

## **Mangaluru: Yettinahole project - Scientist provides detailed response to CM's query**

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**Mangaluru, Oct 26:** Scientist of Indian Institute of Science (IISc), T V Ramachandra, has provided a detailed response to the chief minister (CM), who had questioned Ramachandra's objectivity on the controversial Yettinahole Integrated Drinking Water Project. He has advised the CM to convene a meeting of partners to the project, before continuing with it.

Ramachandra has also touched upon comments made by politicians, officials of Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Ltd (KNNL), and others, about his report not being the official report of IISc, lack of objectivity, that report upholds interests of Mangalureans alone etc. His research in the subject and his expertise in hydrology had also been questioned.

Ramachandra has asked KNNL officials to convene a meeting of all the partners in the project if it has concern about the interests of the people of the state, and has invited the officials for an open debate on the issue in their presence.



Noting that a letter written to the CM in May this year on this issue has not received response, and he has not been called for interaction on the subject, Ramachandra notes that politicians and KNNL officials have been engaged in making negative propaganda about him. He has reiterated his earlier warning that Yettinahole project can turn disastrous for the Western Ghats and that it will fail to deliver water to starved districts.

On the question why he undertook study in spite of not belonging to the Yettinahole or Kumaradhara area, Ramachandra said that scientists conduct study wherever there is apprehension about environment getting damaged because of reckless decisions, as scientists are not bound by regional or religious bonds.

About the allegation of working under the influence of people of Mangaluru, he said he does not feel the need to be influenced by anyone. He stated that he had given in his report what he found during the studies he had conducted in Western Ghats in the 90s and in Kolar region between 2000 and 2004. He said that if implemented, Yettinahole project may result in scarcity of water for the districts of Hassan and Dakshina Kannada, and like the Telugu Ganga project which created shortfall of fish and other resources in Nallur, this project may also have catastrophic after-effects.

About KNNL's comment about his inexperience in hydrology, he pointed out that 35 percent of his research is related to water environment, hydrology, and eco-hydrology. Asking KNNL to desist from sullyng the reputation of research team without gathering enough materials, he pointed out that he has been a fellow of the Indian Association of Hydrologists since 2006.

On the question whether his report is an official document of IISc, Ramachandra says that this study had been conducted with the financial support of science and technology, and environment and forest ministries of the central government, and that IISc had extended support to the research by way of equipment and materials. "Institutions like IISc have extended enough liberty to their scientists to conduct studies as needed by the society, and as part of this initiative, I have conducted studies on the issues which have the potential of having serious influence on the society," he explained.