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Government decides SIA on Yettinahole project, but Activists demand EIA

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MANGALURU: Even as the Karnataka Cabinet on Monday decided to conduct Social Impact Assessment (SIA) study through revenue department, activist Niranjan Rai slammed the decision as "a bogus one".

Dr Rai, who is the convener of Nethravathi Nadi Thiruvu Virodhi Horata Samiti (NNTVHS), told TOI that the decision taken by the Cabinet is totally a bogus one. "What we have been demanding the government is not a social impact assessment. We have been demanding an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA). However, the government is trying to fool people by deciding to conduct a social impact assessment through revenue department. We really do not know why they are conducting social impact assessment through revenue department," said Rai, who is spearheading the fight against Yettinahole project.

"Our main aim is to conserve and protect the river origins. We request them not to destroy the river origins and not to damage the ecologically sensitive areas of Western Ghats. Rain, water and the air that originate in Western Ghats are closely connected to the environment. They are trying to destroy the environment of Western Ghats through the project. Let them lift water whatever the quantity they want. However, it should not be from the origin of rivers. Let them lift water from the river basin not from the river root," Rai said. "There is a misconception that people of Dakshina Kannada are denying drinking water to parched regions. This is totally wrong. We are opposing the project only because they are trying to damage the river roots. If river roots are damaged, people of Dakshina Kannada and other regions too suffer. In addition, the groundwater in our region will be dried up. Destruction of environment will also cause reduction in rainfall. Hence, our demand is that the government should conduct and Environment Impact Assessment first. Further, a social impact assessment should not be done through revenue department, but it should be done through the department of forest, environment and ecology," he added.

