

## 'Port construction at Tadadi will affect Aghanashini ecosystem'

Our Bureau

Mangaluru, November 7:

A scientist at Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has opposed the construction of a port under the Sagarmala project at Tadadi in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka.

Delivering the keynote address at the inauguration of a short course on 'aquatic pollution and abatement', organised by the College of Fisheries in Mangaluru on Tuesday, TV Ramachandra, coordinator of Energy and Wetlands Research Group at Centre for Ecological Sciences of IISc, said that the construction of a port at Tadadi will affect the fragile ecosystem of the Aghanashini river.

He said that Uttara Kannada district has rivers such as Kali, Bedthi, Aghanashini and Sharavathi. Dams have been built across the Kali and the Sharavathi.

On the implications of the construction of dam on the aquatic ecosystem, he said the valuation of goods and services that the people get from these river basins differs.

### 'Threat to livelihood'

Stating that the Kali River has the biggest estuary among these rivers, he said the value of the goods and services that the people get from the estuary is around ₹2.2 lakh per hectare a year, and Sharavathi ₹1.7 lakh per hectare a year. The valuation includes the tangible benefits people get from fish, bio-mass etc.

Stating that Aghanashini has no dams, he said the value of goods and services people get for this ecosystem is around ₹11 lakh per hectare a year.

This ecosystem provides livelihood to around 6,000 people in the region.

Tadadi has a fishing harbour located at the mouth of the Aghanashini River. On the proposal to build a port at Tadadi, he said "it is a kind of a senseless development" people are talking about. He wanted to know, if the government is worried about the livelihood of the local people and the implications of such a project on the environment in the region.

Though there was a proposal to build a thermal power plant at Tadadi eight years ago, it was shelved after the then government in Karnataka was informed about the implications of such a project on the environment. He said that fragile ecosystem in the region has to be conserved for future.

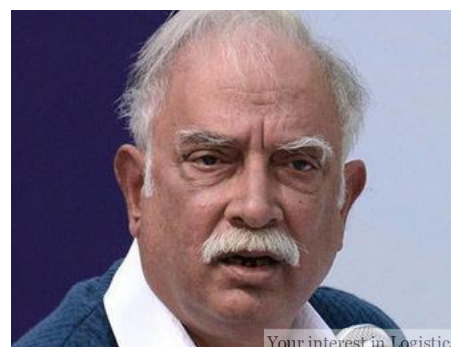
### Letter to PM

Ramachandra said that he has already written a letter to the Prime Minister in this regard.

Giving details about the natural resources of Uttara Kannada district, he said that the evergreen forest cover in the district has come down from 65 per cent in 1973 to 32 per cent now.

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