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'Large projects at Western Ghats causing tremors'

Sakleshpur (Hassan dist): Mar 2, 2015, DHNS:

Mild tremors in and around the Western Ghats is due to the unscientific schemes being implemented by the government in the name of development, fear people of the region.

In the backdrop of this, residents are gearing up to oppose all the projects being taken up in the Western Ghats.

The region (Kodagu, Sakleshpur and Moodigere) had witnessed mild tremors on February 25, at 6.58 am, which lasted a few seconds.

Environment activists have been strongly opposing the construction of hydel power projects, the Yettinahole drinking water project, and the laying of gas and petroleum pipelines, in the Western Ghats, given the adverse impacts that these projects can have on the environment and ecology.

Janaspandana Forum President Rakshidi said that the dynamites that are blasted during the works had caused irreparable damage to the earth with cracks being observed for kilometers at a stretch. Latest to add to the damages is the Yettinahole project, for which works have begun. "The State government has given administrative approval for the project in a hurry. Already there is a dip in the average rainfall by 30 per cent. The Netravathy, Gundia, Hemavathy and other rivulets, which used to have sufficient water for eight months in a year, are now running dry after merely four to five months," he said.

Unnoticed tremors

Hanumantha Reddy of Mines and Geology department said that dams built across Sharavathy, Kali and other rivers in the North Karnataka region had exerted pressure on the land, and the region experienced mild tremors more than 100 times every year, but they go unnoticed.

"Hence, any project that would be detrimental should be dropped," he said. Ecological imbalance

Karnataka Bio-fuel Board former president Y B Ramakrishna said that the ecological imbalance was cause for concern. "Water shortage is being faced in Western Ghats itself and it is impossible to supply water to Chikkaballapur and Kolar districts, 250 km away," he said.

Following the tremors the residents of Hebbasale, Aluvalli, Kadagaravalli, Nagara, Acchanahalli, Devalakere and other villages, who fear of the recurrence of the same, have joined hands to stage a protest soon.

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