

URBAN SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The story of Mavallipura's unscientific

Municipal Solid Waste Landfills- Ramky Landfill



RAMKY'S UNSCIENTIFIC LANDFILL

- BBMP acquired the abutting gomala land (grazing pasture) to establish a scientific landfill.
- This project was contracted to M/s Ramky and construction commenced in 2006. However, no permissions were taken from the Local Panchayat, or from three airports in close proximity of the proposed landfill: Yelahanka Air Force Base (5 kms.), Jakkur Airfield (7 kms.) and Bangalore International Airport (19 kms.). Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules mandated that airports should be at least 20 kms. from landfills - and that presumes well managed landfills.
- Much against the MSWM Rules, Ramky began receiving wastes and began filling it into a massive pit. This was not segregate wastes, but all kinds of waste.
- Ramky's landfill was in patent violation of the Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules 2000 and the Aircraft Act. It lacks a processing unit.
- Within a few months, the incomplete landfill, which lacks all scientific layers of protection, was filled with truck loads of waste.
- Mountains of waste is left open, attracting hundreds of scavenging birds and dogs. This is seriously contaminating air all around the dumpsite, making it unlivable for villages around. This is criminal negligence on the part of Ramky and the BBMP
- As the dumped waste decomposed, the leachates were let out into ponds with no protection
- There was no effluent treatment plant, the toxic waters reached the wells, streams, tanks, contaminating them irreversibly
- Cancer and kidney failures, which were unknown to the local villagers, became commonplace. Heart problems and pyrogenic Meningitis manifested in children.

ESG's INTERVENTIONS

- ESG conducted systematic water analysis of all surface water and ground water bodies in the region.
- The results revealed that the water quality in wells, borewells and lakes in the mavallipura area were contaminated and had pollutants beyond permissible limits confirming its public health danger. Many people lost their life to a variety of diseases.
- ESG along with the Dalit Sangharsh Samithi submitted these results along with representation demanding the shutting down of the landfill to the State Pollution Control Board
- In a landmark decision, Mr. A. S. Sadashivaiah, IFS (Retd.), Chairman, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, directed the Commissioner of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP, Bangalore's city corporation) and the private operator of the city's major landfill, Ramky Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd., to immediately stop receiving waste into the facility at Mavallipura
- Invoking its powers to so direct under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 the Board has also instructed the operator Ramky to "process the accumulated waste completely for composting within 3 months in a scientific manner without causing eye sore to the public and health/Environmental hazard".
- The unprocessed refuse from the accumulated waste would have to be transported by BBMP to another landfill site at Mandur for scientific disposal. The Board has threatened that it would initiate penal action against the BBMP as per the Environment Protection Act, if this direction is not complied with.
- Despite shutting down the land fill, there was massive pressure to reopen the landfill as the city did not have an alternative way to manage it's waste.
- Severe protest from the local community which also resulted in the death of a youth in the protest stopped the BBMP from forcefully reopening it
- ESG initiated a Public Interest Litigation to ensure justice to the local people who had lost their lives and livelihoods and continued to be threatened.
- The PIL resulted in several progressive interim orders and initiated the city to take several measures to manage it's waste at source.
- The case is still ongoing and



MAVALLIPURA REVOLUTION

that transformed India's approach

to waste management



FIRST, STOPPING BYLAPPA'S LANDFILL

When villagers of Mavallipura, who were predominantly Dalit, walked into ESG in 2003 seeking help to stop landfills that were destroying their village commons and forests, thanks to BBMP dumping hundreds of truck loads of Bangalore's mixed garbage every day, little did we imagine what the implications would be.

The mess was horrendous. The waste caught fire every now and then. The highly toxic leachates contaminated all soil and water all around. The stench from the decomposing and putrid waste made breathing difficult. Mosquitoes bred spreading dengue, chikungunya and malaria.

Mavallipura and other villages were considered the best in milk production. But due to the horrific pollution contaminating ponds, wells and streams, livestock became sick and died. The villagers began losing sustainable livelihoods, and the situation disturbingly forced several into scavenging garbage piles for a living.

Soon the water, air and land became so polluted that people started falling sick with all sorts of diseases.

ESG worked with Dalit Sangarsh Samithi in resisting the construction of a min-Bhopal disaster and exposed how a local farmer, Bailappa, had run the facility all along on forest land! Due to criminal action initiated by ESG, the land fill was shut down in 2006, and the land reclaimed by Forest Department. But the waste remains!

See: <https://tinyurl.com/ESGBloreToxicLegacy>



Bangalore's Toxic Legacy

Investigating Mavallipura's Illegal Landfills



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