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Experts feel that making each department file its own affidavit makes them more accountable. It also helps NGT understand what each department is doing. DH file photo

Angered by the callousness of government agencies in implementing their suggestions on improving Bellandur lake, an 18-member expert committee has asked all civic and government stakeholders to file individual affidavits before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) court.

Earlier, Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) used to file a collective affidavit from seven stakeholders — BDA, Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), Karnataka State Lake Development Authority (KSLDA), Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Revenue and Urban Development Departments — before the NGT court in Delhi on the progress on improving the condition of the 900-acre waterbody.

Environmentalist A N Yellappa Reddy, one of the expert committee members, said none of the agencies was serious about implementing their suggestions. The decision to seek individual affidavits was taken during an expert committee meeting on August 26.

"The revenue department deputes a tashildar who has only one answer — notices will be served to encroachers — while BBMP deputes an engineer who has limited knowledge. Other departments are no different," he said.

Experts feel that making each department file its own affidavit makes them more accountable. It also helps NGT understand what each department is doing.

Citing the example of the solid waste management issue raised by the NGT court during the hearing on August 17, Prof T V Ramachandra from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc and committee member said: "It is better the committee is aware of what is happening on the ground and what is being presented in court. This is simply because the members are not informed on ground developments."

At the previous NGT hearing, KSLDA CEO Seema Garg refused to record her statement to confirm the claim made by BBMP officials that no solid waste was dumped in and around the lake.

"The government is hopeless, which is why the lake is in such a pathetic condition. Fragmented governance is the root cause of the problem. Integrating all departments is not difficult, but nobody wants to. Committee meetings are held either before or after the NGT hearing and nothing else happens," Ramachandra said.

This was the first meeting soon after the NGT hearing. The last meeting was held on July 31. A meeting on bio-remediation scheduled for Monday did not happen. The next meeting is scheduled for September 2 as the NGT hearing is slated for September 8.