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## BBMP begins lake revival work, lack of funds stall sewage treatment

BY AKSHATHA M, ET BUREAU | DEC 12, 2017, 11.15 AM IST

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The **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike** (BBMP), which is on a lake revival spree, has commenced the work of rejuvenating the Devarabeesanahalli lake. But oddly, the installation of a sewage treatment plant (STP) is not part of the BBMP's plan. Reason: lack of funds.

In March 2016, a team of researchers led by **Prof Ramachandra TV** from the Centre for Ecological Sciences at the **Indian Institute of Science** (IISc) released a report on the status of the lake located on the Outer Ring Road and surrounded by IT parks and residential layouts. The report narrated how the lake was on the verge of destruction.

A year and a half later, the BBMP took up the lake's rejuvenation but minus the most crucial component — a sewage treatment plant. According to IISc's estimation, around 2 mld (million litres per day) of sewage flows into the lake. An STP's construction is estimated to cost Rs 2 crore.

The BBMP has set aside Rs 29.50 lakh to construct a sewage diversion drain as part of its ₹3-crore worth lake development work.



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What this essentially means is that the diverted sewage will flow downstream to the Bellandur catchment area. Rubbishing the plan, Prof Ramachandra said: "The city authorities have no right to divert sewage and pollute downstream. After all the hue and cry over protecting the Bellandur lake, what is the point if they are diverting sewage from one lake to another?"

The BBMP, however, maintains that it has no funds for an STP. "But we will be more than happy if private firms come forward to fund the treatment plant," said Jagannath Rao, DCF of Lakes.



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Rao was referring to the many IT firms that share more than half of the lake's boundary. Despite requests, none of the firms have apparently committed any funds for the STP. "We have the example of Emphasis funding the STP at Mahadevapura lake, Qualcomm at Kundalahalli lake and Genpact helping Soul Kere. Something similar should happen here too," he said.

However, behind the scenes, the Rotary Club of **Bengaluru** is attempting to advocate and pool resources from IT firms and the RMZ Foundation. EGP Haran, a member who led three such meetings with lake groups, RMZ and residents of the area, said nothing is concrete yet.

"RMZ Foundation expressed interest to fund the project but now the interest has to be converted into commitment. Rotary as such is not envisaging to fund this project directly, for I believe, since the IT firms around the lake have invested money for lake view and are the actual beneficiaries, they are in a better position to fund the project," Haran said.

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