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You are here: [Home](#) » [State](#) » Deforestation led to landslide in Karwar, says expert committee

Deforestation led to landslide in Karwar, says expert committee

Bangalore, Dec 7, DHNS:

A multi-disciplinary expert committee that probed into the reasons for the landslide in Karwar which claimed 19 lives during the October floods has found that deforestation and large scale excavation of soil from the hillock lead to the tragedy.

The committee lead by Dr T V Ramachandra, from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, along with officials from the forest and mines departments found that a total of 21 landslides had occurred in Karwar including the killer landslide at Kadwad village due to antecedent rainfall. The landslide had resulted due to removal of deep-rooted vegetation besides lateral pressure due to swelling of oversaturated clay rich soil horizon.

The report was submitted to Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa at a function organised by the Department of Forest and Environment and Western Ghats Task Force.

The committee has recommended planting of native vegetation on hilltops and slopes, restoration of natural drainage network, banning of illegal soil mining. The committee has also suggested that authorities concerned remodel the protection wall around the Naval Base in Karwar to pave way for natural drainage of rain water.

No to large scale projects

The committee has recommended that no large scale development projects be taken up in Uttara Kannada district that are likely to harm the ecology and biodiversity of the Western Ghats. "Considering the implementation of large number of mega projects in Karwar, it appears that the region has exceeded the carrying capacity and further implementation of any mega project would prove detrimental to the local population," the committee report submitted to the CM said.

Besides, the committee has pointed out the Konkan Railway track connecting Karwar town with Goa and other places passes through the Zariwada paleo-river valley and also crosses the lineaments. The vibrations generated by movement of trains has developed cracks on hill tops and also resulted in the loosening of the soil, the report

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said

Yeddyurappa also approved the launch of a scientific study project on “integrated carrying capacity study and sustainable development strategies in Uttara Kannada district”.

The Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, will be conducting the study, which will serve as a guide for policy makers to choose appropriate development projects which are in tune with the ecology of the district.

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