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Workshop Invitation

Rejuvenating Lakes, Rivers and Wells to make Bangalore Water Secure

Venue: Ashirvaad, St. Mark's Road Cross, (Behind Kabab Corner), Bangalore 560001
Wednesday, 24th April 2013, 10 am to 4.30 pm

This year we are suffering the worst drought in decades. Most dams across the Cauvery are drying up. Will this mean half of Bangalore's population that gets piped water supply from the river will have to find alternate sources? And where exactly from? What will be the social and political consequences of this emerging crisis?

Meanwhile, those who have no choice but to depend on ground water are witnessing a sharp fall in ground water levels. There is a frenzy of sinking new bore-wells, but water is hard to find. Water merchants are exploiting this situation as the Government fails to step in and regulate: buying a tanker of water which was Rs. 250 a few months ago has now crossed Rs. 500 in most neighbourhoods.

As always, the poor are the worst sufferers. Opportunistically, political parties have cashed in on this crisis and are competing to supply water to the urban poor. But will this goodwill last beyond the elections?

With a population touching 1 crore and untrammelled mega extraction of water by high end residential and commercial complexes, Bangalore is a ticking water-time-bomb likely to explode soon.

This is an unfortunate fallout for a city that grew by leaps and bounds over the past five centuries entirely by harvesting rain water in tanks/lakes. These lake series have been systematically polluted, encroached and destroyed over the past three decades, resulting in the current crisis. Ground water levels are depleting, even as much of the water extracted is unpotable and requiring expensive treatment.

Exactly a year ago, the Karnataka High Court passed an unprecedented judgement in a PIL filed by ESG directing the State Government to constitute District Lake Protection Committees to oversee protection and rehabilitation of lakes and their *Raja Kaluves* (canals) on a war footing. A year later, the State is yet to constitute these regulatory committees, and pollution and encroachment of lakes continues unabated.

The fate of Arkavathy and Vrishabavathy is well known. Little attention has been paid to protecting their watersheds. The Vrishabhavathy, in particular, receives heavy discharge of industrial effluents and sewage. She contaminates everything in her path as she flows to eventually join the Cauvery, before the river crosses into Tamilnadu.

Where are we headed? And what can we do? This workshop is to focus on these very serious problems, so we can find real and long-lasting solutions.

To register email shashi@esgindia.org or call any of the numbers listed above.



Agenda

- 10 am Registration
- 10.30 am Welcome and Introductions – Shashikala Iyer, ESG
- 10.45 am Is Water an Environmental Limit to Bangalore's Growth and Prosperity – Bhargavi S. Rao, ESG
- 11.15 am Can Rainwater Harvesting Help Bridge the Water Demand-Supply Gap? – A. R. Shivakumar, Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology
- 11.45 pm How secure is our Right to Water? - Kshitij Urs, Action Aid
- 12.15 pm How much can we depend on Arkavathy for water? - Sharad Chandra Lele, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment
- 12.45 pm Discussions
- 1.15 pm Lunch
- 2.00 pm How can the Karnataka High Court Ruling in the ESG Lakes Case help build water security? - Leo Saldanha, ESG
- 2.30 pm Case study of protecting and rehabilitating Subramanyapura Kere
- 3.00 pm Can we foresee a future when we can swim in our streams and lakes – Discussions, Conversations and Strategising Action
- 4.15 pm Conclusion and Tea