

Dear members,

The Environment Support Group in collaboration with Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology invites you to a Workshop on Urban Lakes as Ecological, Cultural and Public Spaces – A Workshop for Decision Makers, Media, NGOs, Teachers, Students and the Public, Date: Saturday 26th September 2009, Time:10.00 am - 4.00 pm, Venue: Marigowda Hall, Lalbagh, Near Double Road Entrance, Bangalore

The urban built area of Bangalore once had over 300 tanks (now also called as lakes). These water harvesting systems were built over hundreds of years by various generations, and formed an intricate network of water use serving agriculture and drinking water needs. In addition these water bodies have become critical sites for a variety of flora and fauna, especially local and migratory waterfowl.

Over time, these tanks have disappeared due to poor urban planning, lack of concern and reliance on drawing water from faraway rivers. The cultural underpinnings of water conservation that was so innate to life and living in these regions, slowly eroded with the disappearance of these lakes. As the city grows denser in population and buildings, the critical importance of lakes as social, cultural and ecological spaces is being felt.

Presently less than 60 of these tanks exist in built Bangalore, and most are heavily polluted or drained. As a direct result of encroachment of lakes and its canal networks, Bangalore's neighbourhoods get easily flooded even in a short rain frequently resulting in loss of life and property.

In this workshop we will understand the traditional methods of use and management of tanks and community relationships that kept these practices alive. We will appreciate the dynamic ecology of lakes and their role in supporting livelihoods of communities dependent on fishing, horticulture and farming. We will focus our concerns on how lakes have transitioned into cesspools of urban waste, sewage and decay. We will examine how critical lakes are to building water security for ever growing Bangalore. We will examine the role of the Rule of Law and Community Action in reviving these critical water bodies. We will also examine current policies of protecting and conserving lakes and examine their efficiency, especially ongoing efforts at privatising lakes. As an overall process we will try and evolve a series of good practices to ensure our lakes are retained for our generation and generations to come.

This workshop is for decision makers from the government and corporate sectors, academicians, media persons, legal professionals, political leaders, etc. Needless to state, anyone is welcome with prior registration. Proceedings of this workshop will be widely circulated with the help of mass media and also electronically. Please read more at:

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/resource/res22090901.pdf>

For More Details and Registrations contact: Divya Ravindranath or Bhargavi S. Rao, Environment Support Group, 1572, 36th Cross, Ring Road, Banashankari 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage, Bangalore 560070 Tel: 91-80-26713559/60/61 Email: [bhargavi@esgindia.org](mailto:bhargavi@esgindia.org)/[divyarrs@esgindia.org](mailto:divyarrs@esgindia.org) Website: [www.esgindia.org](http://www.esgindia.org). Please note Lalbagh requires all participants to pay the entrance fee of Rs.10 at the gates.

Regards,

Bhargavi S. Rao,  
Environment Support Group,  
Bangalore