

## IISc researcher responds to government criticism of his report

- [Mohit M. Rao](#)

Upset with the “offensive propaganda” by the State government over his report on the controversial Yettinahole diversion project, T.V. Ramachandra, Professor at the Indian Institute of Science has written to the Chief Minister asking him to ensure a proper scientific dialogue before undertaking an “environmentally-disastrous” project.

Contrary to the government’s claim that 24 TMC (thousand million cubic feet of water) can be diverted from the tributaries of Netravati at Western Ghats towards parched districts of Kolar and Chikkaballapur, Mr. Ramachandra’s analysis had shown that barely 1 TMC can be diverted from the stream through the nearly Rs. 13,000-crore project.

The hydrological calculations showed that just 9.55 TMC was water flowed in the streams, of which 5.8 TMC was needed as local demand in Dakshina Kannada district.

However, the report had come under criticism, with the Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited (KNNL) saying Mr. Ramachandra was not an expert on hydrology and the report published was not authentic.

“KNNL bureaucracy should refrain from casting aspersions on any research team. We have worked consistently and strived for the welfare of the country and State. If KNNL is really interested in the welfare of the state, we invite them for open scientific dialogue in the presence of all stakeholders,” says Mr. Ramachandra’s letter, which adds that he has authored more than 500 publications.

With allegations that the report had ulterior motives as it was “not authorised by IISc”, the scientist responds: “Academicians enjoy academic freedom which empowers them to undertake research of their choice and relevance to the society. The report is prepared by our group in response to the request from local people...(this is a) part of scientist’s social responsibility,” he says.

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