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## A SHALLOW GRAVE

By Preethi Ravi, Bangalore Mirror Bureau | Apr 13, 2016, 02.00 AM IST



*Depth of Varthur lake has reduced to 1 metre from 10 metres, reveals survey conducted by IISc, MEG and the Indian Army; this is harming the flora and fauna, the study warns*

The depth of the Varthur Lake that used to be 10 metres only a few years ago, has reduced to an unbelievable one metre, a Bathymetric survey conducted by The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Madras Engineering Group

(MEG) and the Indian Army has revealed.

The result came up after a massive effort in which samples were taken at every 10 ft along the length and breadth of two lakes started on April 4 from the Varthur Lake, and will be completed after surveying the Bellandur Lake within two days.

Nearly 13 personnel from MEG, six IISc members, volunteers from Whitefield Rising, and students from KK School have taken up the survey hoping to provide a solution for the rejuvenation of Varthur and Bellandur lakes, which have recently been in the news for all the wrong reasons.

According to TV Ramachandra, who has been working for the development of the Bengaluru Lake, says, "Silt of 2-3 feet is present across the two lakes and the quantity of silt is in the region of 7.3 million cubic metres. The commercial value of the silt, which can be used as manure, sand for construction or to make bricks is to the tune of Rs 1,800-2,000 crore. By selling this slit, we could generate enough revenue to rejuvenate the lake."

As part of the rejuvenation efforts, scientists from IISc and other experts recommend wet dredging to remove silt and sludge from the lakes. "Previously, villagers around the lakes used to remove the silt once every two years and use it for manure and farming. However, due to rapid urbanisation, farmlands have given way to concrete buildings and thus the silt has continued to accumulate," the professor said.

### Tough task

Water hyacinth and weed cover of the lakes made the task tough as boats could not move far from the shores. The scorching sun only added to the difficulties. The team overcame all of this to complete its task at Varthur Lake on April 7 and moved on to Bellandur Lake the next day. The Bellandur Lake Group has been extending

hospitality to the MEG and IISc teams since then. The teams have been put up at the KK English School, Varthur.

### **Details of the desilting**

- \* *It will help recharge groundwater in the surroundings*
- \* *Borewells around the lakes will also get recharged as seen around the Jakkur Lake*
- \* *Money for rejuvenation of the lakes need not come from the government; it is sitting in the lakes*
- \* *MEG says it is equipped with the knowhow of de-silting lakes*
- \* *De-silting of one lake can be completed in 24 months.*

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