


Because Every Lake Matters: The Revival of Puttenahalli Lake

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Protecting an urban lake is a challenge because of the constant threats of sewage and encroachment. Puttenahalli Lake was once another dying lake in Bengaluru which had lost hundreds of its manmade tanks in the wake of urbanisation. Today it is a thriving ecosystem, a 'Model' for others in the city. It is successful because of how it is being maintained post-rejuvenation. The transformation from a clean and dry lake to a rich biodiversity hub required sustained effort by a citizens' group, the Puttenahalli Neighbourhood Lake Improvement Trust (PNLIT), working in a close partnership

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with the government and involving the local community. How sustainable is the PNLIT model? How do they get the different government agencies to cooperate? How do they handle political pressure? How do they engage the community and retain them as stakeholders? Puttenahalli Lake highlights that public participation is crucial to improve lake management and development.

Usha Rajagopalan is a writer, translator and lake conservationist based in Bengaluru. She has won the Federation of Indian Publishers' Award, and prizes thrice consequently in the Commonwealth Short Story Competition. The Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education has included 'A Patch of Land,' her translation of Subramania Bharati's poem in the 2023 syllabus for General English.

Her writing has received support from the Charles Wallace India Trust, University of British Columbia, Sangam House, Le Château De Lavigny, Pro Helvetia and the International Water Management Institute.

Usha led a campaign in 2008 and got the municipality to rejuvenate Puttenahalli Lake in her neighbourhood. To nurture the lake, she co-founded Puttenahalli Neighbourhood Lake Improvement Trust (PNLIT) in 2010. It is considered a model in citizen-led lake conservation in the city.

As the Homi Bhabha Fellow, 2023 – 2025, she is working on her 9th book documenting the Puttenahalli Lake experience.

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YouTube Live Link: <https://tinyurl.com/ASETon25August>

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