

Biocon Foundation adds one more feather to its cap

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Biocon Foundation, the CSR arm of Biocon Ltd. and Syngene International Ltd., has dedicated the newly revived Hebbagodi Lake in Anekal taluk to the community. Besides the bio-rejuvenated lake, a Children's Park and a safe drinking water facility using Reverse Osmosis (RO) technology were also opened for the public.

The above facilities were inaugurated by **B Shivanna, MLA, Anekal taluk; Lakshman, Chairman, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB); Wing Commander G.B. Athri (Retd) and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, recently.**

As a part of its efforts to ensure environmental sustainability, **Biocon Foundation**, with approvals from the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority (KLCDA) and other government authorities, has brought back to life the dying 35-acre Hebbagodi Lake, leading to a significant improvement in the water quality and the return of flora and fauna. A public space has been created around the lake in the form of a children's park and walkways for recreational activities. The safe drinking water RO facility will cater to the needs of the neighbouring community.

Biocon Foundation initiated the project under the inspirational leadership and guidance of Wg Cdr G.B. Athri (Retd) in mid-2016, and has successfully completed the project. Wg Cdr G.B. Athri (Retd) played a significant role in the lake revival project by helping Biocon Foundation synergize efforts to obtain the necessary multi-government approvals and providing guidance throughout the complex process of lake rejuvenation.

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Managing Trustee of Biocon Foundation, said, "I want to congratulate each and everyone involved in successfully implementing the ambitious task of reviving the Hebbagodi Lake. Biocon Foundation is committed to address the pressing social and environmental issues in Karnataka with strong community engagement and innovative solutions. The 'proof of concept' established at Hebbagodi Lake has opened the path for Biocon Foundation to initiate other lake rejuvenation projects and will contribute towards reviving other Bengaluru lakes."

Wing Commander G.B. Athri (Retd), said, "Water is the heart and soul of the lake. Without removing a drop of water from Hebbagodi lake (which is the usual practice), we have successfully rejuvenated the lake. The water quality has attained pristine glory with the help of natural elements. The most important aspect of Hebbagodi lake rejuvenation process is that time-tested natural processes have been put into place."

Pratima Rao, Mission Director of Biocon Foundation, said, “Biocon Foundation constantly engages with the neighbouring communities to undertake various initiatives aimed at environmental management and ecological conservation. With the help of key stakeholders, such as Wing Commander Athri, government officials and local authorities, we successfully restored the ecosystem of the Hebbagodi Lake in a time-bound, cost-effective manner. I believe this initiative will spur other corporates to come forward in implementing innovative solutions that pave the way for a better Bengaluru.”

Lourd Raj Joseph, Vice-President and Head, Central Engineering & EHS, Biocon, added, “Given the importance of preserving Bengaluru’s natural lakes, we undertook the Herculean task of the rejuvenation of the Hebbagodi Lake through fresh thinking, collective effort and innovative solutions. A multipronged strategy to use bioremediation, floating islands and aerators has yielded spectacular results. Measures were also taken to protect the lake by engaging with local authorities and the community to monitor and preserve the area. A children’s park, with gardens and play equipment, has completed the transformation of the area into a clean, green space.”