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Yettinahole project an ecological disaster: IISC expert to CM

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ANGALURU: The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has officially written to the state government that the Yettinahole project is "unscientific and not feasible".

T V Ramachandra, coordinator, Energy and Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, has urged chief minister Siddaramaiah to convene a meeting involving all stakeholders.

Scientists led by Ramachandra had conducted a study and prepared a report on the Yettinahole project. The team concluded in the report that the total availability of water in the project streams is just 0.85 TMC and it is impossible to draw 24 TMC. The government had ignored the report considering it a personal opinion. Now Ramachandra has sent letter to chief minister Siddaramaiah officially on the IISc letterhead on October 21.

"I am writing this open letter through media to you regarding Yettinahole project as it appears that my earlier letter (10th May 2015) written to you has not got any response or any meaningful scientific discussion / deliberation and to bring to your kind notice the consistent negative propaganda resorted by Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited (KNNL) against me and my colleagues. This letter is to assert again that the proposed Yettinahole project is ecologically disastrous and economically unviable as the purpose of supplying to water parched region would not materialize as there is insufficient water yield in the catchment," Ramachandra noted in his letter to the CM.

He pointed out that while the Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited plans to draw 24.01 TMC of water through the project, the actual water yield in Yettinahole catchment is only 9.55 TMC. Out of that, 5.84 TMC is needed for domestic use, crops and livestock. Meanwhile, the environmental flow of 2.86 TMC should be maintained in the catchment to sustain the ecosystem. Hence, he noted, "the detailed project report (DPR) estimate of 24 TMC in Yettinahole catchment is erroneous."

"The implementation of the project will cause large scale land cover changes in the region. The proposed project would alter the hydrologic regime affecting the local ecology, biodiversity and more importantly livelihood of people in the region. The proposed project would cause habitat fragmentation and shrinkage resulting in enhanced human-animal conflicts," he pointed out and urged the government to drop the project.