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## WG Task Force awaits report on people's health

Stanley Pinto, TNN Feb 16, 2013, 12.46AM IST

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**MANGALORE:** The Western Ghats Task Force will make necessary recommendations to the Centre and the state after receiving the report of the epidemiological survey on residents living in the 0-16 km radius of the Kaiga Generating Station (KGS).

The survey work was taken up by Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), Mumbai, in March 2012 and is expected to be completed in two years.

Ananth Hegde Ashishar, chairman of the task force, told TOI that it was because of the initiative of the task force that the survey was taken up.

Villagers of Hartuga, Balemane, Haruru, Balase and Kuchegar, and those who are living inside or bordering the five-km 'sterilized zone' of Kaiga had demanded the TMC to conduct a health survey so that all matters pertaining health would be cleared once for all.

The last epidemiological survey was conducted in 1997-98, but it was limited only to the staff and workers at the plant.

An epidemiology is the study of health-events, health-characteristics or health-determinant patterns in a population. It is a cornerstone method of public health research and helps identifying risk factors related to diseases.

The survey will be conducted in three phases. In the first phase, the survey will be carried out in 0-5 km radius of the plant, the second phase will cover people living in the 5-10 km radius and the last phase will study the health of people in the 10-16 km radius of the plant.

Regarding the establishment of the fifth and sixth units of the Kaiga Nuclear Power Project (KNPP), Ashishar said, "We cannot do much regarding this as the land belongs to them. What we can do is pressure them to follow the guidelines, have welfare and social responsibility projects for the local population and protect the local bio-diversity."

The move by KNPP to set up the fifth and sixth units has been opposed by many, including Yellapur Taluk Swarnavalli Mutt pontiff Gangadharendra Saraswati on health and environmental grounds.

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