

# DECCAN Chronicle

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## Summer's here and so is the water crisis

Bad planning and depleting water in the Cauvery river catchment area threaten a 40% deficit in drinking water in summer for the city, caution wetland scientists from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). As it is, several areas in the city receive drinking water just once in four days and the situation is expected to become worse if urgent steps are not taken. Presently the water supplying agency — BWSSB — draws 1,200 MLD of water from the Cauvery River and T. G. Halli dam to supply the city, which requires 1,500 MLD per day. Moreover, new areas in Bengaluru east such as White Field, K. R. Puram and Jigani Industrial Area will get Cauvery water connections in the next few months even though BWSSB is not able to meet the present demand. Dr T.V. Ramachandra from the Energy and Wetland Research Group of IISc points out that the ground water levels in areas around White Field has gone as low as 800-1,000 feet. This has created large scale demand for potable water in these parts of Bengaluru which have been developing without any proper plan. "How can industries be set up when there is no surplus water to supply? This situation in the coming years will lead to a situation where water shortage in Bengaluru will scale up to 40%. And if everyone wants water from the Cauvery, where will the river get water from?" he asked. Dr Ramachandra suggests some urgent repair work has to be taken up to improve the Cauvery catchment area. "Water harvesting and vegetation improvement??? in the critical basin of the Cauvery river should be taken up, as well as improving water conservation methods in Bengaluru," he said. Western Ghat Task Force chairperson Ananth Hegade Ashisara echoed similar concerns as far as water resources are concerned. "Several perennial water streams in Shimoga, Chikmagalur, Dakshin Kannada and Coorg are drying up in summer due to exploitation of forests for timber, mining and quarrying. We must restore the water resources to ensure long lasting water supply to cities like Bengaluru," Mr Hegade added. Water experts also claim that a large amount of water from the Cauvery is being diverted to agricultural fields. "Due to availability of water in large quantity, rice and sugarcane, which consume large amount of water, are being cultivated in the old Mysore region," said an expert. Water conservation; where do we stand? \* According to BWSSB officials, about 10% of households in Bengaluru have rainwater harvesting facility, but they do not reuse the water. \*Most commercial complexes in the city run their cooling equipment using water drawn from taps or borewells. There must be a law permitting only treated water to be used to run air-conditioning. \*Popularise effluent treatment plants and use of treated water. \*It must be made mandatory for all apartments to use treated water for flushing.

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