

Namma Bengaluru Foundation's lake petition instrumental in lake rejuvenation

Bengaluru: Dec 10, 2019: To reclaim and protect Bengaluru's dying lakes Namma Bengaluru Foundation started 'United Bengaluru' campaign under the Aegis of Shri Doreswamy in 2017. The goal was to bring together the civic bodies and citizens (local community members, lake groups, experts,) to restore the water bodies of Bengaluru from the hazards of dumping garbage, effluents into the lake and removal of illegal encroachments by vested interests.

The United Bengaluru team submitted 23 lake petitions to Lokayukta on 03-08-2017 one of which is the Hulimavu Lake. Out of 145-acre of the Lake, 19 acres and 26 Guntas had been encroached upon. **The Revenue Department reports indicates that 'BDA' that was entrusted to develop the lake has been the biggest encroacher. It has reportedly encroached on 17.33 acres to form a layout and roads.**

The Lokayukta issued notices to the Tahsildar and the Joint Director of Land Records Department and directed them to carry out a survey and submit a status report by the next date of hearing. Despite order dated Sep 11, 2018 and subsequent orders, there has been very little or no progress in sight. With the recent lake breach on Nov 24, 2019, the Lokayukta visited the Lake & instruct Bangalore South Taluk Tahsildar, BBMP Commissioner, Chairman of BWSSB and officials of BBMP health department to submit an interim report in 2 weeks. This report was submitted in our petition hearing today.

The Officials submitted that damage grievances have been addressed as per the disaster management guidelines of India. Also, the survey of the lake is partially done and the complete survey on encroachment will be submitted by next hearing.

On behalf of Doreswamy Ji, NBF today in a letter has submitted few suggestions. Lokayukta has immediately directed the officials to comply with these requests (of immediately fencing the lakes and eviction of encroachments.

The Honourable Lokayukta ordered: the school books and uniforms to 30 children must be given by BBMP within 7 days and also to fulfil the damage Redressal for all the 374 houses (per the survey by BBMP) by Jan 10 2020. He further directed that a joint survey be taken up by the BBMP, BWSSB, The pollution control board etc. to assess the contamination of water etc. in two weeks and Tahsildar must evict the encroachment in eight weeks. Also, fence the lake immediately and submit the report on the same by next hearing.

Shri Doreswamy reacted that "It is very sad to note that despite two years of delay the officials are yet to take corrective measures to rejuvenate and restore the lakes. This is a public work and the onus must lie with them to be responsible towards their duty. BDA being the government body itself has encroached land and now it must be seen that the eviction must begin from here. I have the moral responsibility to save the public properties so the next generation will get the deserved environment to live in."

Mr. Harish Kumar. General Manager, Namma Bengaluru Foundation responded that, "NBF and United Bengaluru will evolve a joint action plan after meeting the Chief Engineer (BBMP) and discuss and issues and status on the development work of lakes. We will also be meeting the BBMP commissioner on the '**fencing for all lakes**' as a first and immediate action and removing the encroachment immediately thereafter. We will also be submitting a report on the inspection of new lakes to the Lokayukta and file rejoinders to the existing lake Petition.

About united Bengaluru Lake campaign:

United Bengaluru spread awareness on preservation of lakes and inspected about 23 lakes. The report was petitioned to the honourable Lokayukta. There are 23 cases with Lokayukta currently. So far 13 lakes have been surveyed based on Lokayukta order and we have represented in all these surveys.

Relentless follow up from awakened and informed citizenry for action from the Lokayukta against encroachers, recovering the land and protecting it with boundaries has helped in Civic bodies working on the development of these lakes.

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