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# Ecological, economic value of water bodies in Karnataka is Rs 7.32 lakh crore

*The value of water bodies is gradually being lost to various development works.*

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Wetland (Representational Image)

**By Bosky Khanna**

**Express News Service**

**BENGALURU:** A recent study by the researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) - Bengaluru, shows that the worth of the entire wetland ecosystem in Karnataka is Rs 7.32 lakh crore (7,320.6 billion), which is gradually being lost to various development works.

The report titled 'Accounting of Ecosystem Services of Wetlands in Karnataka state, India' states that the ecological value of water bodies in Bengaluru, ranges from Rs 10,000 to Rs 55 lakh per hectare per day, depending on the water body and its utilisation.

The report stresses on the need for conservation of the ecosystems through sustainable management tenets. Researchers in the report said that it requires an understanding of the livelihood support of ecosystems.

Prof TV Ramachandra from Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, co-author of the report, told TNIE that values have been assessed based on the services provided, the protection it has and its utilisation. He said that it is important for the government to understand the value of the ecosystem while accounting the budget.

Its inclusion in the GDP is also important, as this is the only way to preserve the water bodies. The focus of the study was to understand the worth of wetlands through the accounting of provisioning, regulating and cultural services. The provisioning services accounted for the tangible benefits (including fish, fodder and water) considering the residual values indicated an annual revenue of Rs 49.70 billion.

### **'Wetlands play crucial role in food chain'**

Similarly, accounting of non-use values of ecosystems through the benefit transfer method indicating regulating and cultural services support accounted for Rs 96.89 billion and Rs 37.93 billion per year, respectively, stated the report.

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Researchers in the report also stated that the annual flow of water in the ecosystem accounted to Rs 284.52 billion per year. However the overall net present value of the ecosystem accounted for Rs 7,320.6 billion (7.32 lakh crore) which includes the

ecological, socio-cultural and environmental support wetland provides to ecosystems in Karnataka.

In case of the water bodies of Bengaluru, the researchers accounted two water bodies in the report- Rachenahalli and Varthur lakes, spread across 42.09 ha and 220 ha, respectively. The report stated that the total value of the ecosystem services provided by Rachenahalli lake is Rs 10,435 hectares per day and that of Varthur lake is Rs 55,54,000 hectares per day.

Prof Ramachandra explained that water bodies not just help fishermen, but play a crucial role in the ecosystem and that needs to be accounted for -- vegetation, livelihood support, provision of water (surface and underground) and other products. Thus it is important to ascertain its ecological and economic worth in decision making process by the government.

The method of assessment includes market price method, socio-economic surveys, contingent value methods and questionnaires to ascertain the dependence on water bodies.



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