

Project may face pushback

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The proposed project is likely to see pushback from environmentalists and locals in Shivamogga along the lines of the Yettinahole project. Environmentalists have already threatened to challenge the proposal in court. Many argue that it comes at a time when concerns are being expressed on poor rains in the Sharavathi river valley owing to destruction of forests. Since construction of the reservoir, the water level has reached the brim only 14 times, and the last occasion was in 2014. In the past three years, the reservoir had not received even half of its total capacity.

“It would damage the ecology of the region, as large tracts of forest would be destroyed for construction of jack wells and to lay the pipeline,” said B.M. Kumaraswamy, environmentalist and member of Vruksha Laksha Andolana.

Dr. T.V. Ramachandra, Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc., Bengaluru, said water was already depleting in the river basin. The tailend areas had already seen depletion of fish, hitting livelihood, increase of salinity, which will only increase with further diversion, adversely impacting agriculture yield.