meanwhile, has returned major setbacks in gains made in previous decades, such as tackling [polio](), and may even be accelerating resurgence of the disease. The entry of [new variants of SARS-COV-2]() is also raising concerns if the COVID vaccine could really protect against all variants.

Urban Issues

In an earlier newsletter, we discussed possibilities of the '15-minute' and '1-minute city'. Feargus O'Sullivan discusses the downsides of such an idea, while Pierre-Olivier Roy questions if the shift to electric vehicles without factoring how much one travels will help decarbonize an economy. These discussions assume importance in the backdrop of increased investments and interest in EVs.

Communities & Livelihoods

There is a growing awareness of the critical importance of ensuring indigenous and local populations' in environmental decision-making to protect traditional livelihoods and promote conservation. Lockdowns due to COVID and political factors have become an useful tool in Kashmir to force communities from repairing houseboats on Dal lake, claiming this will help protect the lake. Contrast this with the report from Salam Rajesh on how global accords India has signed require protecting indigenous communities, especially in conservation. Suraj Yengde reminds us that India must go beyond and recognise belief systems of indigenous communities, such as adivasis, as distinct from the majority Hindu community.
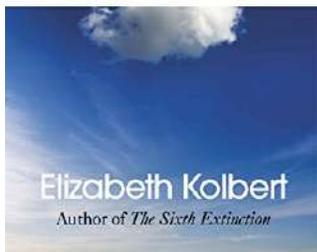
Women & Gender

Amongst the worst impacts of the pandemic is the reversal of several decades of gains in women's rights and their economic security. The lockdown and subsequent factors have reinforced conservatisms and forced women to bear even more the responsibility of extending child care. Celebrating women on a single day is but a ritual, therefore. Instead, the manner in which women have stepped out as part of the farmers' protest must be comprehended for their historic importance. The pandemic has also worsened the condition of women rendering sanitation services. All this is calling out for a deeper reflection on centering the role of women in human progress, particularly in responding to climate change.

Book Review

Under a White Sky by Elizabeth Kolbert: "The quest for technological solutions to problems created by people who were seeking technological solutions to earlier problems is the preoccupation of Elizabeth Kolbert's riveting and pessimistic new book, "Under a White Sky", according to a review in The Guardian. Kolbert reflects that it is "a habit that when humans are encountered with a problem they think of technological solutions which adds up to newer problems".

Images via [Unsplash](#)

Environment Support Group has proactively addressed environmental and social justice issues, collaborating across sectors and disciplines. ESG has worked relentlessly to keep the interests of project affected communities and voiceless ecosystems alive. Our spirit is to fight for solutions that are socially, environmentally and democratically just and inclusive. Your support helps us advance such just causes. Every contribution, big or small, matters and is invaluable for the sustenance of ESG.

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