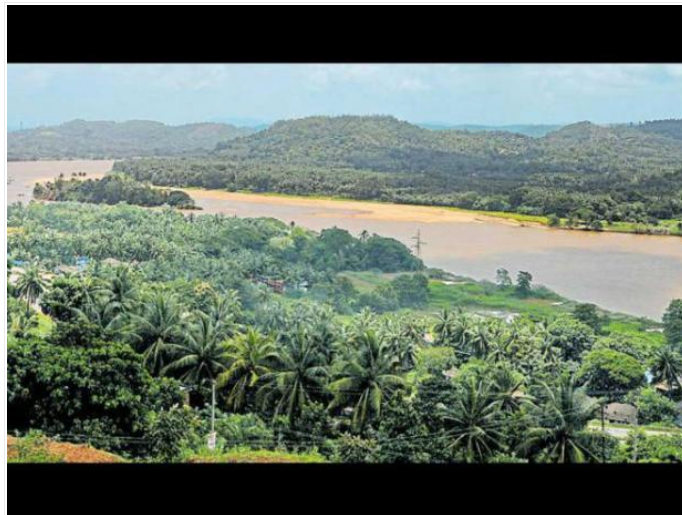


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Fresh move to bring Netravathi water to parched Bengaluru

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The Netravathi water can be pumped up to Yettinahole and during lean months at Yettinahole, the pumping machinery and pipeline from Yettinahole can potentially be used to pump the Netravathi water, says Mahendra Jain, additional chief secretary, Urban Development Department. DH File photo.

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Engineers and experts from Indian Institute of Science (IISc) on Monday made a presentation before Bengaluru Development Minister K J George and Urban Development Department officials on bringing the Netravathi river water to Bengaluru by extending the Yettinahole project.

Mahendra Jain, additional chief secretary, UDD told DH, "Nothing has been approved so far and it is too early to say anything. They have made a presentation and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will look into it," he said.

When asked if this was an extension of the Yettinahole project, Jain said: "May be. Netravathi water can be pumped up to Yettinahole and during lean months at Yettinahole, the pumping machinery and pipeline from Yettinahole can potentially be used to pump the Netravathi water."

BWSSB chairman Tushar Girinath said that they had asked Prof T G Sitharam from the Department of Civil Engineering in IISc and his team to prepare a feasibility report.

"Netravathi water can be a good source and the idea is feasible. But we have to assess the report. The economics need to be worked out along with the infrastructure and other details. We can treat sewage water and use it, but the demand is increasing and we have to look at the needs till 2050," he said, adding that there are proposals to bring water from Linganamakki too. The state government is keen to bring Netravathi water to quench the thirst of water-starved districts of Hassan, Bengaluru Urban and Rural and Chikkaballapur.

The officials who attended the meeting did not divulge details. Despite repeated attempts, George and Sitharam were not available for comment.

Idea opposed

This idea has been strongly opposed by other experts and professors from IISc. Prof T V Ramachandra from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc said that it is absurd to bring water from the Western Ghats.

"Bengaluru gets sufficient rain water. The city needs 17 tmcft water, we get 750 mm rainfall annually. Around 18-20 tmcft sewage water is flowing. If even 16 tmcft is recycled and reused and lakes are rejuvenated, then we do not need to divert Western Ghats rivers. Those who are supporting the idea, should visit Gujarat, where people are foul mouthing the government for diverting river water. They are complaining that the ground water has become saline and productivity has come down. I strongly oppose bringing Netravathi and Linganamakki water to Bengaluru," he said.