Jakkur model will work for Bellandur, Varthur lakes, says IISc scientist

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BENGALURU: The model used to treat sewage at Jakkur lake will also work for Bellandru and Varhur lakes, said Prof T V Ramachandra, lead scientist at IISc's Centre for Ecological Sciences' Energy and Wetlands Research Group.

He was speaking at a panel discussion organised on Saturday by Bengaluru Apartment Federation to discuss the BWSSB notification mandating retrospective sewage treatment plants and dual piping implementation for apartments. Prof Ramachandra said diverting sewage from one place to another, one lake to another, is not the solution. Treatment of sewage is the only solution.

Citing Jakkur lake as an instance, Ramachandra said in 2005, when they took up rejuvenation work of the lake, the water body had nitrates.

"After using a unique sewage treatment method, 90 per cent of nitrate came down. This has resulted in increase in groundwater levels in the surrounding areas. Around 300 borewellls in area get water without nitrate content. A similar method can be adopted to any other dying lake, including Bellandur and Varthur lakes.

Prof Ramachandra said primary and secondary treatment of sewage, followed by diversion of water to a constructed wetland that has grass and other plants and then fed to a pond or lake that contains algae will absorb nitrate contents.

Talkig about the sewage water flowing into Bellandur lake, Ramachandra said pipes with a radius of 12-14 inches are used to dump sewage into the lake. "One can imagine the state of the lake. Of 460 MLD sewage water in the lake, 20 to 30 MLD are from apartments, remaining is dumped by BWSSB. Authorities are just blaming apartments. What about the quantity that has to be treated by BWSSB? Sewage water is resource and we have to utilise it," he said.

City can store surplus water

At present, Bengaluru is facingwith a huge water crisis. But the city has potential to store surplus water. The city requires 18 to 20 tmcft water annually and gets around 750mm of water through rainwater harvesting.

At least 15 tmcft can be stored and another 15 tmcft can be saved through treatment of sewage water. There are 193 water bodies left as against 1,422 earlier. "What requires is a change in mindset. If not now, we will end up drinking water with heavy metal content," he said.