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How green was my Bangalore city once

Chethan Kumar & Manu Aiyappa, TNN | May 12, 2014, 03.13AM IST

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BANGALORE: Last month, Pushparekha, a bioscience researcher settled in the US, travelled from Mekhri Circle to GKVK, on a visit. Prof T N Prakash Kammardi of University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) recalls that she greeted him teary-eyed. "It was a pleasure once to travel on this stretch, today there are only a handful of trees here," Prakash quoted his former student as saying.

Has the green paradise that Bangalore was been lost forever? The city has seen trees vanishing faster than it's assumed. In the last 4-5 years, official estimates show that over 50,000 trees have been axed for road widening alone. It has just one tree for seven of its citizens, with the ratio even lower in some areas.

"Bangalore's already facing the result of reckless tree felling as authorities take shortcuts to kill the city's flora. No one thinks of long-term side-effects," says Kapil Sharma, founder of Saytrees, a group of techies working for the cause of trees in Bangalore.

So, what is it that Bangalore needs to change? There are many voices and many answers. Some suggest afforestation in areas outside the core city to compensate for the depleting green cover within. But experts who have studied the issue for long say growth has to be inclusive, and citizens must help Bangalore protect its existing greenery and regain some of what's lost.

Prakash, who has just retired from UAS, offers three solutionsto reclaim Bangalore's green glory. One, private forestry, in homes large enough to house a tree, or two. "But a city can rarely accommodate that, so we should look at social forestry, in common avenues. This doesn't mean we only suggest gardens or parks. We'll have to look beyond them," he says.

For a city blessed with tanks and lakes, the third, he says, is to save our water bodies and use tank bunds to feed our trees. But citizen engagement, he says, is most necessary. "Wherever there is public land, the government should take initiative. In other places, citizens must get incentives to plant and take care of trees. There are a lot of groups doing it and the agencies must take it forward and make more citizens participate," he feels.

Dr S G Neginhal, retired chief conservator of forest, says: "One cannot chop a tree here and plant a sapling elsewhere to compensate. If Jayanagar loses a tree, what's the use of planting two in Byappanahalli? Planting saplings in Byappanahalli is good but it doesn't restore Jayanagar's lost greenery. The problem is not with the soil or the family of trees here, it is with the willingness." Bangalore, he says, is blessed with great soil that can bear almost any tree. "I'd say champak, neem and the Pride of India are good. In case of exotic trees, the gulmohar and the rain trees are great," he adds

QUOTES

Sensitize planners

Poor urban planning and proliferation of road networks have taken a heavy toll on the green cover. Projects like road construction should be well planned and designed to ensure minimum felling of trees. Alternative roads, advance or pre-planting of native trees prior to road construction and appropriate designing to save precious tree species are ways to minimize damage to the green cover and environment. More importantly, the planners and civil engineers need to be sensitized about issues concerning the environment

-- Suresh Heblikar, filmmaker and environmentalist

No one opposes

Bangalore is already facing the result of reckless tree felling. The highest temperature in Bangalore was 39 degrees Celsius this year. This is because authorities only like to take shortcuts and the simplest option is to kill a tree, as no one opposes. No one thinks of long-term side effects. In other countries, cutting tree is the last option, but here it's the first.

-- Kapil Sharma, founder, Saytrees

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Suresh Chandrashekaran (Bangalore, India)

Bronze: 187

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though felling of trees is in general a bad idea, but some trees need to be cut to make way for road widening to meet the growing traffic population,.. yes for every tree that s cut we need to plant 5 in the adjoining areas so that tree cover does not reduce, By easing the traffic..we can reduce the pollution caused by slow moving traffic. .. which would be at least 10 times more harmful suresh.c

Ravi Desmukh (Bangalore, India)
4 Followers

Silver: 1.7K

WORD SMITH 4   NEWS KING 3   FREQUENT FLYER 3

Sadly our rulers have no vision. Either we do not have good plans or the same are not properly implemented. Well considered plans(both short term and long terms) should be implemented in letter and spirit. Apathy of the people is another contributory factor. The powers that be are always bothered about making money on the sly or will be worried about the next election. How many are concerned reg. next generation ? Face book, twitter and the like are means to end and an not an end by itself. Blogging is of no use if same is not followed by useful action.

Veeresh G (bangalore)
1 Followers

Silver: 996

I too feel the same, when came first to Bangalore in 2006 March, felt very happy to see child weather in mid of summer, but slowly Bangalore is loosing the charm, we as the people are reason for that

k.gopalan (BENGALURU)
64 Followers

Gold: 17.4K

Road widening a necessity of growing metropolis.PLANT FAST GROWING TREES TO OFFSET.

Rajendra Babu (Bangalore)

Bronze: 125

The custodian who is supposed to protect the trees himself does the cutting then where is protection for the trees. The trees around Yelahanka Puttenahalli Lake is systematically cut by the Forest dept staff who are the custodian of the lake. This was reported to Upa Lokaykta during his last visit in Apr. The authorities have total disregard to the directive given by UPA and continue cutting the trees at random.

mithunhw ()
8 Followers

Silver: 1.3K

Total pollute area.. worst maintained …

sen (Chennai)

If you want more trees pleas move to banargata and sit there… Now It's silicon valley only because of industrialisation

Vikas ()
6 Followers

Silver: 1.9K

A wonderful transformation from Lake City to Concrete City by All of Us….. Congratulation to All Humans….. May God Help Bangalore City….

maapithas ()
14 Followers

Silver: 4.6K

IN THE LAST 50 YEARS BANGALORE-KNOWN AS PENSIONERS' PARADISE HAS LOST CONSIDERABLE GREENERY DUE TO INDUSTRIALIZATION,UN-PLANNED URBANIZATION RESULTING IN FELLING THE TREES.THE PRIDE POSSESSION OF FAUNA AND FLORA OF BANGALORE HAS SADLY BEEN FORGOTTEN BY THE SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS.THE CITIZENS OF YESTERYEARS TRULY MISS THE NATURES' GIFT TO TH CITY AND SUFFER IN SILENCE

RAVINDRA (Bangalore)

Green green had become concrete and roads, which is really vanishing our Bengaluru.The trees are felled to widen the road,fine why govt is not planning the space for planting the trees at the sides of the completed roads.the stretch between hebbal to airport you can't see a green besides the road. And people or agency who are working for greenery outside the city should start work for the inside city.

Dileep (Location) replies to **RAVINDRA**
75 Followers

Gold: 10.5K

Alone we can do so little, together we can do So Much.

Manish Singh (Bangalore)

Don't worry. The trees will come back when we are gone. And we will be gone

as soon as our jobs get taken away by another cheaper country. The time will
come soon. Till then, please adjust.

Siddarth Gowda (Unknown)
4 Followers
Silver: 994

Man it is really sad to see our Bangalore like this, in terms of population Oh
god! even culturally it is diminishing day by day with lots of people from
outside, I really feel some times whether this is Bengaluru or Delhi or what??!
lots of vehicles and lot of pollution has made Bangalore look like hell man, I
really cannot predict its future.

Dileep (Location) replies to **Siddarth Gowda**
75 Followers
Gold: 10.5K

Do not think took much but do think.

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puneet jain (hyderabad)

my mother is from bangalore she recalls days when in peak summers people
used to wear sweaters and shawls and there were no fans in the city leave
alone acs....

Dileep (Location) replies to **puneet jain**
75 Followers
Gold: 10.5K

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by converting negatives into positives.

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