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Students show concern over death of lakes and loss of green cover in Karnataka

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Varthur Lake is highly polluted and the government should do something immediately to save it for the welfare of residents and the biodiversity of the region. These are not the words of an environmentalist, but of a student, Anusha, from KK High School.

Presenting the pathetic scenario of lakes, she said water bodies have been dried up over the years due to the rapid growth of the city. There is dearth of water. Encroachment and unplanned commercial development like mushrooming of apartments are among the main culprits, she said.

Apart from unbridled development, discharge of effluents like industrial and sewerage waste have further polluted the city's water bodies. This happens due to the negligence of government and governing bodies. The level of dissolved oxygen in water bodies is reducing rapidly due to the pollutants, which also affects the ground water table, she added.

Anusha was speaking on the last day of the three-day symposium 'Lake 2010: Wetlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change' at the Indian Institute of Science on Friday. Students from various city schools made presentations on various subjects including solid waste management, lake pollution, loss of green cover and biodiversity.

Students from Uttara Kannada also made presentations on 'My village biodiversity'. Manasa P Hegde (14) from Ave Maria High School in Sirsi spoke on the biodiversity of Sonde village.

Speaking on the sidelines of the presentation, Hegde said she had made a project on the same theme.

During her 14-point presentation, she said local support and knowledge are needed for conservation.

IISc's Centre for Ecological Sciences gave a 14-page recommendation to the government at the end of the symposium. Prof TV Ramachandra, from Energy and Wetlands Research Group, CES, IISc, said the recommendations included documentation of biodiversity which should form a part of school, college and people's biodiversity register to combat climate change.

Laws should be strengthened and strictly implemented. There is also need for a detailed study on carrying capacity of all macro cities as unplanned urbanisation has impacted local ecology and biodiversity which is evident from the declining water bodies and vegetation, he said.

There should be mapping and clear demarcation of water body boundaries and water levels to be maintained in the wake of encroachments and effluents discharged into lakes. A management plan should be formulated for individual water bodies and for strict implementation of sanitation facilities and scientific management of lakes.

Western Ghats task force chairman Ananth Hegde Ashisara said while it is important to protect the origin of rivers, maintenance of city lakes is equally essential.

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