

Printed from

BangaloreMirror

Karnataka: Yet another pipe dream?

By Deepthi Sanjiv, Bangalore Mirror Bureau | Jun 20, 2018, 04.00 AM IST



The govt's plan to bring water from Linganamakki in Shivamogga to Bengaluru is not feasible, say experts

Quenching Bengaluru's thirst is the biggest task for any government. In an attempt to satiate the ever-increasing demand for potable water, the state government, led by HD Kumaraswamy, has approved a detailed project report (DPR) to bring water from Linganamakki in Shivamogga district to meet the rising needs of Bengaluru.

Deputy Chief Minister Dr G Parameshwara said that the government had approved a DPR to bring water from Linganamakki. A feasibility study has to be made, and it is still in the conceptual stage. Drawing water from Linganamakki, which is about 300 km away, is technically possible, believes the government. But what do experts say?

Experts not happy

However, experts and greens are not happy with the government's decision.

Former irrigation secretary and water expert Captain Raja Rao said this project is not feasible. He told BM, "NITI Ayog has made a report on water management for the entire country recently. The report predicts that by 2030, Bengaluru will face severe water shortage and the ground water will go much below and it will not even be available. Though Karnataka is ranked number four as far as water management in the entire country is concerned, yet the scenario for Karnataka is bad. Against this background, it is definitely not a feasible proposal to bring water from Linganamakki. Unless the government is ready to give water throughout that pipeline — whichever town or city comes in between, we will not be able to receive that water at the end of the pipeline in Bengaluru. This is not the way to approach to get drinking water for Bengaluru. How long can we expect fresh water always? Where is the fresh water available?"

‘Water must be recycled’

Raja Rao says it's time the government thought about other alternatives.

“The government should plan and the public should be made aware that once you get water to Bengaluru from the Cauvery, it should be treated to such a level that it is drinkable and only the makeup water should be able to bring fresh water. The rest of water has to be recycled and used. Bengaluru is not on a river bank and there is no sufficient water in the Cauvery. All the lakes are polluted. The city, which was about 250 sq km, has been expanded to 800 sq km and where is the underground drainage extending to 800 sqkms? All apartments in the city should be connected with sewage lines, which can be treated so that treated water is available even if it gets into the tanks. The tanks at Bellandur, Byramangala, Hebbal or Nagavara lakes should be used as source and treated further to drinking water standards and bottled and supplied at all the meetings of the government including the houses of Chief minister and the ministers and thus demonstrate to public that this water is safe to public.”

Revive Mekedatu project

According to Capt Raja Rao, simultaneously, the state government must pursue the Cauvery issue with the Centre and Supreme Court. “We lost a good opportunity when the case was before the Supreme Court over river Cauvery. We did not insist or seek directions from the Supreme Court that the Mekedatu project should be cleared. If this project was cleared, the state would have about 60 TMC of water available. This water could have been an insurance for Bengaluru's drinking water. The proposed Linganamakki project is nothing but sharing the huge bounty from pipelines coming from Linganamakki to Bengaluru. Like Yettinahole project, water will not reach, but money will be pumped,” he said.

Hence, it is important for Bengaluru to desilt all major lakes and allow the treated water.

Regarding rainwater harvesting, Capt Raja Rao said, “Ground water recharge is essential, rooftop rain water harvesting is important in all the urban areas. As the chairman of an expert committee constituted by the High Court in 2005-06, I had submitted a detailed report with about 112 recommendations of which one was on a recharge structure at roadside drains at all intersections in Bengaluru. This should be constructed not by government but on a PPT mode. If my recommendations were taken seriously and implemented it in a year or two, by now we would have reaped the benefit through an increase in ground water with 12-13 years of rainfalls. All lakes should be rejuvenated and protected and there should be recharging structures for ground water and wherever government land is there in all those lands, more ponds should be constructed for rain water harvesting, he said.

AR Shivakumar, principal scientific officer, Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology, Indian Institute of Science, believes that for a city like Bengaluru to have sustainable water supply, it should have a mix of conventional river water supply augmented with ‘new water’ sources which includes rainwater harvesting, ground water recharge with sustainable withdrawal and reuse of treated waste water.

Alarming situation in city

He said the ground water situation in Bengaluru is alarming because the extraction of water is four to-five times more than the recharge of ground water. In his blog rainmanspeaks.blogspot.in, he writes: “Bengaluru has been receiving increasing rainfall in recent times. 100 years of rainfall statistics puts the average annual rainfall at 929 mm, with 57 rainy days in Bengaluru. For Bengaluru, the water supply at the tap end (excluding

losses) is 685 million litre per day (MLD). (Total supply is 1350 MLD and unaccounted for water amounts to 665 MLD). The average rooftop area for rainwater harvesting per property is 110 sq m in Bengaluru, creating a potential of 81,752 million litre of water, at 80 per cent collection efficiency.



pipe 2

BENGALURU CITY IS A BIG WATER GUZZLER

BWSSB officials have already sought entitlement of 19 tmc feet of Cauvery water per year. Of which Bengaluru gulps 14 tmc feet of water between September and June. On an average 1.5 tmc of water is required to meet the demand of the city per month. The IT city, which initially, got water from Hesaraghatta and Tippagondanahalli reservoirs, switched to Cauvery from 1970. As a result, BWSSB pumps water to the city from a distance of 64 km from Cauvery water near TK Halli. According to BWSSB officails, Cauvery is the only source of drinking water as a mere 10 to 15 per cent of the population depends on bore-well water. Over 100 villages were added to BBMP limits couple of years ago, making the situation worse. BWSSB facilitates supply of 1,400 MLD of water per day.

As per the census of 2011, city has a population of close to 80 lakh odd now it has crossed 1.15 crore.