

DECCAN Chronicle

Bengaluru: Bottling plant sucking Bannerghatta dry

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Bannerghatta National Park

Bengaluru: Illegal exploitation of ground water has been a major concern in the state that is currently facing acute water crisis. In case of Ragihalli, a rain deficient village, sand mining has already denuded the area off the natural resource.

Recently, more than 40 residents of Ragihalli wrote a letter to the Deputy Conservator of Forest, Bannerghatta, that for the past few years a bottling unit functioning in the village has been drawing huge quantities of ground water.

The letter reads that the unit has not acquired any of the requisite permission.

"It has not obtained any of the required statutory clearances, but it is still operating, and transporting water day and night through the national park. The irony is that our village is getting piped water from another village nearby because of water scarcity here. As you are aware water bottling unit is a prohibited activity in the eco-sensitive zone," the letter stated.

In 2015, the forest department had apprised the panchayat about the illegal construction of the water bottling unit.

Deccan Chronicle broke the story on October 13, 2018 wherein it was stated that Ragihalli gets water from Ramanaikana Doddi village, which is one-and-a-half kilometres away. The over-exploitation of groundwater using borewells in the city has been widely acknowledged not only by the state department of mines, but also by the union ministry of water resources, which had in its 2017 report stated that Karnataka was exploited 705 of its groundwater resources.

Lead scientist of the IISc, Dr T.V. Ramachandra had earlier said, "The region is deprived of water due to rampant sand filtering and if groundwater is exploited in such manner people will cry to quench their thirst. No groundwater recharge takes place in the region." The letter stated that the local farmers are dependent on groundwater stored from rain showers. "Illegal sale of groundwater from a water deficient village in eco-sensitive zone of the national Park, to the parts of the city should stop," said Bhanu Prakash, coordinator, Bannerghatta Nature Conservation Trust.