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Bengaluru has sufficient water, says IISc study

IISc says Bengaluru has sufficient water to meet its needs if sustainably managed

Bengaluru receives an average annual rainfall close to 787 mm, that is likely to be consistent and reliable, as per the study by Indian Institute of Sciences. Photo: PTi

Bengaluru: Contrary to popular perception that Bengaluru is heading to a water crisis, a new study from the Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc) says India's fastest growing urban area has sufficient water to meet its needs. But, that is only if Bengaluru's administration understands the need to sustainably manage its water resources, the study warns.

Bengaluru receives an average annual rainfall close to 787mm, which is likely to be consistent and reliable, as per the study. This alone yields about 14.80 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of water per year in the three major catchment areas of Vrishabhavathi (7.32 TMC), Koramangala Challaghatta (5.2 TMC) and Hebbal valleys (4.2 TMC), according to the study.

Now, the domestic demand of water is 20.05 TMC per year in Bengaluru, which means about 73% of the city's water demand can be met from the catchment areas, as per the researchers. In addition, the study shows that efficient rainwater harvesting could yield the city about another 14.8 TMC of water.

So, Bengaluru has about 30 TMC of water, as per the analysis, which is higher than the existing demand of 20.08 TMC, but utilizing this requires decentralized optimal water management, the study said.

The analysis was conducted by Centre for Ecological Studies head T.V. Ramachandra along with researchers Vinay Shivamurthy, Durga Madhab Mahapatra and Bharath H. Aithal.

Ramachandra and colleagues said they are not sure the current administrators understand the gravity of the situation. They said a model of decentralized harvesting of water and reuse of treated sewage is not an attractive proposition for the current decision makers "with the colonial style of functioning or mind-set".

Reason? As per the researchers, the financial gain for decentralized projects are much lower than that with mega projects such as water diversion.

"This is the sole reason for the local administrators to degrade decentralised water harvesting structures and alienating local community. The main reason for deliberate inefficient management of water resources is to maximise the net return for the ruling class themselves than the overall growth of the region with water security," the study said.