

Mangaluru

Sea water desalination plants not viable, says Ramachandra



T.V. Ramachandra, scientist, and others releasing a report on the Netravathi in Moodbidri on Friday. | Photo Credit: [Special Arrangement](#)

Scientist says such plants will bring down the marine diversity

Stating that sea water desalination plants will do more harm to the marine ecosystem than solve the drinking water crisis, T.V. Ramachandra, a scientist at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.), Bengaluru, said here on Friday that such plants will change the salinity level in the sea.

Speaking at the inaugural session of ‘pre-lake 2018’ conference at Alva’s College after releasing a study report titled ‘carrying capacity of Netravathi river basin based on the ecological sensitiveness’, he said that such desalination plants would bring down the marine diversity.

He also did not agree with building reservoirs on the estuaries.

It may be mentioned here that the government authorities are making moves to set up sea water desalination plants in Mangaluru.

A team of Mangaluru City Corporation visited Chennai recently to study the operation of a desalination plant there.

The report has been prepared by Energy and Wetlands Research Group (EWRG), Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), IISc. led by him.

Mr. Ramachandra, who is also coordinator, EWRG, said that rivers, traditional waterbodies should be conserved and maintained to mitigate drinking water crisis.

He said that there is no need to divert any river or streams to meet the drinking water needs of Bengaluru which received 740 mm to 850 mm annual rainfall.

The same quantity of rainfall yielded 15 tmcft of water against the Bengaluru’s requirement of 18 tmcft. Thus 70% of Bengaluru’s water requirement is met by rainfall which will have to be harvested properly.

Mr. Ramachandra said that annual 600-650 mm rainfall in Kolar and Chikkaballapura was enough to meet their 65 tmcft of water requirement provided silt was removed from water tanks in the districts and the rainwater harvested properly. He said that the ecology in the Netravathi river basin should be conserved at any cost for the future generation particularly in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi.

Vivek Alva, Managing Trustee, Alva’s Education Foundation, Moodbidri said that Yettinahole or Netravathi diversion project is not an issue only for Dakshina Kannada.

“It is a national issue as it damaged the sensitive ecology of the Western Ghats,” he said.

Filatov Nikolai Nikolaevich, adviser, Russian Academy of Science, explained how some of the water diversion projects have affected the ecosystem in Russia.

8 tmcft of water for Mumbai

Bottled water manufacturers are drawing about 8 tmcft of water from the Netravathi river basin for sending them to Mumbai, according to Mr. Ramanchandra.

He said that the catchment area of the basin spread over 4,409 sq km in 11 taluks in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Hassan, Kodagu, and Chikkamagaluru districts.