

KPCL's scheme to rip apart Western Ghats

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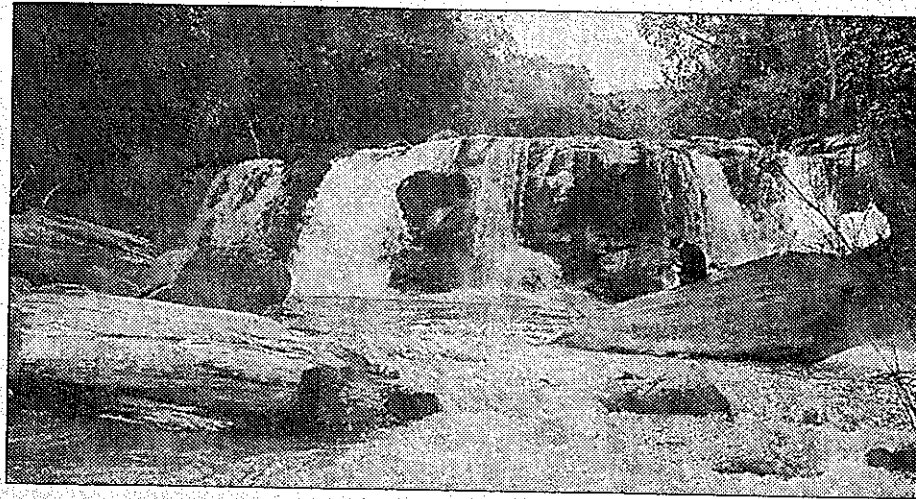
Bangalore, Nov 21: Four dams, 16 weirs and 21 km-long tunnels are all set to cut the throat of Western Ghats. The rivers flowing across the Western Ghats nourish the groundwater, besides providing a finest breeding ground of 3,500 odd fauna and rare flora.

The Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) is planning to implement the 'Gundia Hydro Electric Project' located in three districts Coorg, Dakshina Kannada and Hassan.

The present scheme contemplated is proposed to be developed in three stages with first phase comprising two dams across Hongadahalla and Bettakumari tributaries.

Adding to that the entire project will include rivers like Yethinahole, Kerihole, Hongadahalla, Bettakumari, Kumaradhara, Lingathhole, Kadumane and Abilibural.

Speaking to reporters here



Mookanamane Abbi falls which attracts visitors in large numbers will be submerged in the proposed dam. —Express photo

on Monday, Vidyaprasanna Theertha Swamiji, the chief pontiff of Sri Kukke Subramanya Mutt said the proposed project would destroy thousands of acres of forest land.

Also more than 18 villages would be submerged in the backwaters.

"The project contemplates harnessing the water of Be-

ttakumari and Girihole rivers both tributaries of Kumaradhara river.

The water of these rivers will be diverted and the regular river course will be dried. Subramanya and surrounding villages and wildlife of Bisle-Pushpagiri forest which are dependents of Kumaradhara river will be affected. Th-

ousands of pilgrims visit Subramanya temple town from across the world and the flow of sacred river Kumaradhara would be affected," he said.

Malenadu Janapara Horata Samiti president H.A. Kishore alleged that the KPCL was not disclosing the accurate information regarding the project.

Why this area is important

■ Western ghats is placed under 'Bio-diversity Hot Spots'

■ The proposed dam site falls in the serene forests of Western Ghats which spreads across six states covering 1,59,000 square kms of area

■ The Western Ghats covers 44,000 sq kms in Karnataka and Agumbe in the state receives highest rainfall in India (7,500 mm)

■ There are 38 distinct tribal communities dwelling here.

"Information regarding tunnels, transmission lines, power house, roads and townships which are expected to dent the forest cover further are not disclosed," he said.