

Refilled stone quarry posing threat to life

Hennur Bande quarry filled with garbage annoying nearby residents

KAREN SOLOMON

The Hennur Bande is a stone quarry, which is about 80 feet deep. After being dug out for so long, now, the quarry is being refilled again. This time, however, it is being refilled with garbage, and illegally.

This is posing a danger for the residents of the area, resulting in deaths. The Late Mr. Nalsamy owned the land, including the quarry. Mr. Guna, whose house is on the border of the quarry, was one of the drivers of the trucks carrying the cut stones. The quarry, in the last ten years, has been under government's control.

Ms. Poornima, who was in the Vijayalakshmi Colony from birth, said that the people used to wash their clothes in the water in the quarry. Mr. Guna said that they were happy when the government started to fill it up with mud due to accidental deaths. But in the recent months, the Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BMP) trucks have started to dump garbage in it while there is still a huge amount of water in it.

Mr. Guna said that the water springs up and fills the quarry. The garbage floats all over the large surface. Now, they cannot sleep or eat due to the stench of garbage beside their home. The other two quarries were filled with mud and

with one of them only partly filled.

Mr. Sathish said that at least 20 people died in the quarry, by committing suicide, murder and



Stone quarry at Hennur Bande which is being refilled
by author

dumping of the bodies or accidentally falling off over the edge in the recent months. He said that even if someone fell off and was dying in there, just then, no one would know, because of all the garbage.

Mr. Vivek said that about three people from Vijayalakshmi Colony died there. Mr. Kumaresh said that the stonebreakers stole the stone slabs and wires that were surrounding the steep area. He also said that the place usually smelled badly during the mornings and in the evenings, after the new loads of garbage had soaked in the water for sometime.

Mr. Guna also said that Mr. Krishnappa, whose house too was near the quarry, collected money from the truck driver for reasons he did not know.

He said that The Bowring Hospital dumped its wastes and dead bodies of babies along with the garbage. Mr. Guna knew the supervisor of the trucks.

There were children going close to the water and collecting things and playing with the garbage, without any protection. In a span of just one hour at least eight trucks of garbage empty their load and depart. Only one truck carrying mud was seen. The road also was swarming with flies due to the unclean surrounding.

Mr. Shankar, ex-corporator of Hennur Main Road, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), said that the quarry was not a dumping yard and that the public had filled in the mud. He said that since the area had recently come under the BBMP, no action had been taken yet.

Karmelaram Railway Station bereft of basic services

SAMEER RANJAN BAKSHI

Karmelaram Railway Station on Sarjapur road is not well connected with Bangalore and neighbouring states. It also does not have a reservation counter in it.



Only a few trains stop at this station
by author

Only three trains stop here every day. Workers and employees working in Karmelaram on Sarjapur road face problems in commuting from their residence to their working places. Even the general public faces the same problems while travelling to the neighbouring states.

As the roadway passing through the area is quite busy during peak hours, workers and employees working in granite and marble factories such as Indus garment Factory, Wipro and integrated technologies often reach their working place late.

M. Samiullah, Station Master of the Karmelaram station, said that many software engineers and workers stay in Hosur and come here to work. They usually come by road because there is no train in the morning, but they go back by a local passenger train (pushpull) at 7.30 pm.

As many people residing in this area are Tamilians and Keralites, they often travel to Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Not even a single train going to Madurai, Thanjavur and Coimbatore stops here. People have to travel to Cantonment or City Railway Station to catch those trains which turns out to be cumbersome for them. The distance they have to commute is about 25 kilometers apart from facing severe road jams and air pollution across the city.

Rev. Fr. K.P. Xavier, CR, Vicar General (chief priest) of a church said that "we have submitted a memorandum to the Honorable Railway Minister, Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav, to look after these demands."

Mr. Dasharathi, P.R. of the Cantonment Railway Station said that "we have submitted the memorandum to the Personal secretary of the minister."

IISc earthquake study useful for construction

GAYATHRI VAIDYANATHAN Earthquakes will not be able to shake Bangalore if construction companies heed a new study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). The study, conducted by Dr. Sitharam and associates, has produced a map that shows how different parts of Bangalore will respond to earthquakes.

The first recorded earthquake in Bangalore was on December 10, 1807 with an intensity of IV on the seismic scale. More recently, January 29th 2001 saw an earthquake of magnitude 4.3 on the Richter scale in areas surrounding Mandya, just 35 km south of Bangalore. About 50 buildings in Kanakpura were damaged. This led to a panic as the consequences of the Gujarat earthquake disaster, which took place just three days earlier, was fresh in the minds of people.

Subsequently, the IISc researchers installed ground sensors at different parts of Bangalore to measure the intensity of shake in response to earthquakes originating even 100 kilometers away. Since Bangalore is such a

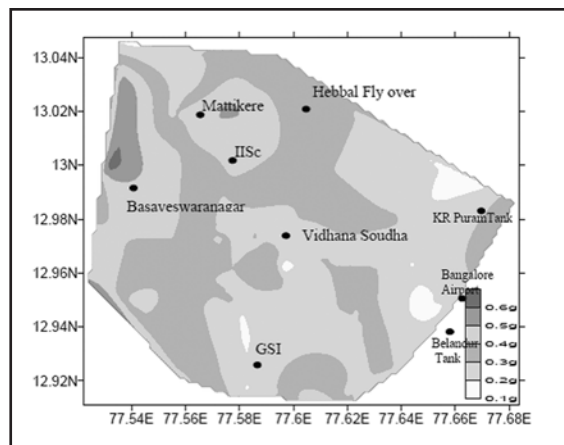
densely populated region with a mushrooming construction industry such a study is very important and necessary, said Dr. Sitharam.

Structures ranging from mud shacks to steel constructions together with improper construction techniques make Bangalore vulnerable to even low magnitude earthquakes.

This will no longer be the case if structural engineers take the results of the study "Seismic Hazard Analysis for the Bangalore Region" into account while designing buildings. The study has produced a map that shows the acceleration of the ground surface due to earthquakes far away, called a micro-zonation map. The map covers all of Bangalore in detail, including

layouts and has been superimposed over road maps.

It is not a study of the probability of earthquakes, Dr. Sitharam



Ground acceleration map of Bangalore
Courtesy Google Images

stressed. It shows "what kind of forces [engineers] should be adopting while designing buildings [and] how does the soil in Bangalore respond. Such a study is needed for structural engineers building underground metros, new multi-rises and even for renovating older structures, especially hospitals and schools.

N.P. Sharma, Chief Engineer of the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRCL), one of the supervisors for the Bangalore metro, agreed: "it is a very good study and very relevant." The BMRCL is constructing the metro with underground foundations for moderately earthquake prone Zone 3, and over ground tracks designed for less earthquake prone Zone 2 seismic activity. This study is especially relevant for builders who can now determine exactly how resistant their structures should be. Areas with loose soil together with longer soil columns, generally found in dry lake beds and old ponds that have been filled up, are the ones more prone to shake. Buildings built here must be earthquake resistant, said Dr. Sitharam.

Previous studies have found Karnataka significantly more earthquake-prone than thought before; there are 10 fault lines running through Bangalore. Since the Indian peninsula is pushing against the Eurasian plate, tectonic forces generated below ground can manifest in earthquakes.

No information for tourists at Railway Stations

The Tourism department information centre at the city railway station shut for the past two months

ANIL DAS

The Karnataka State Tourist Information Centre, at Bangalore city railway station has been shut for the past two months. The tourist information centers, which are supposed to disseminate information about tourism spots, etc. to the tourists arriving from

different part of the city, are left without any information. This causes great inconveniences to the tourists from India as well as abroad.

A foreign tourist, Erica from Spain said that she has been at the railway station for a connecting train to Anantpur, which is 36 hours late. She has been spending the time in

Railway station with nowhere to go. She doesn't know the city, and the tourist information centre is not functioning.

Ravi Prakash, Public Relations Officer (P.R.O) of Southern Railways, said, "We do not deal with the tourist information center as it comes under State government's purview." Raghava, a

neighbouring bookstore vendor complains of tourists enquiring for information regularly, which is really annoying during the business hours.

Ratnakar, P.R.O of the Karnataka State Tourism Department said, "We have shut down the office for renovation works and regret the huge inconvenience caused.