

Politicians with vested interests are fooling Kolar people with Yettinahole Project: IISc CES

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Moodabidri: "If existing lakes are desilted and surrounding areas are covered with vegetation, all the lakes, ponds, streams and water bodies can be brought back to life", said MLA J R Lobo. He was speaking after inaugurating the "YUVA Lake-2016 Conference", on the second day of the three-day International Lake-2016 Conference, on Thursday, at Alva's College, Moodbidri.

Lobo added and said, "If existing lakes can't retain water, what is the guarantee of new lakes perpetuating water? So it is advisable to go for extensive desilting process of lakes rather than thinking of creating new ones. Explaining the Pilikula project for conservation of Western Ghats, the legislator said, this was a unique project focusing on recreating and preserving flora and fauna and protecting the endangered species of Western Ghats. He termed this project as one of the unique projects not only in India but also in the world. He urged the people to follow the traditional methods of maintaining water bodies like "Madaka" and "Katta", which are inseparable parts of the agricultural fraternity. "We are systematically destroying our mother nature. Till now we fought world war for extension of our territory; to protect our trade and commerce but future wars will be on water", he cautioned. He said our ancestors had left us with beautiful nature but we were not in a position to pass the same legacy to our future generations.

Dr. T V Ramachandra, CES, IISc, Bengaluru said, "Today is an era of briefcases where the government projects are contractor and consultancy driven and decision makers can't make money with our low cost projects. So they easily deny our suggestions." Speaking about Yettinahole project, he said, "We had given a detailed report to the government saying that based on the rainfall data of 100 years in Yettinahole catchment area, this project was economically unfeasible and disastrous. It is having only 9.5 TMC of water, from which 6 TMC is used for peasants and 2 TMC for fishery. Only 0.85 TMC is available for general usage. He ridiculed this project and said, "Kolar people can get oxygen from Western Ghats through laid pipeline, but not the water. Since people are in distress in Kolar region, politicians are easily making the fools of them."

In his presidential remarks, Alva's Education Foundation Managing Trustee Vivek Alva asked the most sublime and rhetorical question, "Has age got anything to do with youth?" He said, "Among today's youth, there is a trend of lightness, dilution and superficiality and this could be a potential threat to the country if the responsibility is not understood." He stated that the Western Ghats are the assets of the entire world and its conservation should be a movement. He said change would surely take place when education was not just limited to needs and means. He ended his remark by saying, "All schools could be like universities and all universities could think like schools."

M D Subhashchandra, M A Khan, Bharath H Aithal and Harish Bhat were felicitated for their contribution towards preserving environment.

In the first technical session on "Wetlands and their Ecosystem Services: Experiences from North", Timo Huttula from Finland said the Finnish Environment Institute worked on the different aspects of environment such as marine research, sustainable construction and production, freshwater management etc. He explained the concept of ecosystem and wetland and evaluated the studies and training related to construction of wetlands in Finland. "Construction of wetlands is one of the most popular water protection measures in Finland," he said. Speaking on "Oxygen Depletion in Stratified Lakes-Why shallow and deep lakes react differently?", Alfred Wuest of Switzerland said the decision to clean up lakes had led to 90 percent success in Switzerland. In the last forty years, enormous activities to clean up the lakes in Switzerland were carried out by the Hydro Biological Laboratory, Kastanienbaum.

Researchers Timo Huttula, Alfred Wuest, former minister K Amarnath Shetty, Bengaluru's Environment Research Foundation's Prof Rajashekar Murthy, K K English Medium School Principal Uma Mohan, Alva's College Principal Prof Kurian and Lake Conference -2016 Coordinator Dr Rajesh were present among others.