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## Mangaluru: Religion cannot unite the world but science can – Dr Ramachandra During Talk on Yettinahole

Posted By violet Pereira On October 16, 2015 @ 10:45 pm In Broadcast | [No Comments](#)

Mangaluru: A talk on the Yettinahole Project by Dr T V Ramachandra, from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, was organized by the Citizen's Council Mangalore Chapter at Sanghanikethan here, on October 16.

Present as the chief guest of the function, vice president of Tumkur Science Centre, C Yathiraju expressed his views on the Yettinahole project and remarked on the government's interest in stopping the project. He said that when projects of such magnitude are undertaken, it is very important to assess and understand their impact on the environment and the disadvantage on people. "For the Yettinahole project, the work was carried out even without a forest clearance. An undertaking has to be signed for projects which encroach on forests, that no work will be started without first obtaining the forest clearance. It is the duty of the forest minister and his ministry to protect and preserve forests, and take action against those who violate the rules laid out for the protection of forests. It is a holy duty. But it is very surprising for a forest minister, who also belongs to this very district which will be affected by the project, to be silent when forests in the state are threatened. He has failed to do his duty by allowing the project to continue, when it started without receiving a forest clearance."





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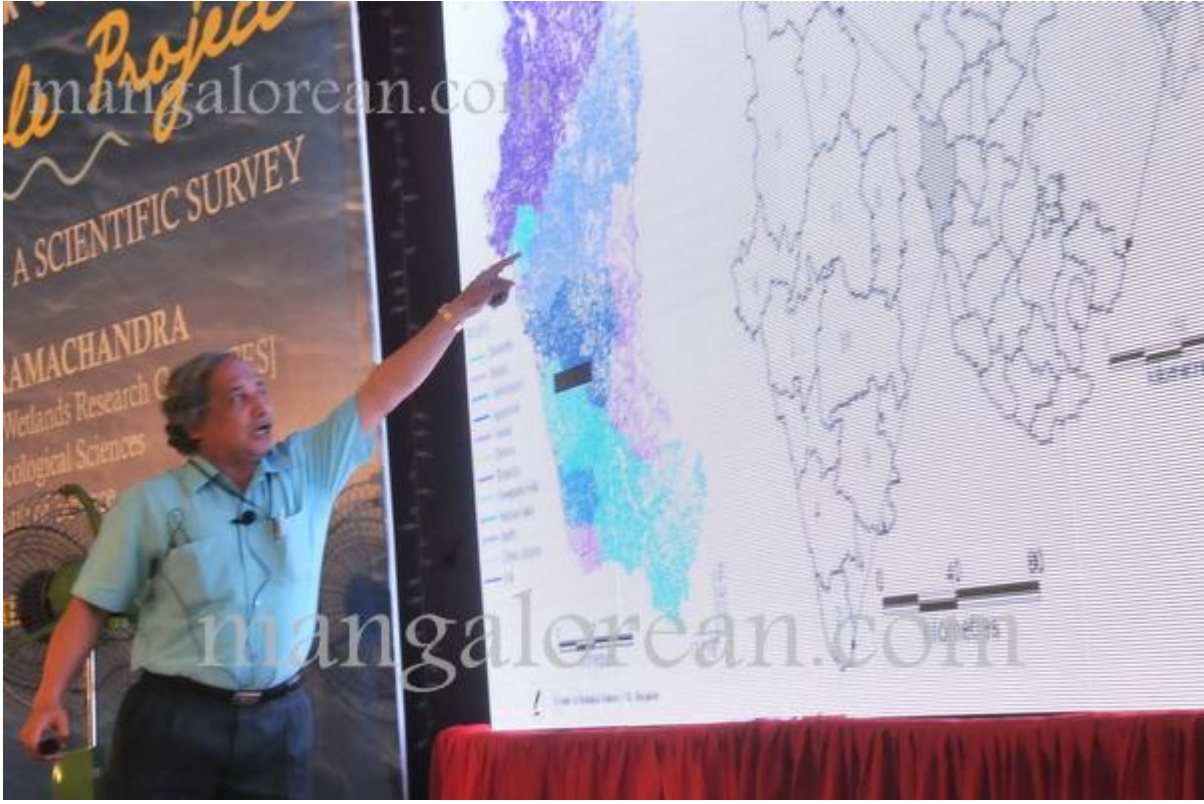
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He further said that the people of Kolar and Chikkaballapur definitely require water. "But why is the government so adamant on this particular route? Is this the only way to provide water to those districts? Have they questioned why there is water scarcity on the region in the first place? We have many water sources but unfortunately due to bad governance, we see lakes and rivers becoming too polluted for human use like the lakes of Bengaluru. The government and elected

members want this project because they can loot more money from the taxpayers," he added.

Before beginning his talk, Dr Ramachandra said, "As a scientist, I feel that I have a social responsibility to the society to present my findings to them." He then gave a brief explanation on his work, studies and findings that he made along with his students on the district of Uttara Kannada. These include studies on rainfall patterns and their relation to the forest cover, forest fragmentation and its consequences on local species, adaptation of local species to changing rainfall patterns, value of provisioning goods and services, etc.

He further said that in one of his studies on the value of provisioning goods and services of Uttara Kannada district, the study found that Uttara Kannada could generate a value of Rs 15,159 crore, but the government's report stated that the district's GDP was Rs 5,798 crore out of which the district's forest were shown to value just Rs 180 crore. "Why is there such a big mismatch between the two studies?" he questioned, and then stated, "Environmental Impact Assessment is a fraud. When I was in the committee, I was disappointed with the way it worked; I just walked away from it."

"Since 1973 to 2013, the forest cover in Uttara Kannada district has reduced from 67% to 32%. Through my studies, we found a direct correlation between forest cover and rainfall patterns in Uttara Kannada district. The areas which received rainfall for lesser months were those with very less forest cover. Decrease in rainfall is alarming for the entire country. Even in Kerala, the number of rainy days are decreasing; this in turn affects the biodiversity in the region."

He pointed out the incorrect assumptions made in the DPR of Yettinahole including the "measured" annual rainfall of 6280 mm as opposed to the actual data collected by the Metrological Department which is 3000-5000 mm.

He also said that the main reason for water scarcity in Kolar is due to deforestation. "The districts of Chikkaballapur and Kolar receive a rainfall yield of 61 and 52 TMCs respectively. There are many other alternatives that can be taken up like decentralized water harvesting, rejuvenation and restoration of lakes/ponds, etc. which are far less expensive to the people and the environment. But these alternatives are not being taken up because there are less avenues for corruption in them and there is less commission to make out of these. The government is using the colonial style of administration by dividing, ruling and looting the people. Diversity is the strength of our country but we need to be united to take on such harmful projects. Religion cannot unite the world but science can," he added.

MP Nalin Kumar Kateel, Yogish Bhat, Nagaraj Shetty, members of Citizen's Council Mangalore Chapter and others were present.

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