



Society and Economy of Karnataka in News



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An Initiative of ISEC to draw your attention to current socio-economic issues pertaining to Karnataka published in different daily newspapers.



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AGRICULTURE

Vegetable prices skyrocket in city as supply takes a hit

Beans selling at ₹80 to ₹120 a kg in retail markets while carrot is selling at ₹60 to ₹80 a kg

Jahnvi T. R.
BENGALURU

To add to woes during summer, the prices of vegetables have shot up in Bengaluru in the last few days, thanks to a supply shortage and the quick deterioration in the quality of vegetables. While the prices have seen a slight increase in wholesale markets, the prices have almost doubled in retail shops.

“As there is a lot of heat emanating from the ground and no rain, farmers are not able to take out the yield which is why there is a supply crunch in the market. Until there is good rain, which might be in another two months, the prices will remain high,” said N. Manjunath Reddy, a vegetable trader at K.R. Market.

While the price of beans is ₹50 to ₹60 a kg in wholesale markets like the Kalasi-



A file photo of the vegetable market at Gandhi Bazaar in Bengaluru.

palya market and K.R. Market, it is anywhere between ₹80 and ₹120 in retail markets. Even in HOPCOMS, the price was ₹80 a kg on Friday. Similarly, carrots are priced at ₹40 to ₹50 a kg in wholesale markets and they are selling at ₹60 to ₹80 in retail shops. The price of Ooty

carrots has also breached the ₹100 mark in retail markets.

Capsicum (₹50 in wholesale and ₹70 to ₹100 in retail), brinjal (₹25 in wholesale and ₹40 to ₹60 in retail), radish (at ₹40 to ₹45 a kg in retail) and cabbage (₹40 to ₹50 a kg in retail) are some of the other ve-

Vegetable prices on Friday

Vegetable	Price in wholesale market (per kg)	Price at Hopcoms (per kg)
Beans	50 - 60	80
Carrot	40 - 50	74
Capsicum	50	66
Brinjal	25	54-62
Cabbage	20	42
Tomato	20 - 25	23

getables whose prices have gone up.

K.T.S. Niyamath, a vegetable trader from Kalasipalya, explained why retail prices are significantly higher than wholesale prices. “If they buy 100 kg of a vegetable from wholesale markets, the retailers will only be able to sell around 80 to 85 kg for a good price. Due to the heat, the vegetables will rot quickly. If they do not manage to sell the vegeta-

bles the same day, then they will not even get half the price the next day as quality reduces,” he said. However, he said that the current retail prices cannot be justified.

He also predicted that if the skies do not open up in the next week, then the prices of vegetables will shoot up further as supply would take an even bigger hit.

Greens not available

Due to heat damage, the availability of green leafy vegetables has also been reduced in the markets. On the city's outskirts, finding daily essentials such as fresh coriander and mint has also become a problem. “I had to check three shops earlier this week to find a bunch of good quality fresh coriander. Even then, I had to pay around ₹35 for a bunch,” said Vishal Kumar, a resident of Yelahanka.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, March. 16, 2024

Farmers in Cauvery basin districts upset over restrictions imposed on use of water

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

Directives from authorities in the Cauvery basin districts prohibiting the use of river water for irrigation have agitated farmers and planters, particularly in Mysuru, Mandya, and Kodagu.

Farmers have asserted that this is crucial irrigation time to safeguard crops. However, with the State grappling with drought, priority is being given to supplying drinking water to Bengaluru, Mysuru, and other major towns.

In Kodagu, planters have initiated irrigation for their coffee plantations, but the district administration has prohibited the use of river water for it.

Nanda Ganapathy, a farmer, said: "Irrigation is a crucial process for ensuring good yields annually. However, the district admini-



Farmers staging a protest in Madikeri on Friday.

nistration has instructed farmers not to utilise river water for it. This decision will significantly affect coffee plantations, given the lack of adequate rainfall in Kodagu this year."

On Friday, members of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) protested against the district administration in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Madikeri.

K. Manu Somaiah, district president of KRRS said: "The Cauvery origi-

nates in Kodagu, yet it's unfortunate that we are now facing water scarcity. The primary reason for the depletion of Cauvery water in the district is the destruction of forests and the use of agricultural land in the name of real estate development, which has been permitted by the district administration."

The Federation of Farmers' Organisations and the State Sugarcane Growers' Federation in Mandya have been urging the govern-

ment to release water from the Krishnaraja Sagar and Kabini dam for irrigation to protect standing crops.

Kurubur Shanthakumar, a farmers' leader, said: "Farmers from Old Mysore and Bengaluru are suffering owing to ban imposed on irrigation. We have appealed to the government to release water into canals to protect crops and provide drinking water to the people in the Cauvery basin. However, the government is prioritising water release to Tamil Nadu. This not only affects people's access to drinking water but also poses challenges for livestock that is deprived of water."

Severe scarcity

In Kodagu, towns like Madikeri, Virajpet, and Kushalnagar are facing a severe scarcity of drinking water. Even borewells and wells have dried up, and locals

say authorities have not been responsive in addressing the crisis in the district.

Codava National Council president N.U. Nachappa said: "Kodagu serves as the primary catchment area for the Cauvery. We are significant stakeholders and shareholders of Cauvery water, yet we are being deprived of utilising it to satisfy our basic water needs."

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Kodagu Deputy Commissioner Venkat Raja said: "The order is not to trouble anyone, especially farmers. With drought persisting this year and there being scarcity of drinking water, it's crucial to conserve water for essential needs, especially with peak summer ahead. We are with farmers and have implemented numerous measures to address the water crisis in the district."

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, March. 16, 2024

ಹೊರ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲೂ ಭರಪೂರ ಬೆಳೆ | ಆಮದು ತಂದ ಸಂಕಷ್ಟ
ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರ ಕೊರತೆಯಿಂದ ಕೊಯ್ಲು ವಿಳಂಬ | ರೋಗಬಾಧೆಯಿಂದಲೂ ನಷ್ಟ

ಕಾಳುಮೆಣಸು ದರ ಕುಸಿತ

■ ವಿನಯ್ ಕೂಡುರಸ್ತಿ ವನಗೂರು
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ಸಕಲೇಶಪುರದ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ವಾಣಿಜ್ಯ ಬೆಳೆಯಾದ ಮೆಣಸು ದರ ಕುಸಿದಿದ್ದು, ಬೆಳೆಗಾರರಿಗೆ ತೀವ್ರ ನಿರಾಸೆಯಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕಳೆದ ತಿಂಗಳು ಪ್ರತಿ ಕೆಜಿಗೆ 600ರಿಂದ 620 ಇದ್ದ ಕಾಳು ಮೆಣಸು ದರ ಈಗ 470ಕ್ಕೆ ಇಳಿಕೆಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಈ ವರ್ಷ ಹಾಸನ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಸಕಲೇಶಪುರ, ಬೇಲೂರು, ಅಲೂರು ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ವಾತಾವರಣ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಯಿಂದ ಮಣ್ಣಿನ ಫಲವತ್ತತೆ ಉತ್ತಮಗೊಂಡ ಕಾರಣ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಭಾಗಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮೆಣಸು ಉತ್ತಮ ಇಳುವರಿ ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಸಕಲೇಶಪುರ ತಾಲೂಕು ಒಂದರಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂದಾಜು ಹತ್ತು ಸಾವಿರ ಟನ್ ಅಧಿಕ ಕಾಳು ಮೆಣಸು ಈ ವರ್ಷ ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆಯಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ: ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರ ಕೊರತೆಯಿಂದ ಈ ವರ್ಷ ಕಾಳುಮೆಣಸು ಕೊಯ್ಲು ಮಂದಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿದೆ. ಕೊಯ್ಲು ಮಾಡಿದ ಮೆಣಸನ್ನು ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಗೆ ಕೊಂಡೊಯ್ಯುವ ಮುನ್ನವೇ ಧಾರಣೆ ಕುಸಿತವಾಗಿರುವುದು ಬೆಳೆಗಾರರಲ್ಲಿ ಬೇಸರ ಮೂಡಿಸಿದೆ.

ರೋಗ ಬಾಧೆ: ಮಲೆನಾಡು ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಸುಡು ಬಿಸಿಲಿನಿಂದಾಗಿ ಕಾಳು ಮೆಣಸು ಹಣ್ಣಾಗದೇ ಬೆಳೆಗಾರರಿಗೆ ನಷ್ಟ ಉಂಟಾಗಿದೆ. ಅಲ್ಲದೇ ಮರದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಳ್ಳಗಳಿಗೆ ರೋಗಬಾಧೆ ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ಬಹಳಷ್ಟು ಮೆಣಸು ಬಳ್ಳಗಳು ನಾಶವಾಗಿವೆ.

ನೆರವಿಗೆ ಬಾರದ ಸಾಂಬಾರ ಮಂಡಳಿ: ಕಾಫಿ ತೋಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಣಗುತ್ತಿರುವ ಬಳ್ಳಗಳನ್ನು ರಕ್ಷಿಸಲು ರೈತರು ಹೋರಾಟ



ಕಾಳು ಮೆಣಸು ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ದರ (ಕೆಜಿಗೆ)

ಮಡಿಕೇರಿ	510
ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು	480
ಗೋಣಿಕೊಪ್ಪ	490
ಕುಣಿಗೇನಹಳ್ಳಿ	490
ಮಂಗಳೂರು	480
ಮೂಡಿಗೆರೆ	490
ಸಕಲೇಶಪುರ	470
ಸಕಲೇಶಪುರ ಸಾಯಿನಾಥ್	500
ಬಾಳ್ಕುಪೇಟೆ	460

ಮಾರ್ಚ್ ಆರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ

ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಏರುಪೇರಾದ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಲ್ಪಮಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಬೆಲೆ ಕುಸಿತ ಉಂಟಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಏಪ್ರಿಲ್ ಆರಂಭಕ್ಕೂ ಮುನ್ನ ಕಾಳುಮೆಣಸು ಬೆಲೆ ಏರಿಕೆ ಸಾಧ್ಯತೆ ಇದೆ.

- ದಿನೇಶ್ ಆಚಾರ್ಯ

ಕಾಳು ಮೆಣಸು ವ್ಯಾಪಾರಿ,
ಹಾನುಬಾಳು
ಸಕಲೇಶಪುರ ತಾಲೂಕು

ಬೆಲೆ ಇಳಿಕೆಗೆ ಕಾರಣ

ಕಾಳು ಮೆಣಸಿನ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಕೇರಳದ ಕೊಚ್ಚಿಗೆ ವೈನಾಡು, ಇಡುಕ್ಕಿ ಹಾಗೂ ತಮಿಳುನಾಡಿನ ಕೆಲವು ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಿಂದ ಲಕ್ಷಾಂತರ ಟನ್ ಕಾಳು ಮೆಣಸು ಬಂದ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ವ್ಯಾಪಾರಸ್ಥರು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಕಾಳು ಮೆಣಸಿಗೆ ನಿರ್ಲಕ್ಷ್ಯ ವಹಿಸಿದ್ದು, ಬೆಲೆ ಕುಸಿತ ಉಂಟಾಗಿದೆ ಎನ್ನಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಗುಜರಾತ್ ಮತ್ತು ಮುಂಬಯಿ ವ್ಯಾಪಾರಿಗಳು ವಿಯೆಟ್ನಾಂ, ಆಫ್ರಿಕಾ, ಇಂಡೋ ನೇಷಿಯಾದ ಕೆಲವು ಭಾಗಗಳಿಂದ ಕಡಿಮೆ ದರದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಳುಮೆಣಸನ್ನು ಆಮದು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಧಾರಣೆ ಕುಸಿತಕ್ಕೆ ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಕಾರಣ ಎನ್ನಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ಬಳ್ಳಗಳ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸಂಬಾರ ಮಂಡಳಿ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಯಾವುದೇ ಕ್ರಮ ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳದೆ ಇರುವುದು ಹಾಗೂ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಬೆಳೆ ರಕ್ಷಣೆ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸರಿಯಾದ ವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ನೀಡದೇ ಇರುವುದು ತೊಂದರೆಗೀಡು ಮಾಡಿದೆ.

ಪತ್ತಿಮ ಫುಟ್ಟ ಭಾಗಗಳಾದ ಕೊಡಗು, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು, ಹಾಸನ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಕಾಫಿ ಬೆಳೆಯುವ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಳುಮೆಣಸಿಗೆ ಅಂತಾರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉತ್ತಮ ಬೆಲೆ ಇದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಈಗ ನಾನಾ ಕಾರಣಕ್ಕೆ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ವಾಗಿ ಬೆಲೆ ಕುಸಿತ ಉಂಟಾಗಿದೆ.

Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.05, Mar.17, 2024

K'taka grain yield may drop by 31 lakh tonnes this year

Water scarcity hits production; prices expected to go up

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Karnataka's foodgrain production (cereals and pulses) is estimated to decrease by 31 lakh tonnes this year compared to the previous year. Paddy is anticipated to see the highest fall, with estimates showing a plunge from 65 lakh tonnes to 38 lakh tonnes.

The steep decline is attributed to the low water storage in the Tungabhadra and Kaveri basins, critical paddy-growing regions. The area under paddy cultivation has shrunk by 4 lakh hectares due to the state government's restrictions in these basins. Karnataka is set to see the lowest paddy harvest in over a decade.

Based on the agriculture department's second advance estimates, the state might experience a deficit in the production of various cereals and pulses, and not just paddy. Only jowar, tur and Bengal gram are expected to buck the trend.

In a typical year, Karnataka harvests 129 lakh tonnes of

Paddy plight

- Paddy production set to plunge from 65L tonnes to 38L tonnes
- Area under cultivation has shrunk by 4L hectares
- Low water storage in Tungabhadra and Kaveri basins

Cereal killer

- Rainfall deficit impacts cereal cultivation
- Ragi production to see a drop of 3L tonnes
- Oil seed yield to decline from 14L tonnes to 10L tonnes



cereals and pulses. The previous year saw an increase to 143 lakh tonnes. However, the production is estimated to slump to 112 lakh tonnes this year.

This year's rainfall deficit has predominantly impacted cereal cultivation. While jowar production is estimated to increase by 60,000 tonnes compared to last year, ragi is projected to witness a drop of around 3 lakh tonnes.

"Erratic rainfall led to a challenging kharif season, and the total failure of rabi crops has dealt a severe blow to both the farmers and the state's production," said BK Desai, Director of Research at University of Agriculture Sciences, Raichur.

► Grain, Page 5

Grain, from Page 1

Several farmers who shifted from traditional crops to those requiring less water have not seen any significant improvement. "The rain and the government cheated us," said Ramappa Menasinakai, a farmer in Gangavathi who switched to cultivating green

gram from paddy. He said the yield was merely 65% of what was anticipated. The water released from the Tungabhadra reservoir was not sufficient for green gram, he added.

The production of oil seeds is also expected to decline. From 14 lakh tonnes last year, the production of groundnut, sesame, sunflower, mustard

and other crops is projected to decrease to around 10 lakh tonnes this year.

Experts fear that this year's low yield might push the kitchen budget northwards and also impact the state government's ambitious Anna Bhagya scheme.

"In the current scenario, the government has to look for

foodgrains outside the state," said a senior faculty member at the University of Agriculture Sciences, Dharwad.

However, Agriculture Department Director GT Putra says Karnataka would not encounter an acute shortage this year. "While the rabi and kharif yields haven't met expectations, we are hopeful that

by the third and fourth advance estimates, we will minimise the foodgrain deficit," he said.

Farmers have been given a contingency plan to minimise their losses and grow alternative crops. The state government will ensure that the prices of essential foodgrains don't rise sharply, he said.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1&5, March, 18, 2024

B'luru stares at insipid food table as water table dips in Kolar, CB'Pur

Growers of veggies, fruits bear brunt of dry borewells

VARSHA GOWDA
BENGALURU, DHNS:

Just on the periphery of Bengaluru, Chikkaballapur and Kolar districts are major suppliers of vegetables and fruits to the city.

As a water crisis looms, lakhs of borewells in these districts are proving insufficient in providing a reliable water source for agriculture and drinking needs—putting the drinking water security of people in Chikkaballapur and Kolar and supply of vegetables to Bengaluru in jeopardy.

Shreedevi, a farmer on the outskirts of Chikkaballapur town, has used water from 14 borewells in over three decades, not accounting for six failed borewells.

Her family has done all it can to minimise water use, including drip irrigation.

"Right now, only four borewells are functioning. The weather is so dry and soil moisture is very low. I do not know if our crops will survive without irrigation," she says. The farmer grows a variety of

leafy greens and vegetables on her three acres.

"Most vegetables supplied to Bengaluru come from nearby Malur and other taluks in Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts. This is the case because vegetables and fruits are highly perishable. Due to proximity and the massive scale of demand from Bengaluru, these areas have become important," says Prakash Kammardi, retired professor in the department of agricultural economics at University of Agricultural Sciences and former chairman of Karnataka Agricultural Prices Commission.

Historically, Kolar and Chikkaballapur have depended on groundwater for irrigation.

Shreedevi's family is among many which rely exclusively on borewells.

Farmer Ramu Shivanna from Kalvamanali village, Kolar district, explains that low groundwater levels have hit water supply to crops. On his five-acre farm, Shivanna cultivates tomatoes and potatoes.

"We provide water through drip irrigation for only two



Chikkaballapur and Kolar districts are major suppliers of vegetables and fruits to Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO

days a week. This delays flowering, causes some plants to wither and output is low," he says.

A report titled 'Dynamic Groundwater Resources Assessment of India' found Kolar categorised as groundwater over-exploited (199%) district, followed by Chikkaballapur (145%) and Bengaluru Rural (137%).

Relying on groundwater for irrigation has proved to be a financial blackhole for farmers.

"Installing one borewell costs nothing less than Rs 3 lakh," says Lokesh K M, who grows grapefruit in the area. To date, Lokesh has borrowed and saved money to finance 14 borewells.

"Only four are functioning," he says. The most recent borewell, at 1,480 ft, is the deepest. Lokesh says, "I can make

maybe Rs 10 lakh a year if crop is good, but more than Rs 6 lakh goes into borewell maintenance. How can I afford more and more borewells?" he says.

There was initially some hope when KC Valley and HN Valley projects, which aimed to recharge groundwater by filling lakes with Bengaluru's treated water, were introduced.

Officials in minor irrigation department claim the rejuvenation of lakes with treated water has been beneficial.

"Groundwater is more available near lakes that received treated water," says Balasubramanya B, deputy secretary in the department.

Even though lakes have been filled with secondary treated water since then, water availability is questionable.

"Officials have been saying the project is successful, because between 2020 and 2022 there was sufficient rainfall. This was when the project was introduced. Sufficient rainfall was a major reason why water table improved," says Anjaneya Reddy, a farmer leader in Chikkaballapur.

Shivanna disputes the success of the project. His land lies just next to a KC valley channel. "In the past 5 months, stressed due to lack of water for irrigation, I have invested in installation of 2 borewells. Even though we drilled up to 1,200 ft, both borewells failed," he says.

In Shreedevi's case, only 500 to 600 gallons of water was available for use, says Ramesh, her husband.

"Only the most recent borewell installed two years ago yielded 1,000 gallons of water. That was when there was enough rain," he adds.

When the motors are turned on these days, water flow is low, the couple said.

"We do not know how long water will last in these borewells. We do not know if we will get more water on digging more borewells," says Shreedevi.

"Our water is used to grow vegetables, rear cattle and chicken for milk and meat. All of this goes to Bengaluru. How will the city fare if we don't have water?" he says.

Source: Deccan Herald, p. 5, March, 18, 2024

Brief rain respite soon in some K'taka districts

B'luru may get pre-monsoon rainfall in April

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Eight districts in Karnataka are expected to receive light rainfall in isolated locations over the next two to three days, offering some respite from the summer heat.

Bidar, Kalaburagi, Kodagu, Mysuru, Mandya, Hassan, Koppal and Raichur are these districts.

However, a "good cover" of pre-monsoon showers across the state would come only in April and May, said weather scientists. Bengaluru is expected to experience pre-monsoon thundershowers in the last week of March or the first week of April.

El Nino, the climate pattern that resulted in last year's monsoon shortfall, is also weakening, said scientists at the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bengaluru.



Summer showers

In 2-3 days

Light showers in Bidar, Kalaburagi, Kodagu, Mysuru, Mandya, Hassan, Koppal and Raichur

April-May

Pre-monsoon showers across Karnataka

March-end/April 1st week

Thundershowers in B'luru

"The probability of the El Nino effect becoming neutralised is high in the next three to four months," said IMD Bengaluru

Director Prasad. Vijayapura, Kalaburagi, Gadag and Bidar can expect hailstorms during April and May. "At present, we are witnessing the conver-

gence of multiple factors that are resulting in showers in Bidar and Kalaburagi," he said.

IT/BT and Rural Development Minister Priyank Kharge said the government is prepared to address the challenges posed by one of the worst droughts in decades. "The government has formed a sub-committee consisting of ministers to monitor drought conditions. We are adopting measures to minimise the impact," he said.

BWSSB to use robotic technology to maintain public borewells, Page 3

Source: Deccan Herald, p. 1, March, 19, 2024

ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ₹ 8 ಸಾವಿರದಿಂದ ₹ 2.5 ಸಾವಿರಕ್ಕಿಳಿದ ಬಿಳಿ ಜೋಳ ಹಳಕ್ಕೆ ಬಿತ್ತು ಜೋಳದ ದರ

■ ರುದ್ರಗೌಡ ಪಾಟೀಲ ಗದಗ

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ಬಿಳಿ ಜೋಳ, ಮೆಣಸಿನಕಾಯಿ ಬೆಳೆದ ಉತ್ತರಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಭಾಗದ ರೈತರು ಬೆಲೆ ಕುಸಿತದಿಂದ ತೀವ್ರ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಸಂಕಷ್ಟ ಎದುರಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಹಿಂಗಾರು ಹಂಗಾಮಿನ ಆರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಕ್ವಿಂಟಾಲ್ ಗೆ 8,000 ರೂ. ಇದ್ದ ಬಿಳಿ ಜೋಳದ ದರ ಈಗ 2,500 ರೂಗೆ ದಿಢೀರ್ ಕುಸಿತಗೊಂಡಿದೆ. ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಂಗಾರು ಮಳೆ ಈ ಬಾರಿ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಯಷ್ಟು ಸುರಿಯದ ಕಾರಣ ಇಳುವರಿ ಕುಂಠಿತವಾಗಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ ಹಿಂಗಾರು ಮಳೆ ಆಧರಿಸಿ, ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರು ಬಳಸಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ರೋಣ, ನರಗುಂದ, ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೇಶ್ವರ, ಮುಂಡರಗಿ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ವಿವಿಧ ಭಾಗಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಜೋಳ ಬೆಳೆದಿದ್ದ ರೈತರು ಲಾಭದ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದರು. ಆದರೆ ಏಕಾಏಕಿ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬಿಳಿ ಜೋಳದ ದರ ದಿಢೀರ್ ಇಳಿಕೆಯಾಗಿದ್ದು ಇದರಿಂದ ಲಾಭದ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ನಿರಾಸೆಯಾಗಿದೆ.

4 ತಿಂಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ಬೆಲೆ

ಕಳೆದ ಹತ್ತು ದಿನಗಳಿಂದ ಜೋಳದ ಬೆಲೆ ದಿಢೀರ್ ಕುಸಿತ ಕಂಡಿದ್ದು ಗದಗ ರೈತರು ಕಂಗಾಲಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಕೆಂಪು ಮೆಣಸಿನಕಾಯಿ ಬೆಲೆ ಕುಸಿತದ ಪ್ರವೃತ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ಅನುಸರಿಸಿ, ಬರದ ನಡುವೆ ರೈತರು ಸತತ ನಷ್ಟ ಎದುರಿಸಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಜೋಳದ ಬೆಲೆ ಕಳೆದ ನಾಲ್ಕು ತಿಂಗಳು ಕ್ವಿಂಟಾಲ್ ಗೆ ಸುಮಾರು 7ರಿಂದ 8 ಸಾವಿರ ರೂ. ಗಳಿದ್ದರೆ, ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ 2,500-3,500 ರೂ.ಗೆ ಕುಸಿದಿದೆ. ಉತ್ತರ ಮತ್ತು ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಬೆಳೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದಾದ ಜೋಳವನ್ನು ಕೊಪ್ಪಳ, ಹಾವೇರಿ, ಗದಗ, ಬೀದರ್, ಧಾರವಾಡ ಮತ್ತು ಇತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ



AI ಚಿತ್ರ

ಪ್ರತಿ ಕ್ವಿಂಟಾಲ್ ಜೋಳಕ್ಕೆ 2500 ರಿಂದ 3500 ರೂ

ವರೆಗೆ ದರವಿದೆ. ಬೆಳೆಗಳು ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಗೆ ಬಂದರೆ ಸಾಕು ವಿವಿಧ ಬೆಳೆಗಳ ಬೆಲೆ ಏಕಾಏಕಿ ಇಳಿಕೆ ಆಗಲು ಆರಂಭವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ರೈತರು ಆರ್ಥಿಕವಾಗಿ ಸದೃಢರಾಗಲು ಹೇಗೆ ಸಾಧ್ಯ? ದಿನದಿಂದ ದಿನಕ್ಕೆ ಅಗತ್ಯ ವಸ್ತುಗಳ ಬೆಲೆ ಏರುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಆದರೆ ರೈತರು ಬೆಳೆದ ಬೆಳೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಬೆಲೆ ಇಲ್ಲದಂತಾಗಿದೆ.

-ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ಜಾಲಿಹಾಳ
ಸಂದಿಗ್ವಾಡ, ಗದಗ

ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿ ರೈತರಿಂದ ಎಫ್ ಎಕ್ಯೂ ಗುಣಮಟ್ಟದ ಜೋಳ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನವನ್ನು ಖರೀದಿಸಲು ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಮೇ 31ರವರೆಗೆ ನೋಂದಣಿ ಕಾರ್ಯ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗುವುದು.

ಪ್ರತಿ ಎಕರೆಗೆ 20 ಕ್ವಿಂಟಾಲ್ ನಂತೆ ರೈತರಿಂದ ಅವರು ಹೊಂದಿರುವ ಜಮೀನಿಗೆ ಅನುಗುಣವಾಗಿ ಎಫ್ ಎಡಿ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಖರೀದಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು. ಪ್ರತಿ ಕ್ವಿಂಟಾಲ್ ಗೆ ಜೋಳ (ಹೈಬ್ರಿಡ್) ಗೆ 3180 ರೂ. ಹಾಗೂ ಜೋಳ (ಮಾಲ್ಟಿ) ಗೆ 3225 ರೂ. ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

-ವೈಕಾಲಿ ಎಂ.ಎಲ್. ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿ, ಗದಗ

ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಳೆಯಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಆದರೆ ಈ ಬಾರಿ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಜೋಳ ಬಿತ್ತನೆಯಾಗಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ದಾಖಲೆ ದರ ಸಿಗುವ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆ ಹುಸಿಯಾಗಿದೆ.

ಉತ್ತಮ ಬೆಲೆಗಾಗಿ ದಾಸ್ತಾನು

ಬೆಲೆ ಕುಸಿತದಿಂದ ಕಂಗಡ್ತರೂ ಕೆಲ ಬೆಳೆಗಾರರು ಮುಂದಿನ ದಿನಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಜೋಳಕ್ಕೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ಬೆಲೆ

ದೊರೆಯುವ ಆಶಾವಾದದಿಂದ ರೈತರು ದಾಸ್ತಾನಿಗೆ ಮುಂದಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆದರೆ ಸಣ್ಣ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಜೋಳವನ್ನು ದಾಸ್ತಾನು ಮಾಡುವುದು ಕಷ್ಟವಾಗಿದೆ. ಮಾರಲೇ ಬೇಕಾದ ಅನಿವಾರ್ಯತೆಗೆ ಸಿಲುಕಿ ಈಗಿನ ಬೆಲೆಗೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಬೆಳೆಯನ್ನು ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಿ ನಷ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ಸಿಲುಕಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.10, Mar.19, 2024

ಮಹಾರಾಷ್ಟ್ರ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧೆ ಎದುರು ಕಣ್ಣೀರಾದ ರಾಜ್ಯ ರೈತರು ರಾಜ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಮುಳ್ಳಾದ ಮಹಾ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ

■ ಬಸವರಾಜ ಕೆ.ಜಿ. ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ

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ಈ ಹಿಂದೆ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ದರವನ್ನು ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣಕ್ಕೆ ತರಲಾಗದೆ ಪೇಚಿಗೆ ಸಿಲುಕಿದ್ದ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸರ್ಕಾರ, ರೈತರ ಪಾಲಿಗೆ ಲಾಭದ ದಾರಿಯಾಗಿದ್ದ ರಫ್ತು ಎಂಬ ಮಹಾದ್ವಾರವನ್ನೇ ಮುಚ್ಚಿತ್ತು. ಇನ್ನೊಂದೆಡೆ ನೆರೆ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರಗಳಿಂದ ಮಿಲಿಯನ್ ಟನ್‌ಗಟ್ಟಲೆ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಭಾರತಕ್ಕೆ ಬರುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಈ ಆಮದು-ರಫ್ತಿನ ಆಟದ ನಡುವೆ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಬೆಳೆಗಾರ ನಷ್ಟಕ್ಕೊಳಗಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾನೆ.

2023-24ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ 1,50,174 ಹೆಕ್ಟೇರ್ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಬಿತ್ತನೆಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಶೇ.80 ಭಾಗವೇ ಆಶ್ರಿತಭೂಮಿಯಾಗಿರುವ ಕಾರಣ, ಹಿಂಗಾರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಬಿತ್ತಿದ ಶೇ.60ರಷ್ಟು ಬೆಳೆ ನೀರಿಲ್ಲದೆ ಒಣಗಿದೆ. ಉಳಿದಂತೆ ರೋಗಗಳ ಹಾವಳಿಯಿಂದ ಇಳುವರಿ ಕುಂಠಿತವಾಗಿದೆ. 20 ಲಕ್ಷ ಟನ್‌ಗೂ ಅಧಿಕ ಇಳುವರಿ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆ ವೈಕಿ ಅರ್ಧದಷ್ಟು ಬೆಳೆ ಬಂದಿಲ್ಲ.

ರೈತರಿಗೆ ನಷ್ಟ, ವ್ಯಾಪಾರಿ ಸಂತುಷ್ಟ

ಈರುಳ್ಳಿಯ ಸಗಟು ಹಾಗೂ ಚಿಲ್ಲರೆ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ದರದ ನಡುವೆ ಅಜಗಜಾಂತರ ವ್ಯತ್ಯಾಸವಿದೆ. ಸಣ್ಣ ಗಾತ್ರದ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿಗೆ 6ರಿಂದ 8 ರೂ. ಸಗಟು ದರವಿದ್ದು, ಚಿಲ್ಲರೆ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿ 30 ರೂ.ಗೆ ಮಾರಾಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಮಧ್ಯಮ ಗಾತ್ರ 10 ರೂ. ಹೋಲ್‌ಸೇಲ್ ಬೆಲೆಯಿದ್ದು, ಚಿಲ್ಲರೆ ಅಂಗಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ 40 ರೂ. ಕೊಟ್ಟು ಗ್ರಾಹಕರು ಖರೀದಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ದೊಡ್ಡ ಗಾತ್ರದ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿಗೆ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ 15 ರೂ. ಸಗಟು ದರವಿದ್ದರೆ, ತರಕಾರಿ ಅಂಗಡಿಯವರು 50 ರೂ.ಗೆ ಮಾರುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ದಲ್ಲಾಳಿಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಚಿಲ್ಲರೆ ವ್ಯಾಪಾರಿಗಳು ತಾವು ಲಾಭ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು, ನಷ್ಟವನ್ನೆಲ್ಲಾ ರೈತರ ಮೇಲೆ ಹಾಕುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

₹15 ಕೆ.ಜಿ.ಗೆ

ದೊಡ್ಡ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ
ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ಸಗಟು ದರ

₹50 ಕೆ.ಜಿ.ಗೆ

ಅಂಗಡಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ
ಮಾರಾಟ ದರ



ಬೆಳೆ-ಬೆಲೆ ಎರಡೂ ಕಡಿಮೆ!

ಒಂದೆಡೆ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಬೆಳೆ ಪ್ರದೇಶ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಮತ್ತೊಂದೆಡೆ, ಬೆಳೆದ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿಗೆ ಬೆಲೆಯೂ ಸಿಗುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಆತ ರೋಗಗಳು ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ ವೆಚ್ಚವೂ ಅಧಿಕವಾಗಿದೆ. ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆ ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾದರೂ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಬೆಲೆ ಸಿಗದೆ ಇರಲು ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಕಾರಣ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ನೀತಿ ಹಾಗೂ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಿತ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಇಲ್ಲದಿರುವುದು ಎಂಬುದು ರೈತರ ವಾದ. ಒಂದೆಡೆ ಅಫ್ಘಾನಿಸ್ತಾನ, ಪಾಕಿಸ್ತಾನ, ಮಲೇಷ್ಯಾದಿಂದ ಬರುವ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಮುಳುವಾಗಿದ್ದರೆ, ಗಾಯದ ಮೇಲೆ ಬರೆ ಎಂಬಂತೆ ಮಹಾರಾಷ್ಟ್ರ (ನಾಸಿಕ್) ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಹಾವಳಿಯಿಂದಾಗಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ರೈತರು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ನಷ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ಗುರಿಯಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.10, Mar.19, 2024

CM asks if farmers' conscience will allow them to vote for BJP

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Asking farmers if their conscience would allow them to vote for the BJP that has meted out “injustice” in irrigation projects, drought relief, and in not increasing man days under MGNREGA, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said that in the past former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa had promised to waive loans but refused to do so once assuming power.

“The BJP in its manifesto in 2018 had promised to waive loans of farmers in nationalised banks up to ₹1 lakh. After coming to power, Mr. Yediyurappa had asked if he had a note printing machine to fund the waiver. When farmers sought fertilizers, he had

ordered police firing in which farmers died. Will your (farmers) conscience allow you to vote for the son of Mr. Yediyurappa?” he asked, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a rally in Shivamogga from where B.Y. Raghavendra is contesting.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said: “It has been over six months since drought was announced in the State and I have written several letters to the Centre to release ₹18,177 crore as drought relief. I have met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, but not a paise has been released so far. Why does the BJP hate farmers?” The Centre has not responded to the request to increase man days from 100 days to 150 days under MGNREGA, he added.

Source: The Hindu, p. 4, March. 19, 2024

More Indians are now eating fish, and a lot more of it, finds study

Vaishnavi Chandrashekhar | TNN

Fish consumption has increased in the country, even in inland areas where it hasn't been a traditional staple, a new study has found. This surge could be attributed to rising incomes, changing diets and improved availability of fish, it said.

Researchers analysed data from National Family Household Surveys between 2005-06 and 2019-21 to understand consumption trends in those 15 years for a study, 'Fish consumption in India: Patterns and trends', conducted by WorldFish India in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research and other govt and international bodies.

"The proportion of people eating fish increased from 730.6 million (66%) to 966.9 million (72.1%), an increase of 236.3 million (32.34%)," said the study. Annual per capita fish consumption rose from 4.9kg to 8.9kg between 2005 and 2020. Among fish eaters, per capita consumption rose from 7.4kg to 12.3kg.

India's consumption growth was among the highest in the World Bank group of lower-middle income countries, the study said. Even so, per capita consumption was a little over half the group's average of 14.9kg in 2020. North-eastern and eastern states remained big on fish, along with Kerala and Goa. Tripura had the highest percentage of fish eaters (99.35%).

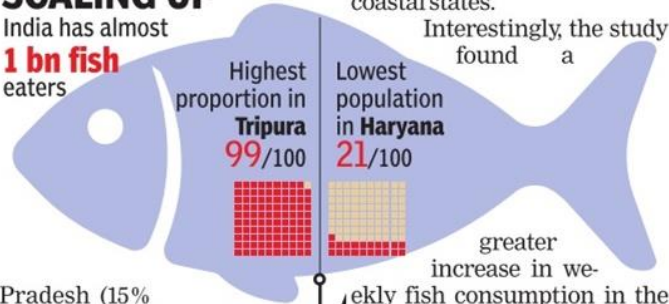
Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and West Bengal follows Tripura as states with highest percentage of fish eaters. At the other end of the fish scale, Haryana had the smallest share of fish eaters (20.6%) in 2019-21, followed by northern Punjab and Rajasthan.

Surprisingly, Jammu and Kashmir saw the biggest in-

crease in the proportion of fish eaters, with a 20.9% point jump, followed by Arunachal

SCALING UP

India has almost 1 bn fish eaters



Pradesh (15% point increase) and Karnataka (10.1). Consumption in Delhi rose by 8.7% points. The increase in J&K could be due to improved connectivity and cold storage networks, said Arun Padiyar, an expert with WorldFish India and lead author of the study.

The study also revealed the frequency of fish consumption has risen, with weekly intake increasing by 11.3%. People in Kerala ate fish most frequently, with more than 50% including it in their daily diet, followed by Goa (36.2% daily consumption) and West Bengal (21.9%). Meanwhile, Assam and Tripura had the highest weekly consumption.

More Men Eat It

Overall, 78.6% men ate fish in 2019-21 compared with 65.6% women. The gender gap was smaller in states where more people ate fish and more frequently, such as Kerala. Padiyar said the gender gap was partly because more men ate at hotels and restaurants than women. Urban areas had greater fish consumption, which included eating at hotels. However, consumption in rural areas was growing faster, according to the analysis.

Still Behind Eggs, Chicken

The period between 2005-06 and 2019-21 saw a general incre-

ase in non-vegetarian food consumption. Fish consumption lagged behind eggs and chicken, the study showed, although the gap was smaller in coastal states.

Much of the increase was due to an expansion in fish farming or aquaculture encouraged by government schemes. In a survey by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) last year, 56% of households cited increased availability and more variety as reasons for more consumption. "Push for fish farming can lead to a big boost for local consumption," said NCAER senior fellow Saurabh Bandyopadhyay. Padiyar said the wealthiest consumers are likely looking for value-added products, such as ready-to-cook dishes, or high-end varieties like pomfret and lobster. "If those are not available, they won't increase consumption."

Despite higher domestic supply – India is the second-largest producer of farmed fish in the world – fish imports rose five times between 2005 and 2020, from 14,000 tonnes to 76,000 tonnes. These imports were likely value-added products such as cleaned and deboned fillets for high-end restaurants, said Padiyar.

Source: The Times of India, p.7, March. 19, 2024

Guaranteed MSP is an ethical imperative

As the general elections draw closer, agrarian concerns have once again taken centre stage. Farmers from the heartland of the Green Revolution have travelled to the border of the capital to not only voice their distress, but also to shape the electoral discourse. The ruling dispensation, sensing adverse electoral implications, attempted to reach out to the farmers. It said it was ready to procure pulses, maize, and cotton at MSP, but this was contingent upon farmers guaranteeing crop diversification. However, these efforts were rejected as the core issues were not addressed, say farm leaders.

The perennial issue of fair pricing of farm produce reigns supreme, now coupled with calls for legal assurances of Minimum Support Price (MSP). However, beyond mere legal mandates lies the pressing concern of maintaining self-sufficiency in food production and addressing the ongoing challenge of distribution. This underscores the ethical imperative of anchoring a legal guarantee for MSP.

The MSP regime was a vital instrument for ensuring food security in India. Given the unique nature of agriculture, farmers lack the ability to exert significant influence, let alone determine the price of their produce. This constitutes a 'market failure.' Thus, MSP ensures that agricultural commodity prices remain above a predetermined benchmark to facilitate remunerative price discovery.

Produce and perish trap

The MSP is announced annually for 23 crops covering both the kharif and rabi seasons, well in advance of sowing, with 21 of them being food crops. However, despite the announcements, the implementation of MSP remains poor. Only 6% of farmers, primarily those cultivating paddy and wheat in States such as Punjab, benefit from MSP. Most transactions involving these



T.N. Prakash Kammardi

is an agricultural economist and former chairman, Karnataka Agricultural Prices Commission, Government of Karnataka

Farmers hardly get 30% of the price paid by the consumers. This will increase if MSP is guaranteed

essential food commodities occur below the MSP, rendering farming economically unviable for the majority of producers in India. As a result, farmers are trapped in a dangerous cycle of produce and perish, leading to crippling debt and deaths by suicide. All these emphasise the pressing need to ensure MSP, including the one recommended by the eminent agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan (with a 50% profit margin).

Several articles under the Constitution, as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants, support the legal recourse to guaranteeing MSP. According to a recent opinion survey by an English TV channel, 83% of landowners and 77% of farm labourers expressed solidarity with the agitating farmers. Notably, 64% of the public also endorsed the farmers' demand for a legal right to MSP.

Sugarcane growers already benefit from a 'statutory' MSP, which sugar factories strictly adhere to when purchasing cane from farmers. A few years ago, Maharashtra attempted to amend its Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act to prevent the purchase of agricultural produce below MSP, but the effort failed due to a lack of political will and a comprehensive strategy. The Karnataka Agricultural Price Commission has laid out a clear roadmap, including potential financial commitments, to ensure a legally binding MSP for crops cultivated in the State. A private member bill on The Farmers' Right to Guaranteed Remunerative MSP for Agricultural Commodities was tabled in Parliament in 2018. The Andhra Pradesh government unveiled a draft bill last year aimed at guaranteeing MSP for crops grown in the State. These efforts show that the objective of establishing a legal recourse to MSP has not emerged suddenly, nor is it impossible to attain.

The solution

A minor amendment to respective

State APMC Acts or the Centre's Essential Commodities Act would suffice to introduce a law ensuring that no transactions of farmers' produce occur at prices below the MSP. The budget outlay will not be as large as projected if legal recourse to MSP is accompanied by essential backward and forward linkages. Crop planning, market intelligence (including price forecasts), and other pre-sowing measures, along with the establishment of post-harvest infrastructure for efficient storage, transportation, and processing of farm commodities, greatly assist in managing the post-harvest glut in the market. Therefore, a legal route to MSP, complemented by the development of such linkages, would provide protection against "market failures" in addressing the surplus, rather than leading to "market distortion," as claimed by some mainstream economists.

Even enhancing MSP to provide a 50% profit margin over total cost is not challenging, considering that current margins already stand at around 22%. Finally, effective procurement and distribution, as envisaged under the National Food Security Act, 2013, is the most appropriate means to not only ensure MSP but also address hunger and malnutrition.

The PM-AASHA comprises schemes for price support and price deficiency payment, along with incentives to private traders to ensure MSP. While it possessed all the necessary elements as precursors to guarantee the MSP, its side-lining in policy circles highlights how political expediency rules the roost.

At present, farmers hardly get 30% of the price paid by the consumers; this will increase if MSP is guaranteed. Establishing a legally binding MSP will anger intermediaries as their share will get reduced. Often, government intervention, and particularly a legally binding MSP, is deemed a problem. It is this adherence to free market dogma that is preventing a just solution to the ongoing crisis in farmer incomes.

Source: The Hindu, p. 11, March. 20, 2024



Hundreds of sacks of chilli kept for e-auction at Byadgi APMC market yard. SANJAY RITTI

The red hot issue of Byadgi chillies

Byadgi chilli is known for its colour and flavour, and the century-old market in the town in north Karnataka transacts massive quantities of the produce and attracts farmers from beyond the State, too.

Girish Pattanashetti delves into the reasons behind violent incidents that occurred in this usually well-regulated and disciplined market on March 11

It's 10 a.m. on Monday, and Basavaraj Navale, who works for the commission agent Basavaraj M. Chatrad, is busy assessing the quality of the chilli kept for auction at the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) yard in Byadgi. Grabbing a handful of chilli pods from the lots containing several bags, he assesses the quality and jots down a few numbers on the notepad he is carrying while an aide opens the gunny bags to show him the pods kept for auction.

Like Basavaraj, there are scores of people with notepads going around the single commodity market yard dedicated to red dry chilli, which is spread over 78 acres in Byadgi town of Haveri district in north Karnataka. The newcomers start sneezing as they pass amid the bags, inhaling the pungent odour, while the likes of Basavaraj, accustomed to the odour, go about their work nonchalantly.



President of Byadgi APMC Merchants Association Sureshgouda Patil. SANJAY RITTI

A special variety

The century-old market is known for two primary varieties of chillies: the Byadgi Kaddi and Byadgi Dabbi. The Byadgi Kaddi (*Capsicum annuum* Linn var. *Acuminatum* Fingerh) is known for lesser pungency and is in high demand because of its very high colour value. While these two are the original varieties for which the Byadgi market is known, the Guntur chilli and around ten other varieties with varying levels of pungency and colour value, which various seed companies have developed, are also available.

The Byadgi Kaddi and Dabbi varieties cultivated in rain-fed areas are considered to be of the highest quality and, accordingly, fetch a high price. These chilli varieties were granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in February 2011, with the tag number 129. Those varieties grown under irrigation fetch a lower price, and those varieties developed by seed companies fetch even less.

Not grown in Byadgi

However, quite ironically, both these varieties, which were earlier grown in Byadgi, are no longer cultivated in the vicinity now because of low yield caused by monoculture. Now, they are cultivated in surrounding areas of Kundagol near Hubballi, and Vijayapura and Bagalkot districts, all situated in north Karnataka. Ballari district, also in north Karnataka, and the border villages of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states are the leading producers of chilli. The local farmers have mainly shifted to maize and cabbage gradually over the last two to three decades.

Sudden violence

At a distance from the Byadgi APMC yard, sitting under the shade, chilli farmers are engrossed in discussion about the unprecedented violence witnessed a week ago at the same mar-

ket and the subsequent loss and arrests. They turn away when they notice someone clicking photographs or making videos using a cell phone. A little later, a platoon of CRPF personnel is seen conducting a route march in a bid to reassure their safety.

"This is the first time that I have seen CRPF personnel marching in our APMC yard," exclaims Basavaraj Chatrad, a second-generation commission agent. "We have seen protests by farmers, which were limited to burning of tyres and roadblocks. Subsequently, the committee members would intervene to hold talks, negotiate and hike prices, and the matter would end there. But this time, it was of a different scale. Never before in the history of the century-old Byadgi market have we heard of such large-scale violence," he said, recalling the incident that occurred on March 11.

Just several yards away from his office is the APMC office, which now looks gloomy because of the soot caused by the burning of vehicles and office furniture. The final assessment of the damage caused is still underway, and workers are busy washing the building.

What happened on March 11

On the afternoon of March 11, just as the e-tender process at the APMC had concluded for the over 3 lakh bags that were put for auction and the buyers and commission agents had received the successful bids, a mob marched to the APMC office alleging low price for the yield.

Their allegation was that there was a sudden drop of ₹3,000 to ₹5,000 per quintal of chilli. Within no time, the vehicles parked on the APMC office premises bore the brunt of their anger; the office was ransacked and vehicles torched. "We were just writing down the prices for each lot when he heard the commotion," recalled Basavaraj Navale.

The vehicles were up in flames, and the fire brigade vehicle, which reached the spot, too, was torched. The personnel were manhandled and chased away. The protesting farmers locked the gate and did not allow the police and fire brigade personnel to enter the premises. It was only



Cold storage has come as a boon to the chilli farmers who bring their yield to Byadgi APMC. There are 32 cold storage units in Byadgi taluk now. SANJAY RITTI

Beyond cooking

Apart from traditional usage, the Byadgi Kaddi and Dabbi varieties of chilli are more sought after in many industries. They are used in the production of pickles, masala products, and chilli powder, as Byadgi chilli allows for the best colour naturally, that too with less pungency. Because of its long-lasting bright red colour, it is used as a colouring agent and also for extraction of Oleoresin (a concentrated form of the spice in solvent form).

Oleoresin is used as a colouring agent in the production of cheese, sauces, and spice mixtures and to deepen the colour of egg yolk. It is also used in confectioneries, the cosmetic industry (lipsticks), the beverage industry for toning fresh wine, the meat industry, the pharmaceutical industry, the poultry and cattle feed industry and as a dye in the textile industry. Byadgi chillies are also being used as substitutes for paprika by oleoresin manufacturers in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, America, Europe, Nepal, Indonesia and Mexico. From Byadgi, the chilli goes to the leading exporters located at Cochin (Kerala), Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, and in turn, after value addition, products like Paprika Oleoresin are exported.

(Source: National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Haryana)

after additional police force reached the spot that the angry crowd dispersed, and the situation was brought under control. But the damage had been done by that time.

However, surprisingly, the market activities resumed a few hours later, with thousands of farmers turning up to weigh their lots, which continued until late into the night.

The next couple of days saw visits by officials and Minister of Textiles, Sugarcane Development and Agricultural Marketing Shivanand Patil, meeting with farmers and APMC merchants, serious discussion about the reason for the violence, the problems, the demands and so on.

However, what triggered the violence remains unresolved. If the traders are to be believed, even when Byadgi APMC witnessed record arrivals of over 4 lakh bags in the second week of March, the rates were in the same range as those on March 11.

A massive market

Good and fair market conditions in Byadgi have resulted in the Byadgi chilli market expanding year after year. The Byadgi APMC now has 1,125 registered buyers and 1,013 commission agents, and of them, around 400 buyers and agents are active.

During 2022-23, the market recorded a turnover of ₹ 2,281 crore, and this fiscal it is likely to cross the number because of massive arrivals. The expanding market has resulted in the establishment of 32 cold storages in and around

Byadgi, with more farmers availing of the facilities to get better prices for their produce.

The chilli season begins in November and concludes in May. However, the Byadgi market provides direct employment to several thousand people throughout the year as the stored yield is put for auction even after the season is over.

The market also provides indirect employment to a few thousand people who, like the women from Katenahalli village Nagamma, Bhagya and Renuka, go back home getting higher wages than an average daily wage. They told The Hindu that while a daily wage might earn in the range of ₹400 to ₹500, they earn up to ₹900 on a good day, depending on the quality of the chilli pods they de-stem.

Their average daily earnings are around ₹ 700. The men who load and unload the chilli bags earn up to ₹1,000 per day. Many of the farmers voluntarily give headload workers a few fistfuls of chilli pods as 'khushi' (bhakshis), which is an additional income for them.

However, record arrivals and the problem of abundance have resulted in prices falling in recent years, particularly for varieties developed by seed companies. "Even now, good quality Byadgi Kaddi and Dabbi in rainfed areas will fetch over ₹35,000 per quintal. But the same is not the situation of other varieties. The prices have come down from ₹25,000 to ₹10,000 to ₹12,000 now because huge arrivals have exhausted the storage facilities," says first-generation commission agent Ganesh Achalkar.

Gujarat effect

Another reason cited is the arrivals from the Gondal APMC yard in Gujarat until December led to a drop in prices. The chilli variety from Gujarat is similar to the seed variety (known as 2043) that comes to the Byadgi market, which consequently led to less demand for the local variety.

But the president of Merchants Association, Byadgi, and former MLA Sureshgouda Patil, who is credited with developing the APMC yard in his over four-decade stint as President, believes that low prices were not the triggering point for the violence but the handwork of vested interests. "The market has been doing really well, balancing the interests of the traders and the farmers. The systematic functioning might have attracted the wrath of vested interests," he alleges.

Sureshgouda, who took over the business from his father in 1966, is unhappy with successive governments not doing much for the development of the Byadgi chilli even after it got GI tag. He said the problem of space and related issues, including the need for more cold storage, had been brought to the notice of the minister, who has "responded positively".

However, the traders believe that one cold storage promised by the minister will not be of much use as the increased arrivals demand more cold storage. They want the government to acquire land to help the expansion of the market. As a temporary solution, the merchants association has decided to do business twice in week instead of once a week so as to reduce the burden of handling more arrivals on a single day. The association had earlier decided to do business once a week because of the lack of availability of labour.

But despite all these problems, the farmers from as far as Mantralayam in Andhra Pradesh come to Byadgi with the hope of getting better prices and its ability to handle massive arrivals. Chikamma from Mantralayam said he comes to Byadgi as he finds it a better market than those near his native place.

Like him, Bhimanagouda from Shankarabande in Ballari district has been coming to Byadgi for close to three decades as he gets a comparatively fair price for the yield, which, he says, is in the range of over ₹5,000 than the local market.

"Byadgi market can handle large volumes. Even if I don't get the price I am hoping to get, I can put it in cold storage in Byadgi and sell when the prices are up, a facility, which is not available in any other market nearer to us," he said.

Source: The Hindu, p. 4, March. 22, 2024

The shrinking hopes of jowar farmers

The area under jowar in Karnataka in 1959-60 was 28.86 lakh hectares. It has reduced to just around six lakh hectares in 2022-23

Rishikesh Bahadur Desai
BELAVANGI

Praveen Hebballi, who cultivates a small patch of land near Betasuru in Belagavi district in north Karnataka, is a farmer with a difference. The young farmer has been growing multiple crops with the intention of preserving native varieties. His farm has scores of foxtail millet and jowar varieties. "I was able to procure seeds of around 60 jowar varieties, of which around 45 germinated," he says.

He works with various agencies like the Indian Institute of Millet Research, University of Agriculture Sciences, Dharwad, Sahaja Samruddha, an organic farmers association and Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network.

Sadly, he is among the breed of jowar farmers who seem to be vanishing. Though the great millet is the staple of most families in northern Karnataka, area under the crop is reducing.

"When I was growing up, there were jowar fields everywhere. But now they are hard to find. At least half the farmers in the village have given up cultivation of the crop. They may keep a few rows for self use as food grain for their families and fodder for the few cattle heads at home," said Hebballi.

Consistent fall

The area under jowar in Karnataka in 1959-60 was 28.86 lakh hectares. It has reduced to just around six lakh hectares in 2022-23. The production has reduced from 12 lakh hectares in 1960 to around seven lakh hectares in 2023.

The fall has been drastic in the last few years. In 2017, farmers grew jowar on 11 lakh hectares. But it dropped to 7 lakh hectares in 2022. Even in predominantly jowar growing districts like Vijayapura, the acreage has been halved. It reduced to 65,000 hectares in 2023, from around 1.5 lakh hectares in 2017.

The only saving grace is that the productivity has increased three times, to 1.2 tonnes per hectare from just 4 quintals per hectare in six decades. This is due to the research and development efforts of farm scientists over the years.

Reasons for the reduced coverage

A long pending issue is that of lower Minimum Support Price (MSP) for jowar. The current MSP is around ₹3185 for hybrid used as fodder and ₹3225 for Mal Dandi jowar or *bili jola* used as food grain. This translates to around ₹31 per kg for hybrid and ₹32 for Mal Dandi varieties. This is around half of the market prices of around ₹40 per kg of hybrid and ₹70 per kg for Mal Dandi.

However, the market prices witness large fluctuations.

In one year, these prices have changed from ₹2000 per quintal during harvest and ₹6500 per quintal during sowing.

Scientists working with jowar farmers have observed some other trends too.

Shreshail Karabhantanal, principal scientist at the regional agriculture research station in Vijayapura, lists the reasons for the shift to other crops. "Area under Pigeon pea (red gram) is increasing due to almost complete mechanization from sowing to harvest including plant protection measures, while there is no mechanization in



A file picture of maize crop in a rural area of Mysuru district. FILE PHOTO



Farmers engaged in winnowing jowar activity at Deshanur village near Belagavi. P. K. BADGER

sorghum production. Due to the expansion of the area under irrigation, crops like sugarcane, chilli and even new crops like Ajiwan or caraway are increasingly sown. They also have an established market, making them more attractive. Most sugar factories either carry out harvest operations or pay the farmers for it. Such facilities are not available for jowar as there are no jowar-based food processing industries in the region. Only recently, companies like Parle are introducing Nutritional biscuits containing Jowar flour, under their millet range," Dr. Karabhantanal said.

Labour shortage

Farmers say the main problem is low prices and labour shortage. "Jowar has been consistently fetching lower prices than other crops. The low yield adds to the woes of farmers. We have been demanding higher MSP and compulsory market intervention by the government. But our pleas have fallen on deaf ears," says Sidagouda Modagi, Krishik Samaj leader said.

"The major issue is labour shortage. Most of the work on a jowar farm is manual and farmers are not getting workers for the wages they offer," he said.

"Jowar farming is seen as highly labour intensive. Scarcity of labour during the harvesting period is holding back farmers from sowing it. The large fluctuations in market price and solicitation by agents of sugar factories who offer an improved variety of seeds and saplings and the assured buy back, makes farmers opt for

sugarcane," he further added.

The anomalous behaviour of the consumer
Jowar is the major food crop in the seven districts of Kalyan Karnataka and five districts of Kittur Karnataka. The variety used as a food grain is called Mal Dandi, as it was traditionally grown along the Dhoni river in the undivided Vijayapura district. All the other varieties, are referred by the general term - hybrid. These are grown only for fodder or fire wood.

"Home makers prefer the Mal Dandi because of the taste of the rotis. The hybrid jowar flour does not produce tasty rotis. I have never stocked hybrid jowar," Rohan Hanje says kirana shop owner in Belagavi.

Scientists, however, say there is no essential difference between the two varieties. "I think it is the perception that matters rather than the taste," said B.D. Biradar, senior sorghum breeder from UAS Dharwad. "Efforts of extension workers in convincing consumers that the two are not different have not been very successful," he said.

There is a huge difference in the productivity of the two varieties. While a farmer can get only around four to six quintals per acre of Mal Dandi, he can harvest up to 50 quintals per acre of hybrid jowar.

The food basket model solution

While farmers have been demanding higher MSP and universal market intervention, activists seek sustained state support in other forms.

"We have argued that the State Government

should adopt a food basket model of public distribution system, other than the distribution of rice and a few other chosen materials to poor families," said Abhay Kumar of Grameena Koolikara Sangha. According to him, the food basket refers to a package of food grains and other materials that are routinely consumed as staple by residents of the region. This means that the people of northern Karnataka should get jowar, southerners Ragi and the coastal residents should get par boiled rice. Successive governments have been proposing this. But there has been no effort at effective implementation," he said. He feels that procurement of jowar, will gradually increase the area under cultivation.

"Secondly, the government should promote local agri-based industries by procuring and supplying ground nut oil, rather than palm oil and at least one of the lentils, red gram, green gram or black gram," Kumar said. "Now that the state government has introduced Ragi gruel in mid day meals, ragi farmers are bound to get fairer prices," he said.



In 2017, farmers grew jowar on 11 lakh hectares. But it dropped to 7 lakh hectares in 2022. P. K. BADGER

Shivaleela Misale of the Swabhimani Shetkari Sangathan adds to this recommendation by saying, "The government should buy farm produce at the village levels at legally assured prices. If the department of agriculture can sell us seeds and fertilisers through the Raitha Samparka kendras or by opening temporary outlets in every village, why can it not buy from us?"

"There is renewed interest in sorghum in the West. But sadly, we are letting it vanish before our own eyes," says U.S.A.-trained bio technologist Veerendra Patil.

"Jowar crop is a friend of the farmer. It not only feeds his family, but also his cattle. It needs little water and is resistant to drought and vagaries of the climate. The cost of cultivation is lower compared to other crops. We should make all the efforts to preserve it," Dr. Patil said.

"Food scientists in the U.S.A. and Europe are promoting sorghum as it is among the few grains that are gluten and lectin free. Sorghum is high in fibre, antioxidants, protein, and minerals like calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, and iron. Our forefathers knew this, without any scientific data available to them. But we are oblivious to the data before us," he said.

He also advocates cultivation of sweet sorghum to be used as a fodder crop, as it has more energy. Some private companies have tried to produce multi cut sweet sorghum to harvest grains and the stems for green fodder and fuel alcohol. However, they have not been completely successful, he said.

The government of India, in coordination with state governments is conducting research on hybrid and native sorghum varieties.

All-India Coordinated Research Project on Sorghum (AICRP on Sorghum) was set up in 1969. It is now headquartered in the Indian Institute for Millet Research in Hyderabad. It has 21 centres in 11 jowar growing states that are governed by state agriculture universities. Four of these are in Karnataka - Kalaburagi, Vijayapura, Dharwad, and Chamaraj Nagar.

Source: The Hindu, p. 4, March. 22, 2024

Farmers' markets, leaf composting key initiatives of historic RWA

The association which covers Richmond and Langford Towns was set up in the late '70s

RASHMI RAJAGOPAL
TEAM METROLIFE

Laurel Lane in Richmond Town plays host to a farmer's market on the second Sunday of every month. Organised by the Citizens Welfare Association (CWA) of Richmond Town and Langford Town, the latest edition, held on March 10, saw nearly 30 stalls. The next is scheduled for April 14.

The monthly market is one of multiple initiatives by the CWA, which is one of the oldest in the city. It was formed in 1978.

The March market was set up under a tent to shield buyers, sellers and their produce from the blazing sun. Organic vegetables, fruits, and cleaning essentials in addition to food and accessories made from recycled material were



Leaf composting at the park.

some of the products that were sold. "This time, we also had some live music and a potter's wheel," shares Ashima Chander, president of the Association. "These events help foster a sense of community which in turn makes

residents more civic minded. And by focusing on organic and sustainable products, we're also helping them make environment-friendly choices," she adds.

Other initiatives

"We primarily work on civic issues in our area, ranging from garbage segregation to monitoring roads and footpaths, upkeep of Richmond Town Park and street lights, and assisting residents with Aadhaar cards and voter IDs," says Vivek Chand, former president of the CWA.

Over the past few years, the body has been focusing heavily on leaf composting. "Since 2016, the CWA has been taking up various initiatives to promote composting at source to reduce organic waste reaching the landfills. In 2018, we got permission from the BBMP to set up a leaf composting project at Richmond Town Park," shares Nidhya Reddy, current secretary of the CWA who spearheads the project.

They cordoned off two large sections of the park with mesh. The spaces were used to store fallen leaves. In 2021,

when they were asked to clear it for the expansion of the storm water drain, they sold the leaf manure to the community. Subsequently, in 2023, they opened doors to a more permanent space at the park for their composting activities. "We visited Swacha Grahak Kalika Kendra in HSR Layout to meet Shanthi Tummala and Vasuki Iyengar, experts in solid waste management, to understand the various leaf composting options. We decided on large pits built with cement blocks, having a central partition with holes for aeration," Nidhya explains. Leaf composting reduces organic waste going into landfills and eases the burden on the BBMP. The compost goes back into the local community as garden manure, she adds.

A bit of history

It was sometime in the late '70s when Jose Pullen, who lived on Curly Street, heard loud crying from a house nearby. He found that the owner, an elderly woman, had died. Her caretaker was distressed and unsure of how to proceed as the owner's children had moved to Dubai for work. Pullen took the help



Organic produce at the farmers' market.

of two other residents to organise her funeral. But this event motivated Pullen to form a body of residents to watch over their neighbours.

Some of the founding members were Justice Iqbal Hussain; Jose Pullen (chief

engineer); KS Krishnappa (advocate) and Kadial Manjappa (chairman, BMS College). The 45-year-old Association currently has around 20 committee members and covers about 900 families.

Famous residents

Nagineh Hussain Rizvi, descendant of Sir Ismail Mirza and Agha Ali Asker, grew up in the locality. "Ali Asker came from Persia. A horse trader, he became close to the maharaja and the British regent. He bought up a lot of property in the area. He is responsible for the construction of Johnson Market and the mosque next to it," shares the 77-year-old, whose family have been residents of the neighbourhood for centuries. Her father, Mir Sarfaraz Hussain, fought in World War II. He was in Japanese prisons in Malaysia and Singapore, she reveals. Mushir-ul-Mulk Mir Humza Hussain, her grandfather, was the first Inspector General of Police after Independence. Other famous residents include cricketer Syed Kirmani, doctor Sita Bhateja and tennis player Dechu Appaiah.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, March, 22, 2024

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Decentralisation

BBMP seals Mantri mall over ₹34.22 cr. property tax dues



BBMP officials locked the main door of the Mantri Square mall on Saturday and put up a banner stating that the closure was owing to non-payment of property tax arrears. SUDHAKARA JAIN

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has taken action against Mantri Square mall in Bengaluru by sealing the premises for allegedly defaulting on property tax to the tune of ₹34.22 crore.

A BBMP official said, “With the assistance of the police and BBMP marshals, we sealed Mantri mall at Malleswaram on Saturday morning due to outstanding tax debt amounting to approximately ₹34.22 crore.”

BBMP officials locked the main door of the mall

and put up a banner stating that the closure was due to the non-payment of property tax arrears and that the trade licence had been cancelled.

This is not the first time the BBMP has taken such an action against Mantri mall over property tax dues.

Source: The Hindu, p. 4, March. 17, 2024

Bridge governance gaps, revitalise ULBs

Coordination between parastatal agencies and local bodies is key to effective governance in Bengaluru

SNEHA PRIYA YANAPPA

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, enacted in 1992, provides for the establishment of urban local bodies (ULBs) as institutions for local self-governance. The Act aims at democratic decentralisation, empowering states to devolve certain functions to ULBs to bring democracy to the grassroots level. However, in reality, ULBs have been disempowered and lack autonomy over city development due to several city-level functions being taken over by parastatal agencies. One might question why it is problematic if parastatal agencies ease the burden on ULBs by performing some functions. These agencies, created by legislation, operate with their own capital and decision-making powers, headed by bureaucrats who are directly accountable to the state government rather than the ULBs, thus diluting the ULB's power. Additionally, the lack of coordination between these agencies and the ULBs exacerbates challenges related to overlapping powers and a lack of synergy between these institutions.

In Bengaluru, several important municipal and developmental works are carried out by multiple parastatal agencies such as the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), the Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM), and the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA), among others. However, these agencies often face challenges when their functions overlap with those of other institutions, leading to a failure in coordination and impeding project enforcement. For example, the Karnataka government withdrew the 2031 master plan prepared by the BDA because it conflicted with the transit-oriented policy prepared by the Directorate of Urban Land Transport. A lack of coordination was also evident when the BBMP's master plan on storm water drains contradicted the BDA's master plan. A study by Azim Premji University also highlighted how overlapping administrative jurisdictions between municipal corporations and state health services, coupled with a lack of coordination between them, resulted in chaos in urban healthcare. Additionally, disputes between parastatal agencies and ULBs further complicate coordination issues, as these agencies often shift responsibility and blame to one another.

This severe fragmentation of governance across the ULBs, the parastatal agencies, and other departments has led to a complete absence of trans-

parency and clear systematic processes. The state government can take two steps to resolve coordination issues between these institutions. Firstly, it can establish a coordination committee at the state level headed by the Chief Secretary of the State, where the commissioners of various institutions will be required to periodically meet to discuss cross-cutting issues. However, history shows that many coordination committees were created over the years without any success. In 2021, a committee was set up by the Chief Secretary to improve coordination among agencies that work on cross-cutting issues. While coordination meetings between the senior officials of the agencies may prove to be crucial, they are often futile because the message is lost in translation and when it is conveyed to those who actually oversee the implementation of projects on the ground.

Therefore, there is a need to supplement the functioning of these committees with a coordination committee at the zonal level that can ensure effective coordination and supervision of the implementation of any project that falls within the respective zone. The Zonal Committee can be headed by the Mayor and include the Zonal Commissioner. The committee can conduct meetings, as and when required, to ensure coordination and resolve any clash that may arise on the implementation of projects on the ground by the respective agencies by creating a mechanism for all strategic and operational matters. The zonal commissioners need to be made ex-officio members of the state-level coordination committee, as they can convey ground-level realities and difficulties in the implementation of projects. This can ensure synergy between the coordination committee both at the state level and the zonal level.

Secondly, the parastatal agencies are directly accountable to the state government and are currently not answerable to the ULBs. The ULB is merely reduced to just another body on a similar level as that of the parastatal agency, despite having elected councillors and a mayor. In this regard, there is a need for the state government to re-imagine the functions, clarifying the hierarchy and clearly assigning the roles of parastatal agencies without diluting the role of the ULBs.

While the spirit of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act has been lost with the overlapping jurisdictional set-up of institutional mechanisms, it is the unprecedented urbanisation in Karnataka that calls for constituting coordination committees at the state and zonal levels to avoid the tussle between parastatal agencies, ULBs, and other institutions and to rethink their functions to avoid an overlap in their functions and powers.

(The writer is a senior resident fellow at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy)

Source: Deccan Herald, p.6, March, 20, 2024

Govt increases BBMP's budget outlay by Rs 745 crore

More funds for solid waste management, hospital infra

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government recently approved the BBMP's budget for the year 2024-25 by increasing the total outlay by a whopping Rs 745 crore. The civic body – which had presented a surplus budget in February this year – is destined to have a significant shortfall in its revenue with the government piling more work.

In an order issued on March 12, the Urban Development department (UDD) has included at least nine new works taking the total outlay at Rs 13,114 crore. The department – which partly reports to Dy CM DK Shivakumar – has not cut down any works that were announced in the original budget.

Additional funds have been provided towards solid waste management wing, upgradation of hospital infrastructure, improvements to Ulsoor lake and Russel Market etc. Funds have also been earmarked for the discretionary use of mayor and standing committees, anticipating elections to the

BBMP, which might take place after the Lok Sabha polls.

The government has also increased the allocation meant for the discretionary use of Bengaluru Development Minister, currently held by Shivakumar, from Rs 100 crore to a whopping Rs 250 crore.

In the same order, the UDD has partially revised the BBMP's 2023-24 budget by including two new works.

With the BBMP expecting an increase in revenue, which could come close to Rs 4,000 crore, the government has directed the civic body to provide Rs 20 crore for the development of Magadi fort by Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Authority, Rs 50 crore for Mahadevapura assembly constituency.

Effect on the finances

In the 2024-25 budget, the BBMP had estimated Rs 4,470 crore from property tax, Rs 1,112 crore from other sources including advertisement fees and Rs 1,644 crore from the BBMP's town planning wing. With the government increasing the total outlay by Rs 745 crore, it is likely to have a bear-

Rs 100 cr for Bengaluru Development minister's discretionary use (increased to Rs 250 cr)

Rs 25 cr for Chief Commissioner's discretionary use (increased by Rs 50 cr)

Rs 15 cr for Standing committee's discretionary use (increased to 25 cr)

Rs 100 cr to match state government's contribution

Rs 20 cr for Halasuru Lake

Rs 50 cr for Mayor's discretionary use (increased to Rs 100 cr)

Rs 150 cr for upgrading hospital infrastructure

Rs 40 cr for Russell Market

New projects



Rs 200 cr for Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd

Decongesting traffic: Infra plan to cost Rs 4.7 cr

BENGALURU, DHNS: The BBMP will be spending Rs 4.70 crore to prepare an infrastructure plan to decongest Bengaluru's traffic.

The work has been awarded to Altinok Consulting Engineering Inc, which will study the 12 high-density cor-

ridors and suggest remedial measures.

The company's report will also form a basis for building the tunnel road, it is learnt. If sources are to be believed, during the course of their survey, the consultants have suggested an underground

road between Hebbal and Palace Grounds.

While eight companies showed interest in the work, only Altinok Consulting participated in the final bid, it is learnt. The BBMP roped in the company earlier this year.

ing on the BBMP's finances.

Speaking to *DH*, BBMP's Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath said the civic body had subdued its projections

but hoped that they would increase its revenue in the new fiscal year.

"With the government introducing many new policies

for Bengaluru, we will be able to meet the cost of new works from premium floor area ratio (FAR) as well as advertisement licenses etc," he said.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.2, March, 20, 2024

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ECONOMY

ಸೈಬರ್ ಕಳ್ಳರ ಹಾವಳಿ ನಡುವೆ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗೆ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಬರೆ | ಸೇವಾ ಶುಲ್ಕ ರೂಪದಲ್ಲಿ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್‌ಗಳಿಗೆ ಹರಿದು ಬರುತ್ತಿದೆ ಸಾವಿರಾರು ಕೋಟಿ ರೂಪಾಯಿ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಸೇವೆಗೆ ಅಡಿಗಡಿಗೂ ಶುಲ್ಕ

■ ಪ್ರಮೋದ ಹರಿಕಾಂತ್ ಕಾರವಾರ

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ಡಿಜಿಟಲ್ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಿಂದ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್‌ಗಳಿಗೆ ನಿರ್ವಹಣಾ ಮೆಚ್ಚು ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೂ, ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಮೇಲೆ ವಿಧಿಸುವ ಸೇವಾ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಹೊರೆ ಮತ್ತಷ್ಟು ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗುತ್ತಲೇ ಇದೆ. ಸೇವೆ ಹೆಸರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಜನರ ಹಣ ಚಿಲ್ಲರೆ ರೂಪದಲ್ಲಿ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಖಜಾನೆ ಸೇರುತ್ತಿದೆ.

ಸೈಬರ್ ಕಳ್ಳರ ಹಾವಳಿಯಿಂದ ತಪ್ಪಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಗ್ರಾಹಕರು ಪರದಾಡುವ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಪ್ರತಿ ಸೇವೆಗೂ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಶುಲ್ಕ ವಿಧಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಗಾಯದ ಮೇಲೆ ಬರೆ ಎಳೆದಂತೆ ಮಾಡಿದೆ. ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ, ಇಮೇಲ್, ವಿಳಾಸ, ಹೆಸರು ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿ, ಪ್ಯಾಸ್ ಕಾರ್ಡ್, ಖಾತೆ ವರ್ಗಾವಣೆ - ಹೀಗೆ ಪ್ರತಿ ಕೆಲಸಕ್ಕೂ ಶುಲ್ಕ ನಿಗದಿಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದು ಕೇವಲ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ನೌಕರರಿಗೂ ಜಾರಿ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಆಧಾರ್ ಆಪ್‌ಡೇಟ್‌ಗಾಗಿ ಜನ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಬದಲಾಯಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಸೈಬರ್ ಕಳ್ಳರ ದಾಳಿಯಿಂದ ತಪ್ಪಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದಕ್ಕೂ ಆಗಾಗ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಬದಲಾಯಿಸಿ ಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಗ್ರಾಹಕರು ಎಷ್ಟೇ ಬಾರಿ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಬದಲಾಯಿಸಿದರೂ ಪ್ರತಿ ಬಾರಿ, ಬ್ಯಾಂಕಿಗೆ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ನಂಬರ್ ಆಪ್‌ಡೇಟ್‌ಗಾಗಿ 59 ರೂ. ಶುಲ್ಕ ಕೊಡಲೇ ಬೇಕು. ಹೊಸ ಚೆಕ್ ಪುಸ್ತಕ ಪಡೆಯುವುದಕ್ಕೂ ಹಣ ಕೊಡಬೇಕು. ವಿಳಾಸ ಬದಲಿಸಿದರೂ ಬೆಲೆ ತರಲೇ ಬೇಕು. ಇಂಥ ಪ್ರತಿ ಸೇವೆಗೂ 59 ರೂ. ಶುಲ್ಕ ಕೊಡಲೇ ಬೇಕು.

ಗೃಹಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಿ, ರೈತನಿಧಿ ಯೋಜನೆಗೆ ಎಲ್ಲರೂ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ದಾಖಲೆ ಆಪ್‌ಡೇಟ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅಂಥವರೆಲ್ಲ ಆಪ್‌ಡೇಟ್ ಹೆಸರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಹಣ ಕಡಿತಕ್ಕೆ ಮಾನಸಿಕವಾಗಿ ಸಿದ್ಧವಾಗಬೇಕು. ಆಸಲಿಗೆ ಹಣ ಕಡಿತದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರನ್ನು ಕೇಳುವುದೇ ಇಲ್ಲ, ಮುಂಗಡವಾಗಿ ಹೇಳುವುದೂ ಇಲ್ಲ. ಖಾತೆಯಿಂದ ಹಣಕ್ಕೆ ಕೆತ್ತರಿ ಬಿದ್ದಾಗಲೇ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಪಾವತಿಸಿರುವುದು ಜನರಿಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಕೆಲವರು ಸಣ್ಣ ಮೊತ್ತ ಎಂದು ನಿರ್ಲಕ್ಷ್ಯಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.



ಶುಲ್ಕದಿಂದಲೇ 1,770 ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ.!

- ಆರ್‌ಬಿಐ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಎಲ್ಲ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್‌ಗಳೂ ಸೇರಿ ದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಸುಮಾರು 300 ಕೋಟಿಯಷ್ಟು ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಖಾತೆಗಳಿವೆ. ಒಂದು ವರ್ಗದ ಜನ ಉಲ್ಟಾ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಖಾತೆಗಳನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಖಾತೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಶೇ.10 ರಷ್ಟು ಗ್ರಾಹಕರು ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೊಮ್ಮೆ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ನಿಂದ ಯಾವುದಾದರೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ಸೇವೆ ಪಡೆದರೆ 30 ಕೋಟಿ ಖಾತೆಗಳಿಗೆ ತಲಾ 59 ರೂ. ನಂತೆ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ, ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಸೇವಾ ಶುಲ್ಕವೇ 1,770 ಸಾವಿರ ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ. ಆಗುತ್ತದೆ.
- ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಹಂತದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಕೃತ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್‌ಗಳು ಲಕ್ಷಾಂತರ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತವೆ. ಸೇವಾ ಶುಲ್ಕದ ಹೆಸರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್‌ಗಳು ಕೋಟ್ಯಂತರ ರೂ. ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಹಾಗಂತ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗೆ ಕೊಡುವ ಸಾಲದ ಬಡ್ಡಿದರ ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗಿಲ್ಲ, ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಠೇವಣಿ ಮೇಲಿನ ಬಡ್ಡಿಯೂ ಏರಿಲ್ಲ. ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ವ್ಯವಹಾರಗಳು ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಡಿಜಿಟಲ್ ಆಗಿವೆ. ಆದರೂ, ಎಲ್ಲರನ್ನೂ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಮಾತ್ರ ತಪ್ಪಿಲ್ಲ.

ಕೆಳಗಿನ ಪ್ರತಿ ಸೇವೆಗೂ ಕಟ್ಟಿ 59 ರೂ. ಶುಲ್ಕ!

- ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಸೇರ್ಪಡೆ / ಆಪ್‌ಡೇಟ್
- ಇಮೇಲ್ ಐಡಿ ಸೇರ್ಪಡೆ / ಆಪ್‌ಡೇಟ್
- ಹೆಸರು ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿ
- ವಿಳಾಸ ಬದಲಾವಣೆ
- ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಖಾತೆ ವರ್ಗಾವಣೆ
- ಪಾಸ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಸೇರ್ಪಡೆ

ಇತರ ಶುಲ್ಕಗಳ ಬರೆ

- ಐದು ಹಾಳೆ ಹೊಸ ಚೆಕ್ ಪುಸ್ತಕ 4 ರೂ.
- ಹಳೆ ಎಟಿಎಂ ಕಾರ್ಡ್ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಮಾಡಲು 177 ರೂ.
- ಹೊಸ ಎಟಿಎಂ ಕಾರ್ಡ್ - ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ 236 ರೂ. (ಕ್ಯಾಶ್), 590 ರೂ. (ಪ್ರಾಟಿನಂ)

ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿಗೂ ಉಂಟು ಶುಲ್ಕ ಹೊರೆ

ಹಿಂದಿನ ವರ್ಷದ ವರೆಗೆ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ, ನೌಕರರಿಗೆ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಖಾತೆ ವ್ಯವಹಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ವಿಫಲವಾಗಿ ಇತ್ತು. ಗೃಹಸಾಲ ಸೇರಿ ಇತರ ಸಾಲದಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ವಿವಿಧ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯಗಳು ಇದ್ದವು. ಈಗ ಎಲ್ಲವನ್ನೂ ಕಡಿತ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿಯ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಖಾತೆಗೂ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ರಂತೆ ಶುಲ್ಕ ವಿಧಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇದು ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್‌ನಿಂದ ಆಗುವುದಲ್ಲ, ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್‌ನ ತಂತ್ರಾಂಶದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಆ ರೀತಿ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ನಮಗೂ ಈ ಶುಲ್ಕದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಬೇಜಾರಿದೆ ಎಂದು ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಕೃತ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್‌ನ ಮ್ಯಾನೇಜರ್ ಒಬ್ಬರು ಅಸಹಾಯಕತೆ ತೋಡಿಕೊಂಡರು.

Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.07, Mar.17, 2024

27.5% pay hike for State govt. staff recommended

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Seventh Pay Commission, headed by former chief secretary K. Sudhakar Rao, submitted its final report to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday. The commission recommended a 27.5% hike in pay to Karnataka government employees.

Mr. Siddaramaiah informed that the government has already released an interim hike of 17% on basic pay to all employees. The State Finance Department would study the final

report and take a decision based on its recommendations. If the government implements the final report, the minimum salary of government employees would go up from ₹17,000 to ₹27,000 per month.

The Finance Department would require a few days to study the final report of the commission before making its recommendations to the government, the Chief Minister said.

Government employees have been demanding implementation of the 7th Pay Commission recommendations.

Source: The Hindu, p. 7, March. 17, 2024

UN-EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

Karnataka's EV tax could derail India's green mobility goals

BABU A AND BIPLAB SARKAR

The Karnataka government's recent decision to levy a 10% tax on electric vehicles (EVs) costing more than Rs 25 lakh has stirred a debate on the future of green mobility in India. This tax, unique in its targeting of electric vehicles, not only marks a shift in the state's policy but also poses a significant threat to the central government's objective of achieving a 30% EV market share by 2030. This move could significantly impede the progress of EV adoption in the country.

The adoption of new technologies follows a specific pattern, starting with innovators and early adopters, before moving to the early majority, late majority, and finally the laggards. In the context of EVs in India, the market is currently at a nascent stage where innovators and early adopters play a crucial role. These initial groups,

characterised by their willingness to embrace new technologies, are critical in driving the wider acceptance and diffusion of EVs across the country.

The additional tax imposed by the Karnataka government threatens to deter these vital early adopters by significantly increasing the initial cost of ownership for electric vehicles. This financial disincentive could slow the momentum of EV adoption.

The move stands in contrast to the centre's new EV policy which proposes to slash the import duty on EVs to 15% from the earlier 60-100%, provided the manufacturer invests a minimum of Rs 4,150 crore in India in setting up manufacturing units within 3 years.

The additional tax by the state government can be seen as a step backward, undermining efforts to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, decrease urban pollution levels, and combat climate change.



Several countries have witnessed significant growth in the EV market, driven by reductions in taxes, subsidies to manufacturers, and various non-monetary incentives. China, for instance, has consistently led the global EV market, contributing over 50% of EV sales annually. The country's New Energy Vehicle (NEV) policy, initiated in 2009, offered extensive support to both EV customers and manufacturers. This support included subsidies, tax reductions, exemptions from registration quotas, incentives for charging

infrastructure development, access to special lanes, and priority parking spaces, all aimed at achieving targeted EV adoption goals.

Similarly, the Biden-Harris Administration, in February 2023, reaffirmed its commitment to achieving a zero-emissions transportation sector by 2050. They unveiled a comprehensive plan, allocating \$7.5 billion to establish a reliable and convenient EV charging infrastructure. The goal is to set up a national network of 500,000 EV chargers along U.S. highways.

Norway stands out as the world's largest EV market by penetration rate, offering 14 distinct fiscal incentives including complete exemption from registration tax, annual ownership circulation tax, road tolls, public parking fees, value-added tax, and free recharging of EVs at public parking lots.

In this context, the Karnataka

government should reconsider its approach to taxation, advocating for support rather than penalisation of EV adoption. Encouraging the uptake of EVs through incentives, infrastructure development, and awareness campaigns is crucial for transitioning from early adopters to the early majority, a necessary step toward achieving widespread EV diffusion.

As discussions around the tax continue, it's clear that the stakes are high. The decision not only impacts Karnataka but sets a precedent that could influence the entire nation's approach to electric mobility. Balancing fiscal needs with environmental and economic goals is no small task, but it is essential for ensuring that India does not fall behind in the global race towards a sustainable future.

(Babu A is a research scholar and Sarkar is a professor, both at a private university in Bengaluru)

Source: Deccan Herald, p.10, March, 18, 2024

No major change in employment status or wages in 10 years

A report by Bahutva Karnataka shows that the share of self-employed workers increased, while the share of those in formal employment remained low

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

On March 11, Bahutva Karnataka, a forum for concerned citizens and organisations, released a report titled 'Employment, Wages and Inequality', at the Press Club, Bengaluru. The report analyses the progress in various employment-related indicators in the last decade, ever since the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came to power, including employment generation, formalisation of jobs, and improvement in wages.

As the general elections draw near, the report also examines the progress of the NDA's employment-related initiatives. In April 2019, for instance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed that 2.5 crore jobs have been added annually. Data reveal that the share of formal employment with social security and other advantages attached to it has remained stagnant. On the other hand, the number of self-employed individuals has increased substantially. Further, while wage earnings have increased when adjusted for inflation, the increase is negligible.

The stagnation is reflected in the share of households earning less than the national floor level minimum wage (NFLMW). About 34% of households in India earned less than the proposed NFLMW of ₹375 a day. Further, wage inequality has resulted in widening the gap between the rich and the poor. In 2022, the top 1% and 10% of the population held 22% and 57% of the national income, respectively, while the bottom 50% held 12.7%, according to data from the World Inequality Database.

Chart 1 compares the share of employment across various employment categories in 2011-12 and 2022-23 for men and women. Data show that the share of employment in the formal sector remained below 25%. The share of

those who were self-employed remained above 50% by 2022-23. While the share of self-employed women was the highest, it also saw the highest growth of 8% points from 56.5% in 2011-12 to 64.3% in 2022-23. According to the report, between 2011-12 and 2022-23, women doing unpaid labour in their family business or farming rose from one in four to one in three due to lack of other remunerative employment and stagnant household earnings.

Chart 2 shows the year-wise average weekly wages, adjusted for inflation, for male and female regular salaried workers and casual labourers. Data show there has not been any significant growth in income in the last five years across employment categories.

Further, many households still earn less than the NFLMW (**Map 3**). In 2019, an expert committee, set up by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, recommended that the NFLMW should be at least ₹375 per day and ₹3,050 per week. Of the 34 States and Union Territories (UTs) analysed, in about 19 of them, more than 20% earned less than ₹375 a day or less than ₹3,050 a week in 2022-23. In Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh, above 50% of the households earned less than this threshold. The report adds that nearly 30 crore workers make less than the minimum wage.

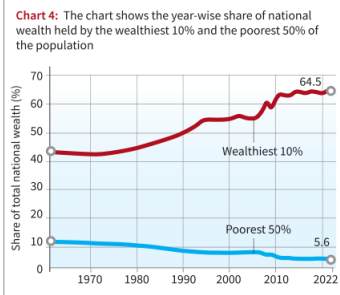
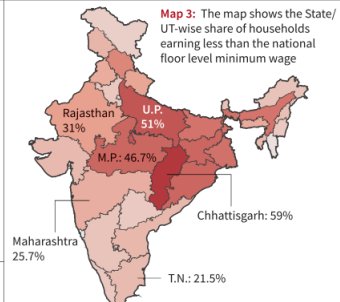
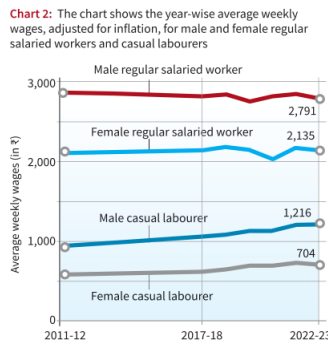
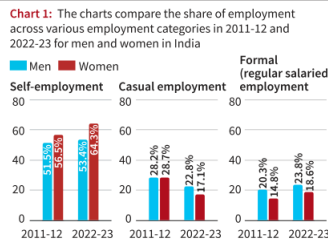
The stagnancy in income growth among the majority of the population, when juxtaposed with India's increased GDP per capita, hints at a widening gap between the rich and the poor. In the last 10 years, GDP per capita increased by 60%, while close to 35% of the total households earned less than the NFLMW. The share of national wealth held by the wealthiest 10% of the population increased from 63% in 2012 to 64.5% in 2022, while the share held by the poorest 50% reduced further from 6.1% in 2012 to 5.6% in 2022 (**Chart 4**). The chart shows the year-wise wealth share of the top 10% and the bottom 50% of the population.

Employment check

The charts were sourced from the report titled, 'Employment, Wages and Inequality', published by Bahutva Karnataka



Unpaid helpers: Women planting paddy seedlings in their agricultural field in Tetelia village, Guwahati. RITU RAJ KONWAR



Source: The Hindu, p. 9, March. 18, 2024

Top 1% Indians' income share is higher now than under British-rule

Post-liberalisation, the income share of the top 10% skyrocketed, with that of middle 40% and bottom 50% steadily falling

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In 2022, 22.6% of the national income went to the top 1% of Indians. Cut to 1951, their share in the income was only 11.5% and even lower in the 1980s – just before India opened-up its economy – at 6%.

The share of the top 10% of Indians too had increased – from 36.7% of national income in 1951 to 57.7% in 2022.

On the other hand, the bottom 50% of Indians earned only 15% of the national income in 2022, compared with 20.6% in 1951. The middle 40% of Indians also recorded a sharp fall in their share of income from 42.8% to 27.3% in the period.

The gap between the rich and the poor has widened rapidly in the last two decades.

In 2022, the share of national income that went to the wealthiest 1% of Indians recorded a historic peak, higher than the levels seen in developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. These are some of the conclusions of the recently released 'Income and Wealth Inequality in India' report published by the World Inequality Lab.

Chart 1 shows the income group-wise share in national income, and the adult population in each bracket as of 2022-23.

Close to one crore adults were in the top 1%, ten crore in the top 10%, 36 crore in the middle 40% and 46 crore were there in the bottom 50% of the income pyramid.

Notably, about 10,000 richest Indians – the top 0.001% of the income pyramid – earned 2.1% of the national income. The top 0.01% and top 0.1% earned 4.3% and 9.6% of the national income respectively.

While income disparity has always existed in India, like in other economies, it was only in recent years, that the gap widened at a reckless pace (**Chart 2**).

To start with, in the 1950s and 60s, the income-gap between the top 10% and the middle 40%, was negligible, across most years.

In the 1980s, even the bottom 50%'s share in national income increased marginally, to bridge the gap.

But post-liberalisation, in the 1990s, the income share of the top 10% skyrocketed, with the other two group's share recording a steady fall. The curves continued on the same path in the 2000s and by the start of the 2010s, they settled and have hardly moved thereafter.

As for the top 1% of the population, their share in the national income in 2022 was higher than that of the richest 1% during colonial rule.

The top 1% earned an average of ₹53 lakh per year, 23 times more than the average Indian who earned ₹2.3 lakh, in 2022-23. The average income of the bottom 50% and the middle 40% stood at ₹71,000 and ₹1.65 lakh, respectively, in the same period.

Chart 3 shows the richest 1% of Indians' share in the national income. Just before independence, in the 1930s, the top 1%'s share of national income crossed the 20% mark. But after independence, with the princely States getting merged with Independent India, the share of the top 1% steadily declined, reaching close to the 6% mark in the 1980s.

However, post-liberalisation, their income share surged again and is presently hovering around the 22.5% mark, much higher than their share under British-rule.

Data shows that, while India's income levels are not growing as fast as other comparable economies, their top 1%'s share in national income is higher than even advanced countries. In 2022-23, the income shares of India's top 1% were above the levels recorded in the U.S., China, France, the U.K. and Brazil (**Chart 4**). Whereas, China and Vietnam's average incomes grew at a much faster pace than India's (**Chart 5**).

Mind the income gap

The data for the charts were sourced from the report titled, 'Income and Wealth Inequality in India' published by the World Inequality Lab. According to the report, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened rapidly in the last two decades

Chart 1: The chart shows the income group-wise share in national income, and the adult population in each bracket as of 2022-23

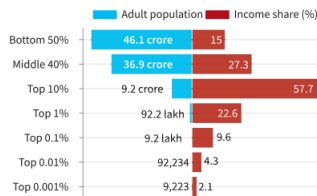


Chart 2: The chart shows the year-wise share of national income for the top 10%, bottom 50% and that middle 40% of the population

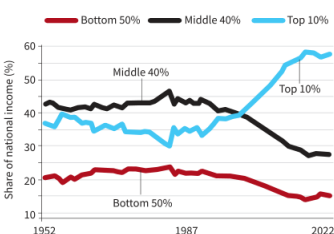


Chart 3: The chart shows the year-wise richest 1% Indians' share in the national income



Chart 4: The chart shows the income shares of India's top 10% and top 1%, compared with select countries in 2022-23

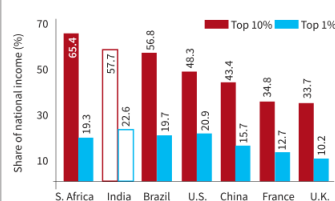
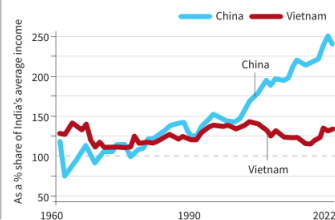


Chart 5: The chart shows the year-wise average income in China and Vietnam as a % share of India's average income



Source: The Hindu, p. 11, March. 21, 2024

Whither K'taka's fiscal discipline?

The prevailing fiscal profligacy is a threat to the state's progress

B S SREEKANTARADHYA

In a broad sense, fiscal discipline can be understood as the practice of controlling deficits and debt to prevent their adverse effects on the economy. Karnataka took a pioneering step in promoting fiscal discipline by enacting the Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act (KFRA) in 2002, preceding the Centre's Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003. The KFRA stipulated that the state achieve a revenue surplus and keep the fiscal deficit within 3% of GSDP. Additionally, a limit of 25% of GSDP for outstanding liabilities was introduced in 2005. Karnataka strictly adhered to the provisions of KFRA, except during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Revenue Deficit

Karnataka attained a zero revenue deficit in 2004-05, ahead of the target year of 2006-2007, and subsequently achieved a small revenue surplus. Although this surplus was small and began to decline, achieving a zero revenue deficit was an achievement in itself. The revenue deficit reappeared, amounting to Rs 6,931 crore in 2020-21. Thereafter, it started declining, with a revenue surplus also achieved in 2022-23. Nonetheless, the revenue deficit reappeared in 2023-24, surpassing the budget estimate of Rs 12,522 crore to Rs 13,951 crore in the revised estimate. The budget estimate for 2024-25 has placed it at a whopping Rs 27,353 crore, an increase of Rs 13,402 crore over 2023-24. A revenue deficit of this order is unprecedented in Karnataka. This surge in revenue deficit is primarily due to the expenditure incurred on fulfilling the five pre-election guarantees. If revenue falls short of the budget estimate and expenditure increases due to the implementation of the 7th Pay Commission recommendations, the revenue deficit may increase further. A rise in the revenue deficit implies an increase in the diversion of borrowed funds to meet expenditures that do not contribute to asset creation. It is also noteworthy that while revenue expenditure has seen growth, there has been no corresponding increase in capital expenditure. In fact, the estimated capital expenditure for 2024-25 is lower by Rs 4,446 crore than the actual capital expenditure for 2022-23. The percentage share of capital expenditure in total expenditure has declined from 19.5% in 2020-21 to 16.6% in 2023-24 and further to 15% as per the budget estimate for 2024-25.

Fiscal Deficit

KFRA stipulates that the fiscal deficit should not exceed 3% of GSDP. The state achieved this target in 2004-05 and maintained it until 2020-21. In 2021-22, the fiscal deficit increased to 3.5% of GSDP due to the pandemic. Despite the 15th Finance Commission allowing the state to raise its fiscal deficit to 4% of GSDP in 2021-22, Karnataka limited it to only 2.84% of GSDP. Similarly, for 2022-23, the state was allowed to increase the fiscal deficit to 3.5% of GSDP, but it managed to restrict it to 2.62%. Thus, the state's record in maintaining fiscal discipline was commendable.

The budget estimate for 2023-24 placed the fiscal deficit at 2.60%, but it increased to 2.67% of GSDP according to the revised estimate for the year. The budget estimate for 2024-25 has placed it at 2.95%. But this is no reason to become complacent, as the estimated fiscal deficit for 2024-25 is very close to the mandated limit, and it may be exceeded if there is any shortfall in revenue realisation and an increase in expenditure. In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit increased from Rs 46,622 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 68,505 crore in 2023-24 as against the budget estimate of Rs 66,646 crore, and for 2024-25, it is estimated at Rs 82,980 crore, a big jump over the fiscal deficit in the previous two years. Gross borrowing is estimated to increase from Rs 85,818 in 2023-24 to Rs 1,05,458 crore, an increase of Rs 19,640 crore over the current year, which again is an unprecedented rise.

Outstanding Liabilities

As the government continues to borrow year after year, net borrowing adds to the debt stock, leading to a continuous increase in total liabilities. Karnataka's outstanding liabilities rose from Rs 5,22,847 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 5,81,28 crore in 2023-24, with a projected increase to Rs 6,65,095 crore in 2024-25. As a percentage of GSDP, outstanding liabilities will increase from 22.64 in 2023-24 to 23.68 in 2024-25. While this is below the mandated limit of 25% of GSDP, there is uncertainty about whether this trend will persist given the current borrowing practices.

In conclusion, with an unprecedented revenue deficit of Rs 27,353 crore, a fiscal deficit of Rs 82,980 crore, gross borrowing of Rs 1,05,458 crore, and a declining share of capital expenditure estimated for 2024-25, fiscal discipline has suffered a setback in Karnataka. The prevailing fiscal profligacy is inimical to the state's progress.

(The writer is a former professor of economics at the University of Mysore and a former member of the Karnataka Tax Reforms Commission)

Source: Deccan Herald, p.8, March, 22, 2024

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EDUCATION

DCET and PGCET processes to go entirely online from this year

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

For the first time, the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) has decided to conduct Diploma Common Entrance Test (DCET) and Postgraduate CET (PGCET) for 2024 entirely online. Not just that document verification and counselling will also be online. This ensures students appearing for these tests need not come all the way to Bengaluru to KEA head office in the city.

The notification for DCET-2024, conducted for lateral entry of diploma students into undergraduate engineering courses, will be issued in the next few days, sources said.

Online exam
KEA conducts CET for un-

dergraduate, postgraduate and for lateral entry students to engineering and other professional courses.

All exams were held physically in the offline mode, even as KEA has made document verification and counselling for CET for undergraduate courses online. However, this exam sees over 2.5 lakh students taking it, making it tough to move it online.

But DCET sees around 15,000-20,000 students taking it and PGCET about 40,000-50,000, prompting KEA to shift these entrance tests online.

"Compared to CET for UG courses, the number of students taking DCET and PGCET is lower. Though nearly 50,000 students apply for PGCET, the num-

ber of students applying for PG courses in each subject is far lower. So we have decided to conduct both these tests online," said S. Ramya, Executive Director, KEA.

"Presently, the seating capacity and the potential of the system for conducting online exams in the State is around 15,000. If we improve this by adding 5,000 more computers, we can hold simultaneous online exams to 20,000 students. Online exam centres will soon be opened in every district. We will soon start an awareness campaign among students about online exams," she said.

Module

KEA has already prepared an Application-cum-Online Verification Module

for DCET- 2024 and PGCET- 2024, on the lines of UGCET.

This will make the entire process of submission of application, examination, document verification, declaration of result, counselling and seat allotment online.

"Candidates need not submit their academic documents to KEA. All academic documents will be collected backend from the department concerned itself.

Candidates seeking seats under specific reservation category should enter the relevant revenue document (RD) number of their caste certificate. So, this time DCET and PGCET candidates need not come to KEA for anything," Ms. Ramya said.

Source: The Hindu, p. 1, March. 18, 2024

ವಿಜಯವಾಣಿ

ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿರಬೇಕೆಂಬ ನಿಯಮವನ್ನು ರದ್ದುಗೊಳಿಸಿ ಸಂಪುಟ ಸಭೆ ನಿರ್ಣಯ

ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳ ನಿಯಮ ರದ್ದು

■ ವಿಜಯವಾಣಿ ಸುದ್ದಿಜಾಲ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತರ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆಯೋಗದ ಮಾರ್ಗಸೂಚಿ ಉಲ್ಲಂಘಿಸಿರುವ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರ, ಧಾರ್ಮಿಕ/ಭಾಷಾ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಎಂದು ಗುರುತಿಸಲು ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿದ್ದ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಸಮುದಾಯದ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳ ದಾಖಲಾತಿ ಮಾನದಂಡದ ಪರತ್ತನ್ನು ರದ್ದುಪಡಿಸಿದೆ.

ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಮತೀಯ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಸಮುದಾಯದ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳೆಂದು ಘೋಷಿಸಲು ಇರುವ ನಿಯಮ/ಆದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆಯೋಗದ ಮಾರ್ಗಸೂಚಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಆಯಾ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ವರ್ಷದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಡ್ಡಾಯವಾಗಿ ಇಂತಿಷ್ಟು ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರಬೇಕು ಎಂಬ ಪರತ್ತನ್ನು ರದ್ದುಪಡಿಸಿ ಅದೇಶ ಹೊರಡಿಸಿದೆ. ಮಾ.12ರಂದು ನಡೆದ ಸಚಿವ ಸಂಪುಟ ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನಿರ್ಧಾರ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಸರ್ಕಾರದಿಂದ ಸವಲತ್ತು ಪಡೆದು ತಮಗೆ ಬೇಕಾದಂತೆ ನಿಯಮ ರೂಪಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಅನುಕೂಲವಾಗಲಿದೆ.



ನಿಯಮವೇನಿದೆ? ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆಯೋಗದ ಮಾರ್ಗ ಸೂಚಿ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಶಾಲಾ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಕ್ಷರತಾ ಇಲಾಖೆಯ ಧಾರ್ಮಿಕ ಅಥವಾ ಭಾಷಾ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಎಂದು ಘೋಷಿಸಲು ಕೆಲ ಮಾನದಂಡಗಳಿವೆ. ಟ್ರಸ್ಟಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಮೂರನೇ ಎರಡರಷ್ಟು ಅಥವಾ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ಸಮಿತಿ ಸದಸ್ಯರು ಮತ್ತು ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಶೇ.25 ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಸಮುದಾಯದ ವರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ, ಉನ್ನತ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಮತ್ತು ಕೌಶಲ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ, ಉದ್ಯಮಶೀಲತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಜೀವನೋಪಾಯ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಶೇ.50 ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು

ಮುಸ್ಲಿಮರು ಹೇಗೆ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತರು?

ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಆದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾಪಿಸಿರುವಂತೆ 2011ರ ಜನಗಣತಿಯ ಪ್ರಕಾರ, ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತರ ಜನಸಂಖ್ಯೆ 96.01 ಲಕ್ಷವಿದೆ. ಇದು ಒಟ್ಟು ಜನಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಶೇ.16.3. ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ 78.94 ಲಕ್ಷ ಮುಸ್ಲಿಮರು, 11.43 ಲಕ್ಷ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತಿಯನ್ನರು, 28 ಸಾವಿರ ಸಿಖ್, 95 ಸಾವಿರ ಬೌದ್ಧ, 4.4 ಲಕ್ಷ ಜೈನ್ ಮತ್ತು 11ಸಾವಿರ ಪಾರ್ಸಿ ಸಮುದಾಯದ ಜನರಿದ್ದಾರೆ. 79 ಲಕ್ಷ ವಿರುವ ಮುಸ್ಲಿಮರು ಹೇಗೆ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತರೆಂದು ಸರ್ಕಾರವು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂಬುದು ಹಲವರ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಯಾಗಿದೆ.

ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಸಮುದಾಯದವರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ನಿರ್ಣಯವೇನು?: ಈ ನಿಯಮಗಳ ವಿರುದ್ಧವಾಗಿ ಸಚಿವ ಸಂಪುಟ ತೀರ್ಮಾನ ಕೈಗೊಂಡಿದೆ. ಪರತ್ತು ವಿಧಿಸಿರುವುದರಿಂದ ತೊಂದರೆ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಈ ನಿಯಮಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನಮೂದಿಸಿರುವ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಸಮುದಾಯದ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಲಭ್ಯವಾಗಲು ಕಷ್ಟಕರವಾಗಿರುವುದರಿಂದ ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಿಂದ ಏಕರೂಪತೆಯ ಆದೇಶ ಹೊರಡಿಸುವುದರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸುವಂತೆ ಸಿಎಂ ರಾಜಕೀಯ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿ ಕೋರಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಪರಿಣಾಮಗಳೇನು?

- ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ತಮಗೆ ಬೇಕಾದಂತೆ ನಿಯಮ ರೂಪಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ತಮಗೆ ಬೇಕಾದವರಿಗೆ ಸೀಟುಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಬಹುದು.
- ಅರ್ಹರಿಗೆ ನ್ಯಾಯ ಸಿಗದ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯದ ಮೊರೆ ಹೋಗಲು ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕಾನೂನು ಇಲ್ಲವಾಗಬಹುದು
- ಆದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಸಹ ಸೇರಿಸಿರುವ ಕಾರಣ, ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ಸೇರಿ ಇನ್ನಿತರ ವೃತ್ತಿಪರ ಕೋರ್ಸ್‌ಗಳ ಸೀಟು ಹಂಚಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅರ್ಹರಿಗೆ ಅನ್ಯಾಯವಾಗಬಹುದು.

Source: Vijayavani, p.5, Mar.21, 2024

State withdraws condition of minimum number of students for tag of religious minority institution

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Following the guidelines of National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions of Higher Education, the Karnataka Government has withdrawn the criteria of a minimum number of students from a minority community at an education institution to get the tag of Religious Minority Institution. A decision on the criteria was taken in the State Cabinet on March 12, and an order issued on March 16.

The Department of School Education and Literacy had a criteria that at least 25% of the students in these institutions had to be from the minority community that is running the institution. This was even higher – 50% – for Techni-

cal Education, Higher Education, and Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Department institutions. Now, these condition have been removed.

According to a copy of the order, this decision was necessary due to a decline in enrollment of minority students at these ‘religious minority institutions’. Citing 2011 census data, the order stated that Karnataka has 96.01 lakh people from the minority community, of which 78.94 lakh are Muslims, 11.43 lakh are Christians, 28,000 are Sikhs, 95,000 are Buddhists, 4.40 lakh are Jains, and around 1,000 are from the Parsee community. There isn’t enough population of many minority communities to get students as per the minimum

requirement prescribed earlier.

However, other criteria for an institution to be declared a religious minority institution will continue.

**SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY**

Corrigendum-3 to E-Tender Notice No.
CAO/CN/BNC/EPC/63/2023 Dated : 24-08-2023

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Construction of New Broad Gauge Line Between Chainage 171.640 & Chainage 142.920 (28.720KM) including Electrical and Signal & Telecommunication works between Bharamasagara (incl) and Chitradurga (excl.) Stations in Tumakuru - Chitradurga - Davangere New Line Project. (Tender Ref. No : TK-DVG-EPC-02)	Rs. 380,13,75,567/-

Bid Due Date	
Existing	Revised
01-04-2024 (15:00 Hrs)	15-04-2024 (15:00 Hrs)

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Engineer / Construction / Works
Bengaluru Cantonment

PUB/763/AAS/PRB/SWR/2023-24

 South Western Railway - SWR  SWRRLY  SWRRL

This is to notify the general public listed in the table below in respect District, which is morefully descrik

Source: The Hindu, p. 4, March. 21, 2024

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Frogs are great models for understanding evolution of life and contemporary climate change, writes Seshadri K S

The Western Ghats (WG), which run along the west coast of India, are one of 36 global biodiversity hotspots. Most life forms here are endemic to the region and found nowhere else on Earth. The Western Ghats sustain millions of people who are directly or indirectly dependent on them for resources such as water and play a vital role in regulating the monsoon patterns.

Researchers and environmentalists have argued that the WG is unique and emphasised the need to protect this fragile ecosystem. However, little is known about the origins of this rich diversity and how it sustained over time.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is often measured in terms of species richness—the number of species in an area. The diversity of life arises from a process called speciation that takes place over a few thousand to several million years. Typically, new species can arise when a population splits and becomes isolated until they cannot interbreed anymore.

This can happen due to a geographical barrier such as a river or a valley. Sometimes, species populations can also become isolated due to genetic mutations when individuals between these populations can no longer interbreed. Eventually, they drift apart and become different species. Repeated over millions of years, this process leads to many new species. The extinction of species is an important step in this process.

The rate at which speciation and extinction occur ultimately determines the number of species in a particular region. However, these rates can vary depending on several factors, including the climate. Prolonged periods of stable climate will likely enable species to persist, and populations will often undergo fewer extinctions.

In contrast, rapid and drastic climatic fluctuations can lead to bursts of speciation or extinction events. Time can also determine the number of species in a region. A population that has persisted in a region for a longer duration is likely to undergo speciation many more times than a region that has only recently been colonised by a species group. All these



processes can result in high species richness.

Evolutionary history

In a recent study, a team of researchers from the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) shed light on how the Western Ghats support a rich diversity of amphibians. They use a large set of genetic data from over 450 species of frogs to reconstruct a genetic history and try to answer the question: "Why are there so many species of frogs in the Western Ghats?"

They began by inferring the evolutionary age of frogs in the WG by comparing genetic mutations between species. Genetic mutations on specific genes are assumed to accumulate at a relatively constant pace, and comparing such mutations between species, they can tell us when they diverged from their ancestor.

They found that most frog families are about 40 million years old, while some groups of frogs, commonly called the Dancing Frogs and the Night Frogs, were as old as 60 million years. This is significant considering that the Indian plate broke off from the supercontinent Gondwanaland, drifted north, and collided with the



Asian plate, forming the Himalayas around 55 million years ago.

Then, they explored whether the Ghats' geography had anything to do with the high species richness. The Western Ghats is a 1600-km-long chain of undulating terrain. Broadly, the Western Ghats are classified into the northern, central, and southern Western Ghats based on their rainfall. The WG also varies in elevation, with high elevations experiencing cooler climatic conditions, especially in the southern WG.

Historically, mountains have been considered a 'species pump' where populations of a species would retreat when the climate was extreme and recolonise habitats when climatic conditions were favourable. Repeated retreating and expansion can isolate species, resulting in speciation events.

Climate history

To examine whether climatic history had anything to do with the rich diversity of amphibians, they then compared the diversification rate across frog groups within the Ghats. They found it to be independent of location within the WG and elevation. "Our findings support the idea that the high frog diversity in the WG is likely a result of gradual species accumulation in stable tropical environments," said Dr Cyriac, a postdoctoral researcher at CES, IISc, and lead author of the paper published in the journal *Evolution*.

"Our findings are a result of more than a decade of research done by many students, researchers, and postdocs. The team traversed the entire length of the Western Ghats, cov-

ering all elevations, habitats, and hill ranges.

Using this biogeographic perspective, we could capture information about most of the frog species in the region and identify subtle variations between closely related species. This was critical in arriving at our inferences," explained Prof Kartik Shankar, the study's senior author, in whose lab the numerous students and researchers undertook this research.

Impacts of climate change

Amphibians are ectotherms; they cannot maintain an internal temperature like mammals. The new study highlights that amphibians in the Ghats have evolved over a prolonged period of climatic stability. "The rich biodiversity in the Ghats did not arise simply but has taken millions of years of evolution in relatively stable climatic conditions. We hope our work will help people appreciate biodiversity and take steps to conserve it," said Dr Cyriac.

Rampant anthropogenic impacts such as deforestation and increased atmospheric carbon dioxide have resulted in climate change. While amphibians have been exposed to climate change, the ongoing onslaught has been too quick for many slow-evolving organisms, such as amphibians, to adapt.

"Frogs are great models for understanding the evolution and contemporary climate change. Their small body size and low dispersal rates mean they diversify at time scales, allowing us to understand speciation processes. On the other hand, their sensitivity to the environment makes them important indicators of the effects of pollution and global warming," concluded Prof Shankar.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.II, March, 16, 2024

IISc study: Bengaluru lakes worth ₹9.4k cr if unpolluted

Niranjan.Kaggere
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The famed lakes and waterbodies of Bengaluru would be worth a whopping Rs 9,418 crore, had those remained unpolluted over the decades, an estimation by scientists from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) shows.

Working on the 'System of Environmental-Economic Accounting' (SEEA) framework listed by the United Nations, the IISc researchers led by Prof TV Ramachandra have successfully published a scientific model called 'BLiS'— Bangalore Lake Information System.

"The more pollution in the lakes, their economic value diminishes considerably.

193 LAKES ANALYSED FOR 3 YEARS

> In a first-ever economic analysis of lakes in B'luru, IISc researchers study 193 lakes spread over six different valleys for three years

> Visit lakes in Koramangala-Challaghatta, Hebbal-Nagawara, Vrishabhavathi, Arkavathi, Chinnar and Suvarnamukhi Valleys for evaluating their worth

> Study reveals that if the lakes were kept in good condition, they would have provided a total ecosystem supply value of ₹365 crore per year

> Analysis shows that constructions across lakes' catchment areas affected groundwater table



MOST VALUED LAKES	Bellandur	Varthur	Madivala	Begur	Hulimavu
	₹96.9cr	₹49.8cr	₹25.9cr	₹14.3cr	₹12.6cr

If you look at the economic worth of each of Jakkur and Rachenahalli lakes, it is Rs 10,500 per hectare per day under normal conditions, but it has reduced to Rs 20 per hectare per day for each lake when they are polluted," Prof Ramachandra told TOI. This translates into a

99.8% decline in value.

The IISc study has factored in the various services that these waterbodies would have provided daily had they not been pushed to the brink as a concrete jungle engulfed the 'Garden City'.

► Water table: Other bk, P 2

Constructions near lakes affected water table: Study

► Continued from page 1
(Other Book)

In a first-ever analysis of the economic and monetary worth of Bengaluru's lakes, waterbodies, and their services as part of a vibrant ecological system, researchers from the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) of IISc studied close to 200 lakes spread over six different valleys of the city for about three years.

The study, though, didn't compute the overall current worth of all the city's waterbodies. Researchers from CES, including Asulabha KS, Sincy Varghese, Sudarshan P and Abhishek Baghel, were part of BLiS. The IISc researchers visited 193 lakes

LAKES OF 6 VALLEYS & THEIR NET WORTH

Valley	Net worth (in million)	No. of lakes	Area (in ha)
Chinnar Valley	₹2,533.1	9	95.8
KC Valley	₹35,494.7	77	1,435.3
Suvarnamukhi Valley	₹382.7	2	14.4
Arkavathi Valley	₹24,329.6	12	920.5
Vrishabhavathi Valley	₹6,831.2	35	258.4
Hebbal Nagawara Valley	₹24,617.2	41	931

Source: CES, IISc

in Koramangala-Challaghatta, Hebbal-Nagawara, Vrishabhavathi, Arkavathi, Chinnar, and Suvarnamukhi Valleys for evaluating their worth.

The services of any ecosystem are estimated in terms of provisioning, regulating services and cultural significance. The three

services together make up for what is described as the total ecosystem supply value. The IISc analysis revealed that if the lakes were maintained in a good condition, they would've provided a total ecosystem supply value of Rs 365 crore a year.

"All of us look at waterbodies only from the recre-

ational perspective, but these entities do have an economic value. This analysis integrates economic and environmental data to provide a comprehensive insight into the interrelationships between the economy and the environment," Prof Ramachandra further explained.

The analysis found constructions across the catchment areas of lakes have affected the water table due to reduced inflow, increased domestic sewage, dumping of debris and plastic waste, construction waste and loss of interconnectivity between lakes. "Nearly 98% of lakes have been encroached upon, while 90% are filled with sewage," Prof Ramachandra said.

Source: The Times of India, p.1 & 2, March. 16, 2024

Delay in lakes' revival mainly behind Mahadevapura water woes: Experts

2 Lakes Impact Water Sources Like Borewells

Nithya.Mandyam
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The prolonged delay in the rejuvenation of Bellandur and Varthur lakes is the primary reason for Mahadevapura zone witnessing an acute water scarcity due to the plummeting groundwater table, experts and activists say.

The rejuvenation of the waterbodies, which are spread over 1,200 acres, began 4.5 years ago by Bangalore Development Authority (BDA). The work should have been completed two years ago but it is still dragging on, with activists blaming a lack of coordination amongst agencies.

Emphasizing the need to complete the rejuvenation earlier, Prof TV Ramachandra of the Indian Institute of Science, who is involved in the endeavour, said, "The two lakes contribute majorly to the recharge of groundwater and borewells, regardless of rain. Rejuvenation of lakes is vital, but the lack of coordination amongst agencies and lackadaisical approach are hindering the work."

Lake activists are upset over the slow pace of work that has resulted in the waterbodies presenting largely a barren look.

"Ever since the BDA took up the project of rejuvenation, Bellandur and Varthur lakebeds look like cricket grounds with their bunds looking like the right place to have seating arrangements," lamented Nagesh Aras, a Bellandur lake activist.

He regretted that the authorities are acting as if Bengaluru has surplus water and are more focused on sharing treated water from the two lakes with neighbouring districts such as Kolar, instead of ensuring that the waterbodies benefit their immediate neighbourhood.

Aesthetics first?

Vishwanath Srikantaiah, another lake expert, said the bigger problem is that the civic agencies look at lakes on-



TAKING OUT TRASH: According to a member of Bellandur Lake Development, during the waterbody's desilting, truckloads of plastic, mattresses and other solid waste had to be removed



ly for aesthetic purposes and fail to understand that they play a vital role in groundwater recharge. "Wastewater from storm-water drains should be treated and let into the lakes to enable groundwater recharging. For this, the lakes must be rejuvenated within the stipulated deadline," he added.

"We had to drain the water to remove the silt from Bellandur Lake. Of its total area of 916 acres, the water is now spread over only 250 acres as the rest of the lakebed is already desilted. Ho-

wever, significant challenges are being faced in the desilting operations as they are restricted to night time, causing delays. Despite having 200 vehicles at our disposal, only 80-100 can operate simultaneously. Complicating matters, nearby apartment residents have been protesting against the noise and disturbances caused by truck movement. Moreover, reaching the dumping yard 22km away means vehicles have to pass through five villages, exacerbating delays and congestion issues," a senior BDA official told TOI.

"Varthur lake is almost desilted and we're waiting for rain so that it fills up. Discussions on filling the lake

“In Bellandur and Varthur lakes, numerous problems are affecting rejuvenation works. Residents are unhappy with the silt being transported at night, alleging disturbance, and during the day, traffic is too heavy to do it. Secondly, a group wanted enzyme treatment of the lakes, which is not possible. If the civic agencies coordinate with each other faster and work better, these things will be resolved faster

TV Ramachandra | PROFESSOR, CENTRE FOR ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES, IISc

with treated sewage water are under way," he added.

According to the official, the rejuvenation work will likely be wrapped up in a year.

Jagadish Reddy, of Varthur Rising, said, "There is a humongous amount of silt deposited for decades in the lake, leading to compacted layers and preventing the water from percolating."

Sonali Singh, a member of Bellandur Lake Development, said, "During the desilting of Bellandur Lake, truckloads of plastic, even beds, mattresses and other solid waste were removed. I doubt the groundwater is being recharged. In most areas, the silt has solidified and stand as high as 8ft."

MORE TIME TO SIGN UP AS KERE MITRAS

Following poor response to its drive to enrol volunteers for overseeing the upkeep of 205 lakes in the city, the BBMP has extended time till March 25 for those interested to register as Kere Mitras.

The civic body had provided a registration window in Oct 2023 and later it extended the deadline multiple times. The initiative was launched after deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar said the responsibility of maintaining parks and lakes should be given to citizens.

On Friday, BBMP said 744 citizens had registered as Kere Mitras. A user ID and password have been provided to each volunteer to monitor day-to-day activities of waterbodies through the lakes monitoring system (LMS) application. They can monitor, record and upload photos during their visit to the assigned lake.

Once selected, Kere Mitras are allowed to volunteer for three months. After that, others will be allowed to volunteer. **TNN**

Source: The Times of India, p.2, March. 16, 2024

Saving the woods

The Supreme Court's interim order on forest definitions brings hope for saving diminishing green cover

B K SINGH

The amendment to the Vansanrakshan Evam Samvardhan Adhiniyam was enacted on August 4, 2023, and came into force on December 1, 2023. Relevant rules and guidelines were also notified on November 29, 2023. The enactment was challenged by a group of retired bureaucrats, including foresters and some NGOs, through WP Civil No. 1164/2023 (Ashok Kumar Sharma and others vs. Union of India) in the Supreme Court of India. The Supreme Court, in the T N Godavarman vs. Union of India judgement (WP No. 202/1996) on December 12, 1996, defined the expression 'forests,' which covers not only the land notified as reserved forests and protected forests but also all lands recorded as forests in any government records. This includes wooded areas, irrespective of ownership, so far as it relates to the diversion of such areas for non-forestry uses.

In 2002, the Supreme Court directed the state governments to form expert committees to identify 'forests' and also those subsequently degraded, denuded, and cleared forests, as well as tree plantations. This aimed to ensure that all cases of forest land diversion for non-forestry uses were approved by the Central Government only. Reiterating the issue further, the Supreme Court in the 2011 Lafarge order gave directions to create and regularly update a GIS-based support data base with district-wise details of the location and boundary of each plot of land that is defined as 'forests' for the purpose of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. However, over two decades later, the Expert Committees appointed by the states have not adequately fulfilled their duties, and the district-wise GIS data base has not been regularly updated.

In 2002, Karnataka's Expert Committee identified nearly 10 lakh acres of non-notified forests as deemed forests, which mainly comprise un-classed forests and wooded areas under private ownership. Later in 2016, the government moved the Supreme Court to cut

this down to three lakh acres, citing various reasons such as community occupancy and insufficient tree density, with many areas having less than 50 trees per hectare. Let us not forget that these lands, which were identified as wooded in 2002, were found to have been degraded and denuded with less than 50 trees per hectare in 2016. The forest and revenue departments have failed to control the illegal tree felling on these lands. I am sure even three lakh acres would have further degraded and shrunk if another stock-taking was done now.



Despite clear directives from the Supreme Court, Kerala diverted revenue forests for non-forestry purposes without referring them to the Union Government under the Act. Similarly, in 2015, Odisha notified that the state has 16,000 sq km un-classed forests, and within two years, in 2017, it brought it down to 22 sq km.

States appear to think that listing all un-classed forests and private wooded areas and bringing them under the purview of the central Act would be to tie their hands as the lands become unavailable for future development projects. However, this short-sighted approach disregards the ecological importance of natural forests, which have 40% higher carbon sequestration potential than man-made forests. Forests are home to streams and rivers and render invaluable ecological services.

The amended Act introduces several provisions that dilute the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, especially regarding the definition of forests. In response to the petition by Ashok Kumar Sharma and others challenging the amendment, the Supreme Court issued an interim order on February 19,

2024, upholding the definition of forests made on December 12, 1996. The amendment to the parent Act is thus partially stayed, with the court directing the expert committees of the states and UTs to submit the list of forests to the Union Ministry by March 31, 2024; the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change will maintain the records, digitise the boundaries, and upload them to their website by April 15, 2024.

The amended Act has damaging effects, exacerbating forest fragmentation by excluding forests up to 0.1 ha for providing public access along the rail lines and public roads, exempting the process of diversion up to 10 ha for security-related infrastructure and 5 ha for areas affected by left-wing extremism, and permitting zoos, safaris, and ecotourism facilities within the forests.

The rules notified under the amended Act provide a land bank for growing compensatory afforestation. The land included in the bank is from the Jhudapi jungle of Maharashtra, the Chhote Bade Jhad lands of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, etc. These lands are un-classed forests available in all states with one name or another. As per the Supreme Court's December 12, 1996 definition, these are all forest lands. At present, many of these land parcels may be degraded and denuded, but trees can be revived in all of them if rigid protection is provided and natural rootstock is allowed to regenerate.

The true compensation comes when trees are grown on non-forest land to an extent equal to the extent of the forests lost. The land banks should comprise only non-forest lands. Keeping un-classed forests in the compensatory afforestation land bank is totally unjustified and can lead to compromising the ecological security of the region. Moreover, states do not have good track records of growing successful compensatory afforestation of high biodiversity value.

The Supreme Court bench also ruled that permissions for zoos, safaris, and ecotourism facilities should not be granted by the government without the approval of the court until another bench of the Supreme Court concludes a case establishing an illegal tiger safari in Corbett Tiger Reserve. This provision of the amended Act has the potential to damage and fragment core areas of Tiger Reserves and is in contravention of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

(The writer is the retired head of the Forest Force, Karnataka)

Source: Deccan Herald, p.11, March, 16, 2024

Dry and distressed: Karnataka's wait for water

As the state faces an intensifying water crisis, how will Karnataka carve a path towards source sustainability and groundwater replenishment?

INSIGHT

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Despite being the main catchment area of River Cauvery, Kodagu is not unfamiliar with water shortage during summer months. This year, the district administration's move to restrict irrigation to ensure the availability of drinking water has triggered a water war. "Farmers in Kodagu use stream water for irrigation only for two months in a year, how can the district administration ban it?" asked farmer leader Manu Somaiah on Friday, during a protest in front of the deputy commissioner's office.

"Such a step will kill our crops while resorts are allowed to waste water throughout the year," says Somaiah.

The water crisis hit headlines over the last two weeks after Bengaluru finally woke up to dry borewells and a shortage of tankers, nearly six months after Karnataka declared 223 taluks as drought-hit. Meanwhile, farmers, frustrated with the water crisis, raised an outcry when the price of chillies they had struggled to grow in the burning heat, crashed overnight last week.

While the state stands in wait of monsoon, which is more than two months away, water levels at Karnataka's 23 reservoirs are at 131 tmcft on March 15. This is 56 tmcft less than the previous year. A crisis seems to be looming. Live storage at the Krishnaraja Sagar has dipped to 6.34 tmcft, similar to water levels during the drought of 2016-17, raising questions

about what has been done in the past eight years to avoid a repeat crisis.

Government initiatives

Several government schemes have been implemented to ensure tap water supply to rural areas in the event of such crises. In fact, a senior official in the rural water supply department says the problem has been mitigated due to these central and state schemes. "The data on the water supply schemes will show that we have made significant steps towards providing safe drinking water," he says.

As per the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti,

75% of 1.01 crore households in Karnataka have been provided with tap connections. The assets have been geotagged to monitor the progress of the scheme. However, there is no direct answer as to how many of them actually carry water.

Data shows that Karnataka has 40,300 piped water supply projects in 31 districts. Though work orders have been issued for 38,231 works, only 3,315 (8.67%) have been "physically completed" while thousands of projects are at various stages of completion.

The delay has led to a struggle for survival, especially for those on the margins of rural communities. For instance, residents in the Asthana tribal *haadi* (tribal hamlet) in Virajpet taluk of Kodagu district are facing a drinking water crisis. The residents of the *haadi* are forced to collect water from sources that are far away.

A permanent solution is still a distant dream for residents. "Some have to walk more than half a kilometre to fetch a pot of water from a public well," a resident told *DH*.

► **Water crisis, Page 3A**



People collect water from a tanker in Amargol, Hubballi.

DH PHOTO/GOVINDRAJ JAVALI

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1, March, 17, 2024

Revive lakes to recharge groundwater

Reservoirs run dry

- State reservoirs have collected only 65% of their average water levels.
- In Dec, the reservoirs had a deficit of 11 thousand million cubic feet compared to the previous year.
- Karnataka's 16 major reservoirs are only 29% full compared to 45% last year.
- 12 reservoirs have water levels less than the 10-year average of 40%.

A city without water

Nearly 50% of Bengaluru's freshwater needs are sourced through borewells.

- The city receives 1,450 million litres per day (MLD) of water from the Cauvery.
- The total demand for fresh water in the city is around 2,632 million litres.
- Natural groundwater recharge through green spaces and water bodies is as low as 148 MLD.
- The BWSSB spends about Rs 3 crore per day on electricity to pump water into the city.
- A Bengaluru consumes 150 litres of water on average every day.

Estimated water demand in the state

1,491 TMC in 2020

1,591 TMC By 2030

According to the State Water Policy 2022,

While domestic uses have overriding priority and in normal conditions, water allocation will be optimised for the other uses, at times of scarcity the priorities for the supply of water will be given to:

- Domestic uses
- Irrigation
- Livestock, fisheries and aquaculture
- Hydro-power
- Ecology
- Industry
- Other uses

WATER in high demand, short supply

The Karnataka water crisis has affected more than 7,000 villages, 1,100 wards, and 220 taluks

- 15 drought years have affected Karnataka in the past two decades
- 98 taluks are facing a drinking water crisis
- 196 taluks have been classified as severely drought-affected

- Over 80% of severely drought-hit taluks are in North Karnataka
- 84% Agriculture accounts for about 84% of water diversions in the state

In the last 50 years, the city has lost 79% of its water spread area

1973: 2,324 hectares
2023: 696 hectares

Built-up area in B'luuru
1973: 8%
2023: 93.3%

Measures to mitigate

- A total of 257 areas across four zones in Bengaluru have been identified as bearing the brunt of the water crisis.
- The BWSSB announced a 20% reduction in water supply to major consumers in the city.
- This includes companies, hospitals, railways and airports.
- Rs 131 crore has been allotted by civic bodies to drill borewells in priority zones.
- The BWSSB has banned the use of water for cleaning vehicles, gardening, building construction, fountains, and entertainment purposes.

Treating wastewater

Bengaluru produces around 1,940 MLD of wastewater. Only 33% of this is re-used.

- 63% Treated at centralised treatment plant
- 13% Decentralised treatment plants
- 24% Untreated
- 33% Percentage of water reused

100%

Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Arunachal Pradesh; Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu; Goa; Gujarat; Haryana; Himachal Pradesh; Mizoram; Puducherry; Punjab; Telangana

90-99%

Bihar: 96.42%; Uttarakhand: 92.94%; Lakshadweep: 92.37%

76-90%

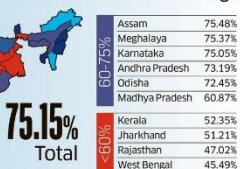
Sikkim: 88.53%; Nagaland: 84.86%; Maharashtra: 84.46%; Tamil Nadu: 81.52%; Lakshadweep: 80.43%; Uttar Pradesh: 79.81%; Manipur: 78.11%; Chhattisgarh: 77.7%; Tripura: 77.4%; J&K: 77%

14 districts in K'taka have less than 50% household tap water coverage

- 75.05% Households with tap water connection
- 0% 100%
- 3% 90% 100%
- 14% 75% 90%
- 12% 50% 75%
- 2% 25% 50%
- 0% Less than 25%

Source: Central Water Commission, State Water Policy 2022, Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, news reports.

Karnataka is among the bottom 8 states in terms of tap water connection coverage



75.15% Total

Dehi: Data not available

COMPILED BY SWEETKUTHI K. DH GRAPHICS: RAMA MASTAIAH

Water crisis, from P1

The resident of the *hoodi* adds, "After several appeals, now the gram panchayat has taken up the work on laying a pipeline to the hamlet to supply water and the work is in progress."

Many of the projects in progress include multi-village supply (MVS) schemes, with lakhs of households waiting for the promised water. "The water will not come," an adviser to the government told *DH*. "At least not for the next two months."

"The schemes depend on either borewells or rivers, both of which have gone dry. There is no sustainable source to ensure the taps will bring water to avoid a crisis situation," he added.

Dry borewells

In the Kittur-Karnataka region, villages that do not have any water source are in dire straits. Officials who relied on borewells to pump water have been disappointed by the harsh drought. Depletion of the groundwater table has made the supply of water impossible.

This is visible in the seven districts of Kalyana Karnataka where the temperature is hovering around 40 degrees Celsius and where rivers have run dry.

Out of 1,280 borewells present in Kalaburagi, 357 borewells have become defunct. The district administration has attributed the depletion of groundwater levels to the drought.

District administrations in the region have identified hundreds of villages that may face water crises in April and May. Officials have identified private borewells to supply water to the villages.

As groundwater levels deplete, high fluoride, content in water poses a threat to human health. Fluoride (31 districts) and arsenic (3 districts) contamination has made RO plants necessary in Karnataka. Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants installed by the government remain defunct in many villages, while some do not have RO plants at all.

Crisis imminent

The administration in Belagavi has claimed that 39 villages are staring at a water crisis and alternate measures like supplying water through tankers have been taken up. Of the total 140 works awarded in 2023, 58 works have been completed under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

In Haveri, over 330 works were undertaken in 2022 in phase one of the JJM project and nearly 90% of the project is in the completion stage. As many as 136 works were initiated in phase two last year, of which only 36 are progressing. "Pipelines were laid a year ago but not even a single drop of water has trickled down from the tap," says Mahantesappa, a resident of Haveri taluk.

In Dharwad, too, 153 villages are already facing a water crisis and the administration is busy supplying water through tankers. The situation is worse at tail-end villages which are grappling to quench their thirst. Around 175 villages in Davangere district are getting water through borewells.

Even areas in Shivamogga district, known for receiving copious amounts of rainfall, are facing a water crisis. Many lakes and rivers in Hosanagar, Thirthahalli and Sagar taluks have almost dried up. Farmers have continued to dig borewells with the hope of getting water to irrigate their crops.

Drinking water supply priority

The reason why villages across Karnataka have developed a high dependence on borewells is that, during droughts, water supply from other main sources is directed

to meet drinking water needs on priority. A senior official at the Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department says the major sources for the MVS projects are reservoirs and dams. "The department is dependent on reservoirs of rivers Krishna, Tungabhadra and Cauvery for MVS. As the supply of drinking water is the top priority, reservoirs maintain the required quantity for the supply of drinking water," he says.

He acknowledges that the vagaries of monsoon have an impact on the supply of drinking water.

"Depending on local water resources such as lakes, tanks and others alone is not a long-term solution. The department is looking at rainwater for the rejuvenation of borewells and groundwater tables. In places such as Kolar and Chikaballapur, treated water supply has worked wonders and the government is looking at extending this to other districts," he adds.

Dependency on monsoon to ensure water supply has proved to be a flawed approach. The Karnataka Water Policy 2022 warns that most northern districts are projected to have an increase in drought incidence by 10% to 80%, with some districts projected to have almost a doubling of drought frequency.

lake. Apart from the runoff during rains, we have to treat every drop of domestic sewage and fill the water bodies to create a sustainable source for recharging groundwater in the long run. Governments and local administrations need to desilt existing water bodies and set up new ones if needed," he explains.

As per a proposal made by Karnataka to the Asian Development Bank, 50% of its population is expected to shift to urban areas by 2030. Karnataka's economic survey 2023-24 notes that even at present, 1,388.44 mld of the total 3,356 mld sewage generated in the state remains untreated, implying that the sewage finds its way to rivers and lakes untreated, resulting in severe environmental deterioration. There is a need to increase the treatment capacity of the state to avoid adverse impact on health and environment."

Unfortunately, successive governments have pushed for big-ticket projects, instead. The Yetinahole project has already become a white elephant with a cost escalation of 180%. Last week, the government pushed for Mokedatu as a magic bullet for the Bengaluru problem. The hurried inauguration of the Yarahi irrigation project in Udipi has also invited widespread criticism as no water flowed to the villages. Friends of Lakes activist V Ramprasad



People rush to fetch water from a well at Khandal village in Kalaburagi district; (above) a crowd gathers around a tanker amid a shortage of water supply in Bengaluru. DH PHOTOS/PUSHKAR V AND TAJAJOON AZAD

The future

Even in the low-emission scenario, Karnataka's State Action Plan for Climate Change has grim warnings for the state. The study forecasts that rains during the kharif season (June to October) will continue to play a crucial role. Projections for 2030 show a one to 14% increase in deviation from the mean average rainfall in 13 districts which already receive less than 1,000 mm.

At the same time, climate change is expected to negatively impact vegetation with seven districts, from Kodagu and Hassan to Raichur and Vijayapura, not being able to support the "existing vegetation or forest type and biodiversity". The disappearance of greenery may, in turn, lead to more climate extremes.

Deepak Saha, former member secretary of the Central Groundwater Authority, says it is high time we ensure source sustainability. "Every scheme taken up by the government should be vetted based on sustainability. Policymakers cannot turn away from the crisis unfolding before them. We need to prepare people for the future with policy interventions regarding the use of water, especially the use of groundwater for irrigation," he says.

Saha adds that unlike the states in the Gangetic plain, a majority of peninsular India, including Maharashtra and Karnataka, have hard rock aquifers with low storage capacity. "Recharging them requires a continuous source like a tank or a

says desilting of lakes and development of lakes based on ecological principles is the need of the hour. "Most lakes in Bengaluru need to be desilted. The same goes for many water bodies in the state. We need an action plan for a scientific rejuvenation to keep our aquifers alive," he says.

Minor Irrigation and Groundwater Development Department Secretary G E Yathish Chandran told *DH* that the idea of a network of water bodies recharging the groundwater was feasible as long as custodians of the lakes join hands. "The 36,000 lakes and tanks in Karnataka can act as a source for recharging groundwater. From our department to the urban local bodies and panchayats, different administrations are managing different lakes. Rejuvenation and maintenance of the lakes are essential to make them reliable water sources," he adds.

(With inputs from Gayathri GR in Mysuru, Naina JA in Mangaluru, Nripaithurungu SK in Davangere, Pavan Kumar HN Hubballi, Shipu Pin Mysuru, Shrinidhi R in Dharwad, Raju Gaudal in Belagavi and Vittal Shastri in Kalaburagi)

Have your say

To express your opinion, e-mail us at: insight@deccanherald.co.in

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, March, 17, 2024

24x7 water supply: A hitch in Hubballi-Dharwad project

MANJUNATH HEGDE BOMNALLI
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Sanctioned over a decade ago, the ambitious World Bank-assisted project to expand the facility of round-the-clock water supply from the Malaprabha to all 82 wards in Hubballi-Dharwad has run into rough waters.

After the project implementation started, progress has been limited to 40%. A large portion of distribution pipelines have yet to be laid.

The project implementation is scheduled to be completed by June 2025, however, this goal is unlikely to

be met.

Though the schedule for 46 wards in Hubballi and Dharwad is once in three to seven days, a few areas get water once in eight, nine or even 10 days.

At present, 11 wards have a 24x7 water supply, while 25 wards have a daily supply.

Malaprabha reservoir in Savadatti of Belagavi district, from where water is sourced for the project, has 8 tmc feet of water at present. The twin cities need 2.17 tmc feet of water per year.

For the requirement of 245 mld, 220 mld is being drawn from Malaprabha dam, while 25 mld is coming from Neer-sagar in Kalahatti taluk at present,

according to officials of the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation (KUIDFC), which is monitoring the project.

Change of hands

The project, supposed to be completed by 2021, has since changed hands after the previous contractor left the project due to escalating costs. The World Bank renewed the loan and a new tender was called for. A Rs 1,206.97-crore contract to modernise the water supply system was awarded to Chennai-based L&T limited.

"Works have been expedited, and efforts are being made to complete

the project by June 2025. Daily water supply will be possible after the clear water trunk mains from Aminabhavi to Rayapur is laid in September," says Hubballi Dharwad Mahanagara Palike Commissioner Ishwar Ullagaddi.

Alternate sources

Several lakes in and around Hubballi and Dharwad have the potential to serve as water sources. Senior corporator Rajanna Koravi has been advocating the revival of Unkal Lake so that it can become an alternative source of drinking water. "Sewage water should be diverted to stop contamination," he says.



An arid lake bed in Kiresur village, Hubballi. (PHOTO: GOVINDARAJ JAVALI)

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, March, 17, 2024

BWSSB plans green star rating for effective implementation of rainwater harvesting

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is mulling over providing green star ratings for apartments, commercial establishments and industries for effective implementation of rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems.

At the Bangalore Apartment Federation (BAF)'s south zone meeting on Sa-

turday, BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar said it would be essential to harvest rainwater for Bengaluru's future water needs. Not adopting RWH methods would also put more pressure on the storm-water drains in the city which leads to flooding, he said.

"We have observed that many apartments have not effectively implemented the RWH system. Hence, to encourage RWH, we are thinking of introducing the

green star rating system based on the harvesting capacity," he said.

Mr. Manohar said that 1,700 water tankers had registered so far as per the BWSSB guidelines as the deadline given by the civic body came to an end. These tankers have a sticker, price list, and number to lodge complaints.

Meanwhile, while inspecting the water supply at Bandipalya, Mr. Manohar took some officials to

task for not putting stickers on free water supply tankers.

"It is mandatory to apply these stickers on the tankers which supply water for free on behalf of the BWSSB. The officials have been instructed about this many times. Otherwise, there is a chance that the water might be misused. Hence, officials should ensure that these stickers are applied, or we will take action against them," he said.

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, March. 17, 2024

ಮಾಲಿನ್ಯದ ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಜಲಮೂಲಗಳ ಮೌಲ್ಯ ಗಣನೀಯ ಇಳಿಕೆ | ಐಐಎಸ್‌ಸಿ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಹಿರಂಗ ಅಶುದ್ಧತೆಗೆ ₹9,418 ಕೋಟಿ ಮೌಲ್ಯದ ಕೆರೆ ನಾಶ

■ ವಿಶ್ವ ಸುರಕ್ಷಿತತೆಗೆ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರ ರಾಜಧಾನಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧ ಕೆರೆಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಜಲಮೂಲಗಳು ದೇಶದಿಂದ ಮಾಲಿನ್ಯದ ಪರಿಣಾಮವಾಗಿ ಅಪಾಯದ ಮಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ತಲುಪಿವೆ. ಇದರಿಂದಾಗಿ ಅಶುದ್ಧತೆಗೆ ₹9,418 ಕೋಟಿ ಮೌಲ್ಯದ ಕೆರೆ ನಾಶವಾಗಿದೆ.

ವಿಶ್ವಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯು 'ಸುರಕ್ಷಿತ' ಅಥವಾ 'ಸುರಕ್ಷಿತ' ಮಟ್ಟದ ಜಲಮೂಲಗಳನ್ನು (ಐಐಎಸ್‌ಸಿ) ಅಂದಾಜಿಸಿದೆ.

ಅಂತಿಮವಾಗಿ 'ಅಪಾಯದ' ಮಟ್ಟದ ಜಲಮೂಲಗಳನ್ನು ಗುರುತಿಸಿರುವ ದೃಶ್ಯವು ಮಾಲಿನ್ಯದ ಪರಿಣಾಮವಾಗಿ ಕೆರೆಗಳ ಮೌಲ್ಯವು ₹9,418 ಕೋಟಿ ಮಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ಇಳಿದಿದೆ.

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ಅಶುದ್ಧತೆಗೆ ಕೆರೆಗಳ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ ಮೌಲ್ಯ				
ಕೆರೆಗಳು	ಒಟ್ಟು ಮೌಲ್ಯ	ಕೆರೆಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ಮೌಲ್ಯ (ಪ್ರತಿ ಕೆರೆಗೆ)	ಮೌಲ್ಯ (ಪ್ರತಿ ಕೆರೆಗೆ)
ಜಲಮೂಲ	253.31	9	95.8	95.8
ಕೆರೆಗಳು	3549.47	77	1435.3	1435.3
ಸುರಕ್ಷಿತತೆ	38.27	2	14.4	14.4
ಅಪಾಯದ	2432.96	12	920.5	920.5
ಪ್ರದಕ್ಷಿಣೆ	683.12	35	258.4	258.4
ಒಟ್ಟು-ಜಲಮೂಲ	2461.72	41	931	931

ಮೌಲ್ಯ ಕುಗ್ಗಿದ ಕೆರೆಗಳನ್ನು ಗುರುತಿಸಿರುವ ದೃಶ್ಯವು ಮಾಲಿನ್ಯದ ಪರಿಣಾಮವಾಗಿ ಕೆರೆಗಳ ಮೌಲ್ಯವು ₹9,418 ಕೋಟಿ ಮಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ಇಳಿದಿದೆ.

ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಮೌಲ್ಯವುಳ್ಳ ಕೆರೆಗಳು	
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು	96.9 ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ.
ಮೈಸೂರು	49.8 ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ.
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು	25.9 ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ.
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು	14.3 ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ.
ಮೈಸೂರು	12.6 ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ.

ಮೌಲ್ಯ ಕುಗ್ಗಿದ ಕೆರೆಗಳನ್ನು ಗುರುತಿಸಿರುವ ದೃಶ್ಯವು ಮಾಲಿನ್ಯದ ಪರಿಣಾಮವಾಗಿ ಕೆರೆಗಳ ಮೌಲ್ಯವು ₹9,418 ಕೋಟಿ ಮಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ಇಳಿದಿದೆ.

6 ಕಡೆ, 193 ಕೆರೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಭೇಟಿ

ನಗರದ ಕೆರೆಗಳು, ಅಪಾಯದ ಮಟ್ಟದ ಜಲಮೂಲಗಳನ್ನು ಗುರುತಿಸಿರುವ ದೃಶ್ಯವು ಮಾಲಿನ್ಯದ ಪರಿಣಾಮವಾಗಿ ಕೆರೆಗಳ ಮೌಲ್ಯವು ₹9,418 ಕೋಟಿ ಮಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ಇಳಿದಿದೆ.

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Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.08, Mar.17, 2024

A handbook to help create zero-waste offices in Bengaluru and beyond

With nearly 50% of plastic being used only once before being discarded, the handbook by Saahas and Rainmatter Foundation talks about how people can move towards a low-waste way of living

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

The best way to manage waste is not to generate it in the first place," says Smita Kulkarni, Communications Consultant, Saahas.

Towards this goal, the non-profit, in partnership with the Rainmatter Foundation, recently released a free guidebook that can help offices in the city minimise their waste. According to Kulkarni, also the co-founder of the social enterprise Stonesoup, many corporations today are already looking at ways to be sustainable, "some for namesake, and some in a deeper sense."

As the guidebook, available for free on both the Saahas and Rainmatter Foundation, points out, we often follow a use-and-throw lifestyle, with nearly 50% of plastic being used only once before being thrown away. And even if some of these single-use materials are recyclable, they are best avoided, says the guidebook, pointing out that not only is plastic the most significant contributor of mixed waste, but recycling items made of it takes a lot of resources. Additionally, there are few takers of recycled plastic since it becomes dull and brittle after processing, states the guidebook, adding, "Not everything gets recycled."

Tannayi Gidh, part of the Outreach and Communications team at Rainmatter Foundation, elaborates on the guidebook's raison d'être. "While zero waste is the ideal, it can sometimes feel a little overwhelming," says Gidh. She feels that moving towards a zero or low-waste lifestyle is not as overwhelming and abstract as it is made out to be, provided one has concrete steps and alternatives listed. "That was the whole



BSMP trucks dumping garbage in Mittaganahalli quarry pit, in north Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

intention of developing this guidebook," she says.

How it began

Gidh also discusses the project's genesis. The seeds for the guidebook, she says, were sown around World Environment Day, which falls on June 5. When they considered developing a campaign around the day, they felt that instead of treating it as a one-off event, it is important to create something long-lasting more focused on specific stakeholders. Waste management, after all, is a crucial piece of the narrative around the environment and climate crisis. "It is the most tangible problem. Everyone has an impact on that problem, and everyone's life is impacted by it," she says, adding that the Rainmatter Foundation decided to start by engaging corporates in the zero-waste pledge because of the volume of waste produced in offices and also because of the ability of changemakers to influence



Participants from the zero-waste workshop conducted at Embassy Services. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the culture and implement systemic changes in their own organisations.

As part of the larger World Environment Day campaign, Saahas and the Rainmatter Foundation jointly conducted a zero-waste workshop focused on corporates.

From there came the idea of the gap that crops up when changes are suggested, she says. "There is very little support provided to materialise that change, especially when

you are doing it at a systemic cultural level," she believes, pointing out that it takes a lot of handholding, collaboration and support from people who understand the space well. "So yes, we can suggest alternatives."

"But who is going to help them understand where it can start from," says Gidh, who believes that the guidebook can help provide this starting point for anyone since it puts all the information

and resources in one place.

Creating a zero-waste office

So, what are the major top waste generators in a corporation? Kulkarni lists them: tissue papers, sachets, paper cups, and PET bottles. "These constitute 80% of the waste generated in corporates. If we managed these four or even one of these four, there would be a significant impact," she firmly

believes. She talks about working closely with organisations like Saahas Zero Waste and the Electronics City Industrial Township Authority (ELCITA) to understand some of the best practices followed in different places. "It is kind of taking a solution from the corporates and giving it back to them," she says.

For instance, by replacing tissues with hand dryers, "automatically around 20% of the waste is gone," she says, going into other practical ways organisations can better manage their resources. Other suggestions? Instead of having a vast collection of sugar sachets, organisations can simply have a jar of sugar with an airtight lid, which "will solve the problem of generating so many sachets every single day," says Kulkarni. She also says that having reusable mugs and bottles can reduce paper cup usage considerably, while steel spoons can replace stirrers. And yes, it is important to edu-

cate people in organisations about these things. "We made posters as part of it...some messaging across office walls will help reinforce these things," she believes.

Practical applications

Remya Mariam Thomas, Head, Human Resources & Admin, Embassy Services Pvt. Ltd, which recently had its facilities team go through a zero-waste workshop, says the organisation has been transforming their workplace culture through innovative waste management initiatives. For instance, they have something called 1 Bay 1 Bin Concept, where dedicated paper waste bins are stationed at strategic points throughout the office bays, discouraging desk-side waste accumulation and prompting employees to dispose of their waste thoughtfully, she says. "This has majorly reduced the paper waste generated at each desk."

Going by that age-old management concept - what cannot be measured, cannot be managed - the company also has a board in the cafeteria that shows the amount of food waste generated daily. "This initiative has led to a significant reduction in food waste, with a remarkable 50% decrease achieved since its implementation. Additionally, our on-campus organic waste converter transforms food waste into nutrient-rich compost, contributing to our landscaping efforts," she says, adding that the organisation has also replaced disposable like wooden coffee stirrers, sugar sachets and paper cups with steel spoons, loose sugar and reusable coffee mugs, respectively. "Through these initiatives, we're not only mitigating our environmental impact

but also fostering a culture of sustainability and mindfulness within our workplace," she says.

A low-hanging fruit?

Like Embassy Services, more and more companies are attempting to create this sort of culture in workplaces, something Kulkarni has observed too. "There is pressure from senior management to show sustainability in behaviour and operations (at the workplace)," she says. And yes, since corporate entities always work in a systemic, process-oriented way, she feels that implementing these small changes is "a low-hanging fruit."

Having said that, changing mindsets is a long-drawn-out process that takes time. "People don't even think twice about doing something. It is the norm," she says, pointing out that while people talk about living sustainably, they often take a selective approach.

For instance, while people may be open to drinking from a reusable bottle instead of using paper cups, they don't always segregate their waste properly. "The facilities team manually has to segregate many times," says Kulkarni, who hopes to roll out these zero-waste initiatives to as many corporates in Bengaluru as they can reach.

"We would like corporates who are leading the way to teach the others. We are just the mediators taking some of the best practices of some of these corporates to help the other corporates catch up," she says, likening it to a Montessori school system where older kids help younger kids with learning. "A small change at the facilities level will result in a huge change as far as waste is concerned," believes Kulkarni.

Source: The Hindu, p. 4, March. 18, 2024

How Bengaluru grew and thrived around lakes

Bengaluru's development as a city is inextricably linked to the development of multiple lakes, says ecologist Harini Nagendra. These lakes were created not only by rulers but also by common people



Nearly dried up Mallathahalli Lake as the city witnesses acute water shortage due to the worst drought in about four decades. *PH*

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

Harini Nagendra brings up the founding myth about modern Bengaluru: how the great warrior Kempe Gowda, a chieftain under the Vijayanagara Empire, saw a hare chasing a hunting dog, a sign of immense bravery. He referred to this area as *Gandubhooni*, the land of heroes, and decided that it would be auspicious to build a city here, starting with a fort. "But how did he create a market town in Bengaluru? There must have (already) been some activity," says Harini, going into the prehistoric past of Bengaluru at a recent lecture titled *Bangalore Lakes: An Ecological History* at the Science Gallery Bengaluru.

Development of water system

The area, which would become Bengaluru, she says, was a very old settlement, as the discovery of mega-

lithic stone tools from 3500 years ago indicates. While other discoveries, like ancient jars filled with coins from all over the world, estimated to be around 2000-odd years old, suggest that Bengaluru must have been an important centre for trade, commerce and cultural exchange, how civilisation developed here is still somewhat mysterious.

"In your school geography textbooks, you always hear that you develop cities near water... that civilisations come from water," says the Bengaluru-based ecologist at the talk, which was part of the ongoing Critical Zones exhibition, a collaboration between Science Gallery Bengaluru and Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan, Bangalore. "That makes Bengaluru very interesting because it has no perennial water supply. It is in the rain shadow of the Western Ghats," she says, adding that in the absence of written record, we will



Harini Nagendra during the 'Bangalore Lakes: An Ecological History' talk. *SANKALP SINGH*

never really know where ancient people got their water from.

Stone inscriptions dating as far back as the 5th and 6th centuries, however, give us some clues about the development of water systems in this area in the early common era. Using a series of maps, Nagendra explains how va-

rious lakes began emerging in the area which would become Bengaluru, beginning by going into the topography of the area, the hilly western part and the flatter eastern part. "The (old) High Ground Police Station used to be its highest point," she says.

Drawing from various inscription stones, she also

talks about the various dynasties that rose, ruled and fell over the centuries—the Ganga Dynasty (6-9 centuries CE), the Cholas (10-12 centuries CE), the Hoysala Dynasty (13-14 centuries CE) and the Vijayanagara Dynasty (14-16 centuries CE)—and how their presence contributed to developing the water systems of

Bengaluru. Kempe Gowda, she adds, had so pleased Achuta Deva Raya, the brother of Krishna Deva Raya, who also went on to rule Vijayanagara, that he was given a number of villages to support the market town that he had founded. "There was a vibrant economy because of all those things," believes Harini, Director, Research Center & Centre for Climate Change, Azim Premji University.

She also mentions how the city's lakes were created not only by rulers but also by common people (one even by a prostitute) and goes into the connection between water and worship. "They went to a landscape and looked at where the low-lying muddy patches were. From this, they scooped out mud and made the lakes," she says, describing how cultures were constructed, how history played out, and even how warfare was carried out because of the city's water bodies. "Lakes were part of the imagination and

a way of life," she believes.

Changing city

Much has changed in Bengaluru's landscape since the times of Kempe. Harini goes into how the city has expanded massively since the days of that market town, and how that expansion came at the cost of the city's water systems. Today, what was once a city that was watered by plentiful lakes, channels, and wells is now almost completely dependent on borewells and Cauvery water, which is clearly not enough for its residents, as the recent water crisis indicates. "We only talk about ecology in times of crisis," she says, pointing out that while poor urban design has altered the topography of the city, it is important to work on nature-based solutions to restore our water systems. After all, "we grew because of attention to lakes," says Harini, who believes lakes and wells could play a significant part in addressing

drought and flooding.

She also goes into how urbanisation—India, along with China and Nigeria, are the fastest urbanising countries right now—is capable of devastating ecology. By 2050, 60% of India's population is projected to be urban, with 415,000,000 people added to its cities. "Where is the housing, electricity, and water going to come from?" she asks. Too often, the conversation lingers on building infrastructure, with people believing that the environment can be looked at later. "People often say that first India needs to develop and then it can take care of its ecology," says Harini, who firmly believes that it is important to develop on the backs of our ecology. Preserving urban ecosystems, while a city grows, is an important aspect of health, energy, economy and people, she says. "We need to understand that we can't grow as a city unless we keep this in mind."

Source: The Hindu, p. 7, March. 20, 2024

Rainwater harvesting park's 14-year legacy: New techniques to show the way forward

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The rainwater harvesting (RWH) theme park, established by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) in Jayanagar, marks its 14th year of operations on Thursday.

Covering an expansive acre, the theme park serves as an informative hub for various RWH techniques, boasting of 26 models and live demonstrations. Throughout its tenure, the park has welcomed approximately 61,147 visitors.

Modest adoption

Despite the BWSSB's proactive efforts to foster awareness through such initiatives, RWH adoption remains modest in the city. RWH systems play a pivotal role in bolstering the water security of Bengaluru, offering numerous benefits.

Efficient utilisation of water collected through RWH reduces reliance on Cauvery water, while surplus water is channelled into the ground via percolation pits, thus replenishing groundwater levels.

BWSSB's data suggests only 1.97 lakh out of the nearly 10.6 lakh water connections in the city have integrated RWH systems. About 39,000 households continue to incur penalties for non-RWH compliance.

Space constraints

Senior BWSSB officials attribute the low adoption rate to various factors, including space constraints in older



Emphasis on public spaces

While residential RWH systems alleviate demand, the installation of percolation pits, storage tanks, and open wells remain pivotal, officials said. These systems significantly enhance groundwater levels by capturing runoff water and facilitating percolation.

properties. "The mandatory RWH implementation rule came into force in 2011 and would retrospectively apply to all properties constructed in a 60x40 feet plot.

"However, many houses that were constructed earlier do not have provisions to implement the system and hence, continue to pay a penalty even to this day," a senior BWSSB official said.

Shift in mindset

However, another official highlights the need for a mindset shift among residents, since many have reservations over using rainwater.

Estimates by WELL Labs suggests implementing rainwater harvesting effectively could potentially fulfil up to 17% of the city's total water requirement.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3, March, 21, 2024

ಕಾನೂನು ಅನುಷ್ಠಾನ ನಿರ್ಲಕ್ಷ್ಯ | 7 ವರ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ 6,400ಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಅತಿಕ್ರಮಣ

ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿಗೆ ಅಂತ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ!

■ ಗುರುದತ್ತ ಭಟ್ ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ

gurudatta.bhat@timesgroup.com

ಕಾಡು ಉಳಿಸಲು ಕಾನೂನುಗಳಿದ್ದರೂ ಅವುಗಳ ಅನುಷ್ಠಾನಕ್ಕೆ ನಿಷ್ಕಾಳಜಿ ತೋರುತ್ತಿರುವ ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಪ್ರತಿ ವರ್ಷ ಸಾವಿರಾರು ಹೆಕ್ಟೇರ್ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಬಂದಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ರೆಸಾರ್ಟ್, ಹೋಂ ಸ್ಟೇ, ಅಕ್ರಮ ಗಣಿಗಾರಿಕೆ ಮೊದಲಾದವುಗಳಿಗೆ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ಎತ್ತಿಲ್ಲದ ನಡೆದಿದೆ.

ಅರಣ್ಯ ಭೂಮಿ ಹಕ್ಕು ಕಾಯ್ದೆ ಜಾರಿಯಾದ ಬಳಿಕ ಅರಣ್ಯ ರಕ್ಷಣೆ ವಿಚಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟತೆ ದೊರೆತಿದೆ. ಹೊಸ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ಪ್ರಕರಣ ಕಂಡುಬಂದರೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಪಟ್ಟ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳನ್ನೇ ಹೊಣೆಯಾಗಿಸುವುದಾಗಿ ಸುಪ್ರೀಂಕೋರ್ಟ್ ಹಾಗೂ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಚಿವಾಲಯ ಎಚ್ಚರಿಕೆ ನೀಡಿದೆ. ಇಷ್ಟಾದರೂ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಳೆದ 7 ವರ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿಯು 6,400ಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ನಡೆದಿವೆ. 15 ಸಾವಿರ ಹೆಕ್ಟೇರ್‌ಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಅರಣ್ಯ ನಾಶವಾಗಿದೆ. ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ತಡೆಗೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಕ್ರಮ ವಹಿಸದಿರುವುದು ಪರಿಸರ ಪ್ರಿಯರ ಆಕ್ರೋಶಕ್ಕೆ ಕಾರಣವಾಗಿದೆ.

ವರದಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಸೂಚನೆ: ಅರಣ್ಯ ಭೂಮಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ರೆಸಾರ್ಟ್, ಹೋಂ ಸ್ಟೇಗಳ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಎತ್ತಿಲ್ಲದ ಸಾಗಿದೆ. ಇನ್ನು ಇಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಬಟ್ಟಗಾಗಿ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಭೂಮಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಕ್ರಮ ಮಣ್ಣು ಗಣಿಗಾರಿಕೆಯೂ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿದೆ.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಭೂ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ತಡೆ ವಿಶೇಷ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯವು ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ಕುರಿತು ಸ್ವಯಂ ಪ್ರೇರಿತ ಪ್ರಕರಣ



ದಾಖಲಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದು, ಬಿಆರ್‌ಪಿ ಹುಲಿ ಸಂರಕ್ಷಿತ ಅರಣ್ಯ, ಬಂಡೀಮರ ಮತ್ತು ನಾಗರಹೋಳೆ ಹುಲಿ ಸಂರಕ್ಷಿತ ಕಾಡುಗಳು, ಸಚಲೇಶಪುರ, ಕೊಡಗು, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು, ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ, ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡದ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅಕ್ರಮ ರೆಸಾರ್ಟ್, ಹೋಟೆಲ್, ಹೋಂ ಸ್ಟೇಗಳ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣವಾಗುತ್ತಿರುವ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಕಳವಳ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಪಡಿಸಿದೆ. ಈ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಪಟ್ಟ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ವಿಸ್ತೃತ ವರದಿ ನೀಡಲು ಸೂಚಿಸಿದೆ.

ಕಾನೂನು ಪಾಲನೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ: ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ತೆರವು ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರಂತರವಾಗಿ ಮೇಲ್ವಿಚಾರಣೆ ನಡೆಸಲು ಸಿಸಿಎಫ್ ಮಟ್ಟದ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಯ ನೇತೃತ್ವದಲ್ಲಿ ಘಟಕ ತೆರೆಯಬೇಕು. ಮುಖ್ಯ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಜ್ಯಮಟ್ಟದ ಸಮಿತಿ ರಚಿಸಬೇಕು. ಈ ಸಮಿತಿ ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೆ ಎರಡು ಬಾರಿ ಸಭೆ ನಡೆಸಿ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ತಡೆಯಲು ಹಾಗೂ ತೆರವುಗೊಳಿಸಲು ವಿಫಲರಾದ ಅಧಿ

ಹೊಸ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು

ವರ್ಷ	ಕೇಸ್
2016-17	1,103
2017-18	292
2018-19	966
2019-20	226
2020-21	863
2021-22	1,032
2022-23	992

ಕಾರಿಗಳ ವಿರುದ್ಧ ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು ಹಾಗೂ ಹೊಸದಾಗಿ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ತಡೆಯಲು ವಿಫಲರಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಡಿಸಿಎಫ್, ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಎಸ್ಸಿ ಅವರನ್ನು ಹೊಣೆಗಾರರನ್ನಾಗಿ ಮಾಡಬೇಕೆಂದು ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರಗಳಿಗೆ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಪರಿಸರ ಸಚಿವಾಲಯ 2004ರ ಫೆಬ್ರವರಿಯಲ್ಲೇ ಕಟ್ಟುನಿಟ್ಟಿನ

ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು

2023ರ ಏಪ್ರಿಲ್ 1ರಿಂದ ಡಿಸೆಂಬರ್ 31ರವರೆಗೆ ರಾಜ್ಯದ 14 ಅರಣ್ಯ ವೃತ್ತಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಟ್ಟು 716 ಹೊಸ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ದಾಖಲಾಗಿವೆ. ಈ ಪೈಕಿ ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗದಲ್ಲಿ 142, ಬೆಳಗಾವಿಯಲ್ಲಿ 128 ಹಾಗೂ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ವೃತ್ತದಲ್ಲಿ 121 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳಿವೆ.

ನಿರ್ದೇಶನ ನೀಡಿದೆ.

ಹೊಸ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ತಡೆಯುವಲ್ಲಿ ನಿರ್ಲಕ್ಷ್ಯ ತೋರುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು, ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ ವಿರುದ್ಧ ಕ್ರಮ ವಹಿಸುವಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲ ಅರಣ್ಯ ವೃತ್ತಗಳ ಸಿಸಿಎಫ್‌ಗಳಿಗೆ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಪ್ರಧಾನ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಂರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ 2018ರ ಆಕ್ಟೋಬರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಆದೇಶ ನೀಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಆದೇಶಗಳು ಕೇವಲ ಕಡತಕ್ಕೆ ಸೀಮಿತವಾಗಿವೆ. ಪ್ರತಿ ವರ್ಷ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಒತ್ತುವರಿಯ ನೂರಾರು ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ಪತ್ತೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೂ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ತಡೆಯಲು ಹಾಗೂ ತೆರವು ಗೊಳಿಸಲು ಅರಣ್ಯ ರಕ್ಷಕರಿಂದ ಹಿಡಿದು ಪಿಸಿಎಫ್‌ವರೆಗಿನ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು, ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ ನಿರ್ಲಕ್ಷ್ಯ ಧೋರಣೆ ತಾಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎಂಬ ಆರೋಪವಿದೆ. ಬಹುತೇಕ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒತ್ತುವರಿ ತಡೆಯಲು ವಿಫಲರಾದ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ವಿರುದ್ಧ ಕ್ರಮವೇ ಆಗುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ.

Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.06, Mar.21, 2024

Experts against use of treated water to fill lakes

50% sewage treatment plants in city fall short of NGT standards

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The BWSSB may be promoting the use of treated water, but close to 50% of the sewage treatment plants (STPs) in the city do not comply with the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) norms and they are yet to be upgraded.

While secondary treated water could be used for construction and other purposes, experts do not encourage its use in filling the lakes—something the BWSSB has proposed to improve groundwater levels. In the first phase, the BWSSB has proposed to fill 14 tanks with treated water. Since only 50% of the STPs provide secondary treated water, experts warned that filling lakes with only secondary treated water would contaminate groundwater and cause health hazards.

"We have seen the impact of filling lakes and tanks with secondary water in Kolar and Chikkaballapur. In these areas, groundwater has been contaminated, owing to this project, and this has affected the health of the citizens. Secondary treatment does not remove heavy metals from the sewage, and this is hazardous, especially given that sewage in

Water board will ensure quality

Admitting that people could be apprehensive, BWSSB Chairman Dr Ramprasad Manohar V assured that the board is pumping treated water into the lake after stringent tests. "We will ensure water is tested by an independent laboratory to ensure quality is up to the standards," he said, adding that all STPs are upgraded to meet the NGT standards.

Bengaluru also carries industrial effluents," Professor TV Ramachandra from the Indian Institute of Science told *DH*. Shubha Ramachandran, a senior member of Biome Environment Trust, suggested that the BWSSB should constantly monitor the water quality and put the data out in the public domain.

"There are a few NGT standards that should be followed. If the BWSSB is able to reach those standards with secondary treatment, it is alright to pump the water. But since it will have a significant impact

At a glance	Number of STPs	STPs up to NGT standards	STPs not up to NGT standards
	34 (Total capacity: 1,348.5 MLD)	16 (Total capacity: 607.5 MLD)	18 (Total capacity: 741 MLD)



A woman buys a water can in Rajajinagar on Wednesday. Concerns over drinking water scarcity have surfaced across Bengaluru. *DH* PHOTO/MS MANJUNATH

on the quality of groundwater, it is important to monitor the water quality constantly," Ramachandran said.

"Unlike in Kolar or Chikkaballapur, where the water is mostly used for irrigation purposes, in Bengaluru, the water will be used for domestic pur-

poses and this calls for more caution," she added.

Of the 34 STPs in the city, only 16 are up to the standards and provide tertiary treated water, while the remaining 18 are equipped to provide only secondary treated water.

While the NGT had revised

the STP standards in 2019, financial strife and administrative hurdles have forced the BWSSB to run the STPs below the standards for close to four years.

BWSSB sources said work to upgrade the plants was started a few months ago.

Rainwater harvesting park's 14-year legacy: New techniques to show the way forward

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The rainwater harvesting (RWH) theme park, established by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) in Jayanagar, marks its 14th year of operations on Thursday.

Covering an expansive acre, the theme park serves as an informative hub for various RWH techniques, boasting of 26 models and live demonstrations. Throughout its tenure, the park has welcomed approximately 61,147 visitors.

Modest adoption

Despite the BWSSB's proactive efforts to foster awareness through such initiatives, RWH adoption remains modest in the city. RWH systems play a pivotal role in bolstering the water security of Bengaluru, offering numerous benefits.



Emphasis on public spaces

While residential RWH systems alleviate demand, the installation of percolation pits, storage tanks, and open wells remain pivotal, officials said. These systems significantly enhance groundwater levels by capturing runoff water and facilitating percolation.

properties. "The mandatory RWH implementation rule came into force in 2011 and would retrospectively apply

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3, March, 21, 2024

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Hrudaya Jyoti scheme for cardiac healthcare launched in State

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dinesh Gundu Rao on Friday launched the Dr. Puneeth Rajkumar Heart Health Scheme (Hrudaya Jyoti) to cater to the cardiac healthcare needs of the poor and general public. It is the first scheme of its kind in the entire country, he said.

Inaugurating the State-level launch programme of the scheme in Dharwad, Mr. Rao said the government had launched the

scheme in memory of actor and philanthropist Puneeth Rajkumar to provide emergency treatment and healthcare facilities for cardiac patients.

“In most cases of heart attack, the patient breathes his last before reaching the hospitals with the required facilities. One of the reasons for deaths was the lack of treatment facilities for cardiac patients in taluk hospitals. To provide cardiac healthcare facilities to taluk hospitals, the government has launched the Hrudaya Jyoti scheme,” he

said. The Minister said that in the first phase, the scheme had been launched in 71 taluk and 15 district hospitals. As many as 65 cardiac surgeons from various district hospitals will be available online to guide the taluk health officials in treating and protecting the lives of cardiac patients.

“Under the scheme, any person suffering a heart attack will be immediately administered an injection worth ₹30,000 for free. The scheme will be extended to all the taluk hospitals

by next year,” he announced.

The Health Minister said steps were being taken to provide first aid to the person suffering from heart problems at public places like railway stations, bus stations, and other busy areas. Defibrillators were being made available outside the hospitals also for the first time.

Releasing the handbook on the training programme under the scheme, Labour Minister Santosh Lad termed it “a model for the whole country”.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, March. 16, 2024

Japanese investors to pump in ₹1,000 crore to open new Sakra hospital at Banaswadi

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Japanese firms Toyota Tsusho and Secom are set to invest ₹1,000 crore to set up another multi-super speciality hospital in India. The investors’ second healthcare project, Sakra World Hospital, a 500-bed

facility will come up at Banaswadi, north-east part of the city.

Sakra World Hospital based at Marathahalli, set up 10 years ago, is India’s first 100% FDI multi-super specialty hospital, through a collaboration between healthcare major Secom Medical System and trad-

ing conglomerate Toyota Tsusho, according to a company spokesperson.

“The new facility is the extension of our commitment towards fulfilling the healthcare needs of the local and international communities,” said Mr. Tatsuro Fuse, while announcing the new project at a media

conference here on Saturday. The new unit will offer range of specialities and super-specialities, including advanced oncology treatments and cutting-edge rehabilitation programmes, he added.

Scheduled for completion by the end of 2026, the new facility is on

6,00,000-sq. ft area, said Yuichi Nagano, managing director of Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru. Lovesh Phasu, group chief operating officer, Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru, said medical research, education, continued learning, and innovation were integral to Sakra.

Source: The Hindu, p. 5, March. 17, 2024

Slum residents grapple with drinking water shortage, dirty water triggers health issues

Shutting down of water ATMs has added to their woes

SHRADHA TRIVENI
BENGALURU, DHNS

As the acute water shortage grips several parts of the city, the slum dwellers struggle to source water for drinking purposes, let alone for other daily chores.

Local dwellers in the K R Puram and Kariyammana Agrahara area told *DH* that

the houses in the area, which used to receive two drums per week from their owners, now get one drum delivered once in two weeks.

There are over 4,500 families clubbed together in the K R Puram area and hail from Kalaburgi, Raichur, Bidar, Davanagere, Maharashtra, Odisha, Bihar and West Bengal. The shortage of clean water has been affecting their health, triggering skin allergies and rashes among the children.

Manju, who lives in Priyank Nagar area near K R Puram said that, for the past few weeks, sewage mixed with water has been flowing in their taps.



Most of the houses have no sump facility and storing in large cans is a challenge. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Rajesh K, a member of Action Aid Association said that several construction workers

staying in make-shift tents in Mahadevapura, K R Puram, Yelahanka, Kanakapura Road,

and Kengeri areas do not have a safe source of drinking water.

"The daily wage workers from other states do not have a proper source of water. Sintex tanks are installed in several places. But it is not sufficient for everybody. These workers are not from the city, but they work for the city's development," he said.

He added that a majority of houses have no sump facility and storing in large cans and drums becomes their last resort. However, with a lack of space to accommodate drums, they end up deprived of maintaining hygiene, owing to rashes and skin allergies.

Karnataka Slum Develop-

ment Board has declared over 2000 slums in the state with 597 slum areas in Bengaluru. However, ground reality shows that several migrant workers and daily wage labourers dwell on the streets in make-shift tents without having proper drinking water facilities, let alone the availability of clean water for non-drinking purposes such as bathing.

The shutting down of several Reverse Osmosis (RO) units or water ATMs has added to their woes. These units not only provided 20 litres of drinking water for just Rs 5, but were the lifeline for many who could not afford to have water purifiers at home.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, March, 17, 2024

3.1% students have refractive disorders, finds govt survey

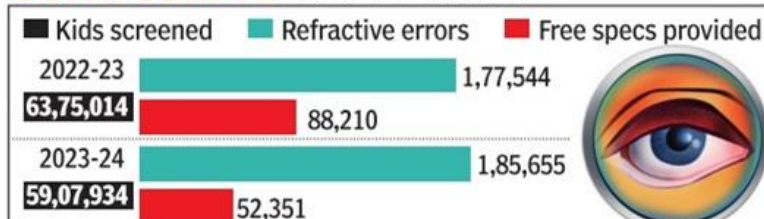
Sruthy Susan.Ullas
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: A survey by the National Health Mission on the eyesight of govt and aided school children in the state has shown that 1.8 lakh of the 59 lakh children tested have refractive disorders. This is 3.1% of the children who were surveyed for the academic year 2023-24.

As per the department of health and family welfare, these numbers are higher than the previous year. In 2022-23, 1.8 lakh children of the 63 lakh surveyed had an eyesight issue. This was around 2.7%. G Shyam Sunder, joint director, ophthalmology, health and family welfare department, said the numbers are in sync with the national trends.

"However, one would note that the number of children with refractive disorders is on the rise. This is attributed to the increasing screen time of children. Outdoor activities have been reduced among children. More and more are spending time on gadgets like phones, TVs and laptops. It is important that

SCHOOL EYE SCREENING



parents restrict the screen time and encourage them for outdoor activities," he said.

The department is also distributing spectacles to children who have refractive disorders. While 88,210 children were covered last year, 52,351 have received spectacles so far this year.

"All the children identified with refractive errors will be provided with free spectacles. We're yet to reach all the children, but it shall be done. Spectacles are being given by the govt in collaboration with NGOs. In some cases, the tenders are not yet completed. In some cases, NGOs have to complete their process. But all children will get them," said the joint director.

The official said no regional variations were observed in the survey results.

The results are part of a

regular survey conducted in govt and aided schools by the National Health Mission. Paramedical officers and refractionists visit schools and screen 6-18 year-olds for the survey.

However, private practitioners feel that the numbers quoted in the survey are too low. "We see a huge number of refractive errors among children in our clinic every day. Many classrooms have at least 50% of children with refractive errors. The numbers are significantly higher after Covid," said Dr Arun Samprathi, a pediatric ophthalmologist with Samprathi Eye Hospital And Squint Centre.

Reduced exposure to sunlight and an increase in activities with electronic gadgets have led to the increase in refractive errors," he said.

Full report: [toi.in](https://timesofindia.com)

Source: The Times of India, p.2, March. 18, 2024

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Violence, homelessness, and women's mental health

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) presents a sobering picture of the pervasive violence against women in India. Almost 30% of women between the ages of 18-49 years have experienced physical violence beginning at age 15; 6% reported sexual violence. Evidence indicates that violence and mental health conditions have a reciprocal, cause-and-effect relationship, and both factors significantly heighten the risk of homelessness. In the three decades of working with homeless women with mental health conditions at The Banyan, we have witnessed this recursive interaction between violence against women, homelessness, and mental health almost universally.

Findings of relevance

A survey of 346 women accessing outpatient services at The Banyan found that relational disruptions, often in the background of violence, predicted homelessness, even when women had accessed care for their mental health – a finding that is mirrored in other studies globally. Another qualitative research that examined user accounts of trauma drawn from women with histories of homelessness showed that descriptions of experiences relating to violence in social relationships, experience of alienation and shame, and poverty did not entirely match with the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* conceptualisations of trauma.

Qualitative interviews with several women living with mental health conditions detail their journeys into homelessness, not merely as a deficit in access to care but also as an escape and possible liberation from repeated cycles of unremitting violence – whether it was from a predatory father, a husband who controlled all aspects of life or an aunt who issued threats to sell into slavery to pay for meals. A recurrent theme that emerged was the impact of child sexual abuse and intimate partner violence on individual mental health and homelessness.

At age 5, Leela began understanding what it meant to be a (child of a) homeless woman living with mental illness. Her mother, Jaya, fled an abusive family home with only Leela, leaving her older siblings behind. Desperate and hearing voices, Jaya contemplated ending their suffering by jumping from a train but was dissuaded by Leela, who did not fully understand her mother's motives but was consumed by an ominous feeling of desperation and crippling fear. Throughout their homelessness, the duo faced the arduous task of survival, finding food and safe spaces to rest every day. Jaya's deformed hand is a reminder of the violence they experienced on the streets.

Within a multifactorial matrix of structural barriers such as poverty and caste, violence and associated feelings of loss of agency feature prominently amongst reasons that precipitate an exit from typical relational bonds and conventional notions of home assumed to provide safety, a sense of community, and belongingness. Ellen Corrin's work offers a



Vandana Gopikumar

co-founder of The Banyan (a mental health service organisation) and The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health, is a critical social work practitioner and researcher



Lakshmi Narasimhan

with an independent research practice at TSI Consulting LLP, has been working with The Banyan and The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health since 2005

Many of the manifestations of mental ill-health appear to be embedded in the reality of adverse life events

nuanced perspective on the phenomenon of social withdrawal in the context of schizophrenia that challenges reductionist views around the construction of negative symptoms. Instead of an overt focus on alignment with the social environment, her work shifts the emphasis to considering meanings and personal experiences behind behaviours often labelled as symptoms of the disorder, and situating mental illness and related symptoms within 'a life frame'. The same lens can be used to approach intersecting issues of women's mental health, homelessness, and violence.

An umbrella-like label

Historically, the label of madness has been used to discredit, subjugate, and silence women who are seen as demonstrating undesirable traits – intellectual curiosity, assertiveness, and autonomy. From the witch trials in the Middle Ages to the incarceration of women in asylums, resistance to oppression and refusal to comply with expected norms were labelled as missteps due to a deranged imagination. In contemporary patriarchal society, the social construct of womanhood continues to be carefully curated and enforced, confining women and their value within reproductive roles and docile submission to various forms of violence, routinely normalised and justified. Madness in this context then becomes not an individuated pathology but a response to the continued violence against women.

Some women describe their madness as resistance, as a defiant embrace of what is taboo for women, an opportunity to break free from coerced identities and assume new personas that transcend patriarchal norms. Others describe their madness as a solace in beliefs such as being the mother of 100 male children or transforming into a goddess with special powers by performing a complex ritual. In the process, some lay claim to an elevated sense of purpose and accruing cultural capital that society places significant value on and associates with improved status. While others may find escape in an idea or imagination to battle the shame, fear and devaluation. And, yet, some other women experience their madness as a journey inward, where voice hearing and altered perceptions become portals to alternate realities where they can engage in a spiritual interrogation of who they are without social constraints.

In contrast to these multifaceted descriptions of madness in the context of violence, the mainstream discourse on women's mental health is dominated by a narrow focus on higher prevalence rates of depression, anxiety or eating disorders, or mental health needs associated with the prescribed reproductive role such as postpartum depression. All these deserve attention but not in a manner that isolates these experiences from the larger narrative. Women's experiences of distress are often viewed through a reductionist biomedicine-dominated lens, neglecting the insidious impact of violence that women endure and absolving society of its

complicity. Navigating mental health and social care systems that mirror these biases, in the background of poverty and caste-based marginalisation, takes a profound toll, elevating risks of homelessness. In our experience, women often encounter health systems that dismiss their lived experience, focusing largely on symptoms and diagnoses that are to be treated and eliminated. In contrast, our experience suggests that many of the manifestations of mental ill-health are embedded in the reality of adverse life events. In this context, investments cannot be confined to increasing proximal access to mental health care without collective action that can substantively address deep-rooted violence.

There is an urgent need, therefore, to develop comprehensive solutions based on a systematic unpacking of multiple factors and their interactions that perpetrate violence against women. Recognising and compensating women for their unpaid labour in household roles and creating the space for women to find supportive networks and alternate family structures outside of typical heteronormative relationships may offer security and refuge. Ensuring access to basic income, housing, and land ownership may offer economic independence and reduce vulnerability to homelessness. Embedding in the education environment, a curriculum that helps growing adolescents interrogate and challenge harmful gendered norms may help foster a generation that values egalitarian norms and rejects all forms of violence against women.

Biological scientist Robert Sapolsky contends that our inclinations, actions, and choices are not products of an autonomous, conscious process of free will but rather shaped by biological factors such as our genes, neural circuitry, and brain chemistry. His work emphasises the role of childhood adversity – abuse, neglect, and poverty – and the profound effects these have on the developing brain, underscoring the need for policies and interventions that reduce violence beginning in the formative years.

Adopt a multifaceted approach

While the two-way relationship between homelessness and mental illness is recognised globally, we need to scrutinise the nuances more closely. Violence against women is one factor that may not receive enough attention in this context. Instead of addressing root causes rhetorically, we should examine the complex strands surrounding mental health. This journey requires opening up to new avenues, involving diverse professionals, innovative research, and meaningful involvement of those with lived experiences. Prioritising a range of robust responses can better address the plurality of needs, especially for high-priority groups such as homeless women. No single narrative makes for a complete response. Greater exploration of phenomena and their influence on mental health, the role of intersectionality, power asymmetries, and the use of feminist standpoint theory in advancing science and ways of knowing are needed. The absence of such a multifaceted approach represents the greatest lacuna.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, March. 19, 2024

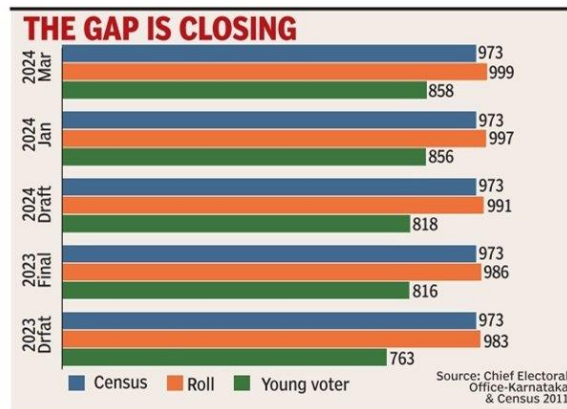
More women than male voters in 17 segments

Chethan.Kumar@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Voter data released recently shows Karnataka is in good stead as far as gender ratio goes with 17 of 28 Lok Sabha constituencies — including segments in backward districts like Raichur and Bagalkot — reporting more female electors. This has improved the overall ratio, making it nearly one woman voter for every man.

Data released on March 16 shows there are 999 females per 1,000 in Karnataka, better than the 997 in the final draft released in Jan 2024. But young voters buck this trend, just as they did in Jan. Young women are now 858 from 856 two months ago. Skewed ratio among young voters could be for multiple reasons, but as **TOI** had reported in Jan, it is primarily attributed to poor sex ratio at birth in 2005-06.

Of the 17 constituencies with more female voters than male, Udupi-Chikmagalur — from where BJP removed incumbent MP Shobha Karandlaje — tops the table with 1,062 women voters, followed by Dakshina Kannada (1,049), Mysore (1,037), Shimoga (1,030) and Mandya (1,029). The other constituencies are



Belgaum, Koppal, Bellary, Davanagere, Hassan, Chitradurga, Chamarajanagar, Chikkaballapur, Mandya and Kolar.

Of the constituencies that have fewer women than men, those in the Bengaluru cluster have the worst figures. Bangalore Central (938) has the least women per 1,000 men followed by South (939), while North (947) is tied with Bidar and Bangalore Rural has 966.

Officials attribute the improvement in female enrolment to extensive Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (Sveep) activities by the Election Commission, with a special focus on encouraging women to participate in the electoral process.

Chief electoral officer (CEO), Karnataka, Manoj Kumar Meena said: "The overall ratio reflects our efforts to enrol every eligible person

and while we have seen improvement even among young voters, that figure being significantly lower has also hurt the overall ratio."

TOI had reported in Jan that at the time of finalising the voter list, the state had around 400 polling booths with zero female young voters. Election officials in-charge of voter enrolment said that the 400 was compared to 3,000 such booths when the exercise began. Meena said, "As on date, most of these 400 booths have been covered".

50k advance applications

While there will be no "revision exercise" of electoral rolls before Lok Sabha polls, election officials will continue updating them.

"We have asked people who turn 18 before March 31 to file advance applications so they can vote in this election. As on date, we have 50,000 advance applications," Meena said.

He did not rule out the possibility of these applications further boosting the gender ratio. "The last date to file applications for those in constituencies going to polls in April is March 25. We are expecting more applications. This could impact the gender ratio," he said.

Source: The Times of India, p.2, March. 21, 2024

How water insecurity affects women

The time burden of collecting water inevitably falls on the women and girls of the household

Sujatha Srinivasan & Aparna Anand

While India has made remarkable progress in expanding household access to water, the National Sample Survey 78th round multiple indicator survey (2020-21) suggests that over 41% of rural households lack access to safely managed drinking water within their households, and geographical disparities in household access to safe water, though declining, continue to persist. The distance to the principal source of drinking water for these households falls in the range of 0.2 to 1.5 km or more. India makes up 18% of the world's population, with a share of water resources of less than 5%.

Evidence suggests that lack of access to water can cause considerable stress among households. In water-scarce areas or among households whose principal water source lies outside their household premises, water collection is typically perceived as a gendered activity, with the time burden of collecting water inevitably falling on women and girls of the household. Water insecurity affects women's everyday lives, household dynamics, and social relationships. It also affects the school attendance and academic performance of girls. Women also face gender-based violence during the commute for water collection, which has an adverse impact on their mental health.

Research suggests that lack of access to adequate water leads to the practice of open defecation. This, in turn, has a multitude of effects on women. Apart from the health impacts like diarrhoea, typhoid and cholera, and impacts on menstrual health, women who practise open defecation also face psychosocial stress as well as a greater risk of non-partner sexual violence.

The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and the National Water Mission present an important shift in the policy for water management. The JJM enables access to drinking water through household tap connections. This reduces the drudgery of women and gives them more time for gain-

ful activities. The programme seeks to measure this through increased participation of women in community engagement, including in gram panchayat and self-help group activities. To this end, the programme is designed to empower women by encouraging their involvement in Pani Samitis constituted for the purpose of planning, implementation, operations and maintenance, and monitoring of the programme at the village level. JJM guidelines also recommend that at least five women from every village are trained in periodic water quality monitoring. This serves the dual objective of empowering these women as well as ensuring the delivery of quality water to all rural households under this programme.

In a recent study conducted across rural areas in three districts in Tamil Nadu, we sought to examine these intended outcomes. We found that household access to safe drinking water enabled under the JJM reduces the time spent on collecting water from off-premises, leading to time gains among women, which they spent on better management of household tasks, children's schooling, and childcare. Women who performed well on overall empowerment indicators also spent less time seeking water and showed a better mental health index. The study also showed positive correlations between water access and sanitation access.

Even as India continues its progress on access to water and sanitation, it is imperative that it continues to uphold a policy environment that mainstreams gender considerations in water access. Beyond reporting on progress in terms of water access or quality, it is also imperative that we measure progress against intended gender goals - be it in terms of reduction in the drop-out rates among school-going girls or reduction in drudgery among rural women and the extent to which this translates to improved socio-economic outcomes for these women.

Sujatha Srinivasan is Senior Research Fellow, LEAD at Krea University and Aparna Anand is Lecturer, Teachers College, Columbia University

Source: The Hindu, p. 11, March. 22, 2024

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Finally, regulation for water tankers

For a long time, water tankers remained unregulated, for reasons best known to the authorities. The water crisis has now prompted the BBMP to rein them in

SHREE D N
BENGALURU, DHNS

As the water crisis hit the city, the prices of water tankers soared, prompting the government to act in accordance with the Disaster Management Act. It also exposed the presence of illegal, unregulated water tankers, which many call "tanker mafia".

"Tankers source water via illegal borewells dug around lakes in the peri-urban area. A visit to Anekal Taluk showed how the tanker mafia operates. There were 7-8 borewells around each lake. The quality of groundwater was bad around these parts due to sewage seepage. Is it genuinely potable?" asks R Rajagopalan, Convener of Bengaluru Residents Welfare Association.

However, there is no official confirmation of the presence of this mafia. Transport department officials say that out of the nearly 3,500 vehicles registered under the tanker category in the 10 Regional Transport Offices in the city, only 1,499 are water tankers. The rest carry oil, milk, liquified

petroleum gas, and more.

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) mandated that all water tanker owners upload the details of their vehicles in an application designed for it. The BBMP data shows that over 1,700 tankers were registered until March 14, 2024, more than the official number of

water tankers registered with the transport department, which is 1,499.

What causes this data mismatch? A water tanker owner who preferred anonymity explains why this happens: "Many farmers who have water sources refurbish their tractors with tanks and use them to carry water. While they use

for agricultural use, they also supply it for construction, residential use, or drinking purposes when the demand is high."

Officials admit that unauthorised tankers are operating, fitted to agriculture and commercial tractors and trailers, which have been deployed due to the current demand caused by the water crisis. A transport department official says there is no data on such unauthorised vehicles because they cannot be tracked.

With coating or not?

Such vehicles may or may not have the ethoxylated polyethyleneimine (EPI) coating that water tankers are supposed to have to prevent rusting of the tanker. However, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and BBMP officials say they do not inspect and monitor whether the vehicles have the required coating.

Most officials from the concerned departments are unaware of any specialised rules for water tankers and their monitoring. The BBMP health department was previously tasked with monitoring the coating for tankers. However, as there has been no water crisis in the last few years, officials say this aspect has not been monitored enough.

When issuing fitness certificates for tankers, the transport department officials might be able to check the presence of coating and other details. Yet, no one knows whether this is done.

White-board tankers

Many illegal tankers, fitted into tractors or trailers, have white number boards meant for private usage yet operate for commercial purposes. Such vehicles do not fall under any department other than transport.

BBMP officials say they cannot verify whether a vehicle is authorised to operate as the owners upload all the documents.

Verification processes may occur later, but there is no chance of that happening now.

So far, sources say the unauthorised tankers are unlikely to be touched until the water crisis is over because such actions will likely increase the tanker price.

Also, though illegal, they still help people with water in the highly



A free drinking water tank for public installed by the BWSSB at Kile Road near Avenue Road. DH PHOTO/SHRINESH

water-starved city; hence, the chance of action against unauthorised vehicles is nil.

Trade licences

A 2016 document on trade license fees lists water tankers under Part IV under the trade-non-food items-industrial category, with a fee of Rs 2,500. News reports from 2016 show that though a trade license was mandatory, thousands of water tankers operated without it, and BWSSB and BBMP were unwilling to insist on it.

There were no licenses, so they could not even be called "illegal" unless the other departments, such as transport, identified them as illegal.

The situation remains the same. Even today, BBMP officials say the BBMP does not issue trade licenses for water tankers. "Even if they are issued, they will be under the petty trade license category," says Vikas Kishor Suralkar, BBMP's Special Commissioner of Health.

Water tanker owners have their worries. When asked why unregistered, unlicensed tankers operate, one tanker owner explains that getting any license is tedious.

"One has to get permission from the central groundwater authority for the borewell and get a commercial power license from BESCOM. Many do not get these, making the water source illegal, thereby making all other approvals hard to get," he explains.

In the past, BWSSB asked BBMP to regulate water tankers. Still, for reasons best known to authorities, this never happened until the current water crisis triggered action from the BBMP in the form of the self-registration application.

Zone	Total tankers registered	Total capacity	Ready to rent (no and capacity)	Not ready to rent (no and capacity)
Bommanahalli	116	7,40,000	28	1,74,000
Dasarahalli	97	5,98,000	12	66,000
East	401	27,93,000	145	9,87,000
Mahadevapura	334	30,67,000	55	4,52,000
RR Nagar	83	5,11,000	14	92,000
South	446	32,14,000	125	9,83,000
West	87	6,17,000	34	2,70,000
Yelahanka	141	10,79,000	28	2,01,000
Total	1705	1,26,19,000	441	32,25,000
			1264	9,39,4000



Feedback: pointblank@deccanherald.co.in

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, March, 16, 2024

ಶೇ. 6.5 ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ಆಸ್ತಿತೆರಿಗೆಗೆ ವಿರೋಧ

ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾವನೆ ಕೈಬಿಡುವಂತೆ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಗೆ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕರ ಮನವಿ | ಹಳೇ ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಮುಂದುವರಿಕೆಗೆ ಒತ್ತಾಯ

■ ವಿಜಯವಾಣಿ ಸುದ್ದಿಜಾಲ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಸ್ವತ್ತುಗಳಿಗೆ ವಿಧಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಆಸ್ತಿತೆರಿಗೆಯನ್ನು ಹೊಸ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಡಿ ಶೇ. 6.5 ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ವಸೂಲಿ ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾವನೆಯನ್ನು ಕೈಬಿಡುವಂತೆ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕರು ಹಾಗೂ ನಾಗರಿಕ ಸಂಘಟನೆಗಳು ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಒತ್ತಾಯಿಸಿವೆ.

ಏ. 1ರಿಂದ ಮಾರ್ಗಸೂಚಿ ದರ ಆಧರಿಸಿದ ಹೊಸ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಜಾರಿಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಈ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿಯಾಗಿ ಶೇ.6.5 ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ತೆರಿಗೆಯನ್ನು ಸ್ವತ್ತುದಾರರು ಪಾವತಿಸಬೇಕಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಹೊಸ ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಅನ್ವಯ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ತಿಳಿಸಿರುವುದಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಅಧಿಕ ಮೊತ್ತವನ್ನು ಪಾವತಿಸಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದು ಹಿಂದಿಗಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಹೊರೆಯಾಗಲಿರುವ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ತೆರಿಗೆ ವಸೂಲಾತಿ ಕೈಬಿಡಬೇಕು ಎಂಬ ಕೂಗು ಜೋರಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ.

ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ಸ್ವತ್ತುದಾರರು ಪ್ರತೀ ವರ್ಷ ಆಸ್ತಿತೆರಿಗೆಯ ಜತೆಗೆ ಶೇ.24 ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಷ್ಟು ನಾಲ್ಕು ವಿಧದ ಉಪಕರ (ಗ್ರಂಥಾಲಯ, ಆರೋಗ್ಯ, ನಗರ ಸಾರಿಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಭಿಕ್ಷುಕರ ಸೆಸ್) ಪಾವತಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆದರೂ, ಪ್ರತಿ ವರ್ಷ ಹೊಸ ಲೆಕ್ಕಾಚಾರದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಕಟ್ಟುವುದು ನ್ಯಾಯಯುತವಾಗಿಲ್ಲ. ಈ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಸಮರ್ಪಕ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ನೀಡದೆ ಸ್ವತ್ತುದಾರರಿಂದ ಅಧಿಕ ತೆರಿಗೆ ವಸೂಲು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎಂಬುದು ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಕ್ಕೆ ಕಾರಣವಾಗಿದೆ.

ತೆರಿಗೆ ಮೂಲ ವಿಸ್ತರಣೆಗೆ ವೈಫಲ್ಯ: ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿಯು 804 ಚದರ ಕಿ.ಮೀ. ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹರಡಿಕೊಂಡಿದೆ. ಇಷ್ಟು ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ 16 ಲಕ್ಷ ವಸತಿ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ 6 ಲಕ್ಷ ವಾಣಿಜ್ಯ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳು ಸೇರಿ 22 ಲಕ್ಷ ಸ್ವತ್ತುಗಳಿವೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ಸುಮಾರು 3,500-4,000 ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ. ಆಸ್ತಿತೆರಿಗೆ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಪ್ರತೀ ವರ್ಷ ಸಾವಿರಾರು ಕಟ್ಟಡ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣವಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೂ ತೆರಿಗೆ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಡಿಸಲು ಪಾಲಿಕೆಗೆ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ.

ವಾಣಿಜ್ಯ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳು ಸೇರಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಸುವ ಕೈಗಾರಿಕೆಗಳು, ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಮಂಟಪಗಳು, ಅಪಾರ್ಟ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್‌ಗಳು, ಪಿಜಿಗಳಿಂದ ಅವುಗಳ ವಿಸ್ತೀರ್ಣಕ್ಕೆ ಅನುಗುಣವಾಗಿ ತೆರಿಗೆರ ವಸೂಲು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಜತೆಗೆ 20 ಎಕರೆಗಿಂತಲೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ವಿಸ್ತೀರ್ಣವಿರುವ ಐತಿ ಪಾರ್ಕ್‌ಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ



ಮಾರ್ಗಸೂಚಿ ದರ ಆಧಾರಿತ ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಬಂದಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ವತ್ತುದಾರರಿಗೆ ಹೊರೆಯಾಗುವುದಲ್ಲದೆ ಪ್ರತೀ ವರ್ಷವೂ ದುಬಾರಿ ತೆರಿಗೆ



ಪಾವತಿಸಲು ಪರದಾಡುವ ಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಇದೆ. ಬದಲಿಗೆ, ಮಧ್ಯಮ ವರ್ಗದ ಜನರ ಮನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ದುಬಾರಿ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಸುವ ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾವನೆಯನ್ನು ತಕ್ಷಣವೇ ರದ್ದುಪಡಿಸಬೇಕು. ಇನ್ನೂ ತೆರಿಗೆ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಬಾರದ ಸ್ವತ್ತುಗಳನ್ನು ಟೋಟಲ್ ಸ್ಟೇಷನ್ ಸರ್ವೇ ಮೂಲಕ ಅಳತೆ ಮಾಡಿಸಿ ವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕವಾಗಿ ತೆರಿಗೆ ನಿಗದಿ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಗೆ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ 8,000 ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ. ಆದಾಯ ಸಿಗಲಿದೆ.

| ಎನ್.ಆರ್.ರಮೇಶ್ | ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ ಆಡಳಿತ ಪಕ್ಷದ ಮಾಜಿ ನಾಯಕ

ಮಾಲ್/ಮಲ್ಟಿಪ್ಲೆಕ್ಸ್ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳ ಪೂರ್ಣ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಜಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಸುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಈ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ನಿವಾರಿಸಲು ಟೋಟಲ್ ಸ್ಟೇಷನ್ ಸರ್ವೇ ಮಾಡಿಸಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಟ್ಟಡ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣದ ನಿಖರ ವಿಸ್ತೀರ್ಣ ಅರಿತು ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ತೆರಿಗೆ ನಿಗದಿ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಲಿ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಆಸ್ತಿತೆರಿಗೆ ಮೊತ್ತದ ದುಪ್ಪಟ್ಟು ಹಣ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಬೊಕ್ಕಸಕ್ಕೆ ಬರಲಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ಕಂದಾಯ ವಿಭಾಗದ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಜನಪ್ರತಿನಿಧಿಗಳು ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರವಾಗಿ ಕರ್ತವ್ಯ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ಬಿಡದ ಕಾರಣ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಸಂಗ್ರಹದಲ್ಲಿ ಸೋರಿಕೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ ಎಂಬ ಆಕ್ಷೇಪ ಹಲವು ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಕೇಳಿಬರುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಈ ಒಂದು ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಸರಿಪಡಿಸಲು ಯಾವ ಸರ್ಕಾರಗಳು ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟ ನಿಲುವು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳದ ಕಾರಣ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಹೊರೆ ಮಾರ್ಗವೇಯಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂಬುದು ನಾಗರಿಕ ಸಂಘಟನೆಗಳ ಆರೋಪವಾಗಿದೆ.



kannada matrimony
Biggest Matrimony Service for Kannadigas

ವಧು ಅಥವಾ ವರರನ್ನು ಹುಡುಕಲು ಸಹಾಯ ಬೇಕೆ?

ಸಮಗತಿ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿ **70928 77888**, **ಮೋದಲೆ ಉಚಿತ!**

ಕನ್ನಡಿಗರ ನಂ.1 ಆಯ್ಕೆ, 23 ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ

ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ ಸ್ವತ್ತುಗಳ ವಿವರ

ವಸತಿ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳು	17 ಲಕ್ಷ
ಕೈಗಾರಿಕಾ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳು	1,10 ಲಕ್ಷ
ಅಪಾರ್ಟ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್‌ಗಳು	23,000
ಪಿಜಿ ಹಾಸ್ಟೆಲ್‌ಗಳು	13,860
ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಮಂಟಪಗಳು	1,800
ಪಾರ್ಟಿಹಾಲ್‌ಗಳು	1,600
ಐಟಿ ಕಂಪನಿಗಳು	3,856
ಸೂಪರ್ ಸ್ಟೋರ್‌ಗಳ ಆಸ್ತಿಗಳು	850
ನರ್ಸಿಂಗ್ ಹೋಮ್‌ಗಳು	2,700
ಲಾಡ್ಜ್‌ಗಳು	2,800
ಮಾಲ್, ಮಲ್ಟಿಪ್ಲೆಕ್ಸ್‌ಗಳು	237

ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾಪಿಸಿರುವ ಮಾರ್ಗಸೂಚಿ ದರ ಆಧಾರಿತ ಆಸ್ತಿತೆರಿಗೆ ಅವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕವಾಗಿದೆ. ಏಕೆಂದರೆ ಮಾರ್ಗಸೂಚಿ ದರ ಆಸ್ತಿ ಹರಿದಿ/ಮಾರಾಟಕ್ಕೆ ಒಮ್ಮೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಪಾವತಿಸಬಹುದು. ಇದನ್ನು ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ಆಸ್ತಿ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಗೆ ಅನ್ವಯಿಸಲಾಗದು. ವಿಪರೀತ ಏರಿಕೆಗೆ ಕೆಎಂಸಿ ಕಾಯ್ದೆ ಅವಕಾಶ ನೀಡದು. | ಪಿ.ಸಿ.ರಾವ್ | ಬೃಹತ್ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಹೋಟೆಲ್ ಗಳ ಸಂಘದ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷ

Source: Vijayavani, p.5, Mar.16, 2024

‘Phase 2 of Pavagada Solar Park will be completed in two years’

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The second phase of Pavagada Solar Park will be completed in the next two years, Energy Minister K.J. George said on Friday in Tumakuru.

“To eliminate the energy deficiency in the State and become self-sufficient, the support of locals to establish phase 2 of the solar park, which has a capacity of 2,000 MW, is needed,” he said. He also thanked the farmers who have come forward voluntarily to lease out their land.

While expressing the State government’s commitment to making Pavagada Solar Park the number one in the world again (it is currently fourth), Mr. George said, “Pavagada will be a part of history. The cooperation of the farmers is the reason we have such a vast solar park here. While Pavagada was previously known as a backward region, it now has solar energy, which is better than all other forms of energy.” He also urged the farmers to make the best use of solar energy by using solar pump sets.

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, March. 16, 2024

'Anywhere registration' of documents set to be extended to all districts soon

Facility was offered first in Bengaluru in 2011; it was launched in Belagavi and Tumakuru on Thursday. As many as 72 sub-registrar offices covered

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

About 13 years after the concept of 'anywhere registration' was rolled out in Bengaluru to provide ease of registration to people, the State government has decided to extend it to all the districts in Karnataka. While the government launched the 'anywhere registration' facility in Tumakuru and Belagavi on Thursday, it will be extended to all districts over the next couple of months.

The concept was launched in 2011 in Bengaluru. Now, as many as 72 sub-registrar offices in five registration districts of Bengaluru (Rajajinagar, Basavanagudi, Gandhinagar, Jayanagar, and Shivajinagar), and Tumakuru and Belagavi districts have



A file photo of the sub-registrar office at Kengeri in Bengaluru.

been covered. Under the concept, people are given the option to choose any of the sub-registrar's offices within their district to register documents, instead of approaching only the jurisdictional sub-registrar.

'Worked fine'

"While I am very enthusiastic to scale it up, I have

to be equally careful and watch the experience. We want to have 15 to 20 days of pilot in two districts. If the pilot succeeds, my system is ready for the State-wide launch. In about two months after the pilot, it could be rolled out in other districts too," Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda told *The Hindu*. "It worked

The concept will also help in optimising human resources and infrastructure, according to Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda

perfectly fine in Bengaluru because it is an integrated entity whereas district is not so integrated," he explained.

In the State, Tumakuru, Shivamogga, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Belagavi, Hubballi, Kalaburagi, and Ballari cities report big registrations after Bengaluru. The extension of 'anywhere registration' to districts is coming after the launch of several online initiatives that have brought down the turnaround time for registrations in the State, including scheduling ap-

pointments after uploading documents and visiting sub-registrar offices only for registration and online marriage registration in a certain category where the visit to the sub-registrar office is not necessary.

Benefits of scheme

The Minister said that the anywhere registration concept would also help in optimising human resources and infrastructure. "There are complaints that some offices are overcrowded and infrastructure is not adequate. While some offices report 15 to 25 registrations in a day, some offices report over 70 registrations a day. By multiplying options in allowing people to choose any sub-registrar office in the district, overcrowding can be prevented and time utilisation is better with transfer of load."

Meanwhile, Revenue Department sources also point out that the new system would help in combatting corruption as people have multiple choices to register their documents.

"By democratising the registration process, people will have the choice as alternative offices are available, resulting in reduced corruption," sources explained.

For 12 years, sources said, there was no political will to extend the concept to the State as officials in the department had resisted its extension. "It was just a lack of will. If it could succeed in Bengaluru there is no reason for this concept not being extended to other districts," sources in the department said.

Source: The Hindu, p. 9, March. 16, 2024

Electoral Bonds: Infra, power, pharma cos among top corporate donors

Over 30 companies bought bonds worth Rs 50 cr & above

SHAKSHI JAIN &
ARUP ROYCHOUDHURY
BENGALURU, DHNS

Some of India's biggest corporates across sectors purchased electoral bonds worth Rs 50 crore and above, with companies from the infrastructure sector being the largest buyers, as per the lists submitted by the State Bank of India to the Election Commission, on directions of the Supreme Court.

An analysis of the data on the ECI website by *DH* shows that the biggest donors in the infrastructure and construction space accounted for Rs 2,272 crore by 12 companies. These

included Megha Engineering (Rs 966 crore, the second largest donor overall), DLF Group (Rs 170 crore), Rashmi Cement (Rs 63.5 crore) and NCC Ltd (Rs 60 crore), among others.

The power and mining sector contributed the second biggest chunk of bond purchases over Rs 50 crore, with purchases from Haldia Energy (Rs 395



crore), Western UP Power Transco (Rs 220 crore), Dhariwal Infra and Torrent Power Ltd. From the mining space, Vedanta Ltd and Essel Mining

bought bonds worth a combined Rs 624 crore.

In the gaming/lottery/gambling space, just one company, Future Gaming and Hotel Ser-

Electoral bonds data: Sectoral distribution of top donors (Rs 50 cr and above)		
Infrastructure: Megha Engineering (Rs 966 cr), DLF Group (Rs 170 cr), Rashmi Cement (Rs 63.5 cr), Sri Siddharth Infratech (Rs 61 cr), NCC Ltd (Rs 60 cr), Ramco Cement (Rs 54 cr)	Power: Haldia Energy (Rs 395 cr), Western UP Power Transmission (Rs 220 cr), Dhariwal Infra (Rs 115 cr), Torrent Power (Rs 86.5 cr)	Mining: Vedanta Ltd (Rs 386 cr), Essel Mining (Rs 238 cr)
Gaming: Future Gaming and Hotel Services (Rs 1,368 cr)		
Healthcare/pharma: Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals (Rs 162 cr), Dr Reddy's Labs (Rs 80 cr), Natco Pharma (Rs 69.2 cr), Divi's Labs (Rs 55 cr), Aurobindo Pharma (Rs 52 cr)		

vices Ltd, bought bonds worth a staggering Rs 1,368 crore, making it the largest buyer of bonds. In total, around 1,300 entities bought Rs 12,155 crore worth of bonds since the scheme's inception in 2019.

Another big contributor was healthcare and pharma. The biggest donors included Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals (Rs 162 crore), Dr Reddy's Laboratories (Rs 80

crore), Natco Pharma (Rs 69.2 crore), Divi's Laboratories (Rs 55 crore) and Aurobindo Pharma (Rs 52 crore).

In the telecom space, Bharti Airtel, through its subsidiaries bought Rs 247 crore worth of bonds while the biggest donors in the financial services sector included Prarambh Securities (Rs 78 crore) and Infina Finance (Rs 60 crore).

Among the individual do-

nors, there are some well known titans of the corporate world as well. Lakshmi Niwas Mittal, Executive Chairman of ArcelorMittal, bought bonds worth Rs 35 crore, InterGlobe promoter Rahul Bhatia procured bonds worth Rs 20 crore, Biocon founder Kiran Mazumdar Shaw made purchases worth Rs 6 crore, while Polycab Chairman Inder Thakurdas Jaisinghani bought bonds worth Rs 14 crore.

Incidentally, the third biggest donor overall, Qwik Supply Chain Pvt Ltd, which bought bonds worth Rs 410 crore, is said to have links with Reliance Industries. However, the conglomerate's spokesperson told news agency PTI that Qwik Supply is not a subsidiary of any Reliance company.

Some well known corporate names also purchased bonds in lesser amounts. InterGlobe (which does business as Indigo) purchased electoral bonds worth Rs 36 crore and Bajaj Auto bought bonds worth Rs 18 crore, as per *DH*'s examination of the data.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.12, March, 16, 2024

Lok Sabha elections in two phases in State on April 26 and May 7

To increase voter turnout, 5,000 polling booths are being focused on in Kalyana Karnataka and in BBMP areas

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Parliamentary polls in Karnataka will be held in two phases with 14 constituencies going to polls in each phase. While 14 constituencies in South Karnataka will go to polls on April 26 (as part of the second phase nationally), the other 14 constituencies in North Karnataka will go to polls on May 7 (as part of third phase nationally.)

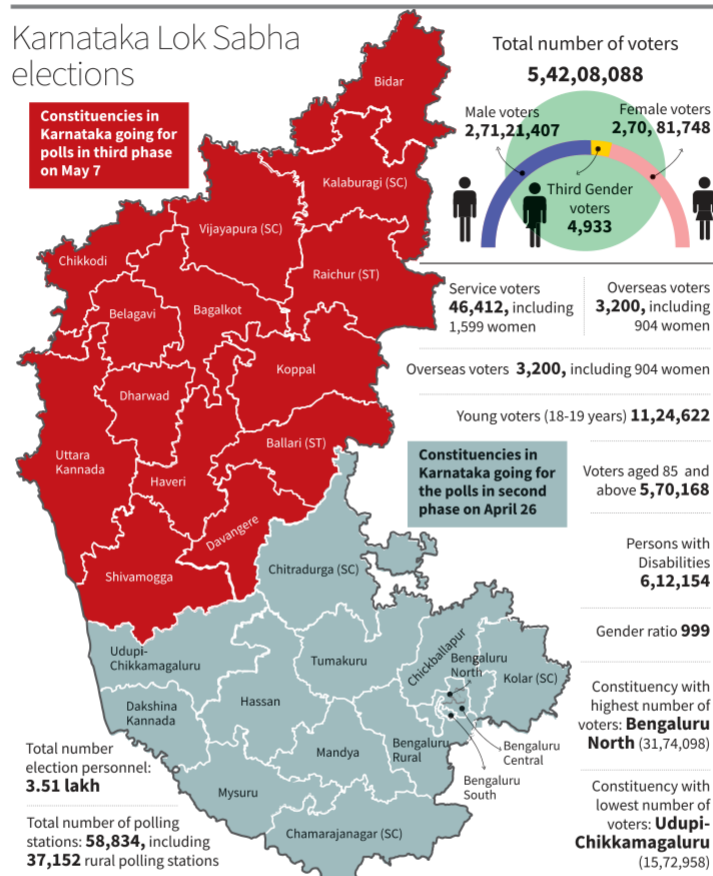
The Election Commission will be issuing notification for the second phase of polling on March 28, and the notification for the third phase of voting will be issued on April 12. Of the 28 constituencies in the State, five are reserved for Scheduled Castes while two are reserved for scheduled Tribes.

There are a total of about 5.42 crore eligible voters in the State, an increase by 6% over the electoral roll of 2019 parliamentary elections with an addition of nearly 32.53 lakh voters, Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Meena told presspersons here on Saturday. After the final roll was published in January 2024, 4.22 lakh voters have been added, he said.

In a bid to increase voter turnout, as many as 5,000 polling booths are being focused on in Kalyana Karnataka and in BBMP areas that had seen lower voter turnout, especially targeting those booths that reported less than 30% voter turnout in the last elections. In BBMP limits alone, 3,000 such polling stations have been identified and we are trying to provide better facilities to improve voting percentage.

The election officials

Karnataka Lok Sabha elections



will also approach 5.7 lakh elderly and 6.12 lakh persons with disabilities, who are eligible to vote from home, to seek their option whether they would want to vote from home or vote from polling booths. "We will also seek what kind of facilities they would require, including transportation, magnifying glass, and wheelchair, among others," he added.

There will be a total of 1,808 model polling stations, including five Sakhi booths to be managed by women in every Assembly

constituency, one booth each in Assembly constituency to be managed by persons with disabilities and young officials. About 40 ethnic polling stations and 200 theme-based polling booths will be established.

The Chief Electoral Officer said that the vigilance in the State had already started on August 1 and so far ₹537 crore worth of cash and other goods had been seized and 4,678 FIRs registered by 14 State and Central agencies.

They include ₹151 crore

cash, ₹42 crore worth of liquor, ₹126 crore worth of drugs, and ₹71 crore worth of gold jewellery. Though these seizures are not directly connected to the model code of conduct, he said that based on the information, the sources of these are now known. "We are trying to curb these activities. We have information on drug, liquor, and money networks." He also said that the Election Commission will keep an eye on digital transactions, and banks have been asked to provide information on

Byelection on May 7

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The byelection to Shorapura (Surpur) Assembly constituency (reserved for ST) in Yadgir district will be held as part of the Phase 3 elections on May 7. The byelection has been necessitated following the demise of Congress legislator Raja Venkatappa Naik recently. The results will be known on June 4.

Registration still open

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Those not in the electoral roll can still register and vote in the forthcoming Lok Sabha election. Form 6 to include the name and Form 8 to make changes can be done made till 10 days before the last date of nomination.

Also, those turning 18 years before March 31 can make advance applications and eligible names will be included the electoral list. The Election Commission has so far received 50,000 advance applications.

suspicious digital transactions at the district level.

He also clarified that there is no bar in implementing drought relief work, but should not be done to swing votes. "At the district level, officers will be holding meetings to oversee drought relief. It is the responsibility of the government."

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, March. 17, 2024

A tale of two crises: BMTF confronts flood of illegal connections and drought of action

Has recovered close to 1,010.71 acres worth Rs 4,089.81 cr

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Over the last five years, the Bangalore Metropolitan Task Force (BMTF) has handled close to 309 cases and surprisingly the majority of the cases pertain to illegal water connections. While the BMTF was constituted with the main objective of protecting government land and removing encroachments, only 50 such cases have been taken up so far and the BMTF has been successful in recovering close to 1,000 acres of land.

The BMTF officials maintain that the large number of illegal water connection cases was due to the nature of the complaint. "It is easier and more rampant across the city. Hence there are more complaints on illegal water connection," Seemant Kumar Singh, ADGP, BMTF, told DH.

However, complainants and activists point-

ed to a number of flaws in the system and opined that there is a need to revamp the organisation since it has failed to take proactive steps in protecting the government's assets.

N R Ramesh, former BBMP Councillor, said that the majority of his complaints have not been addressed and the institution has failed to deliver justice.

"Of the 81 complaints I have filed with BMTF, 63 of them have not been addressed and are pending with them. The officials show no will in disposing of these cases and there is hardly any action on the encroachers," he said.

While the delay in investigating is a problem, Amaresh, a RTI activist said that the bigger problem was that the BMTF many times closed off cases without the consent of the complainant.

"At least three of my complaints have been closed by just filing a B report. They have not contacted me or briefed me on why the case was closed. As a complainant, I have the right to know why the case was closed. But, BMTF does not follow any of these procedures," he said.

Most of the petitioners pointed out rampant corruption at the lower levels and opined that the system needs to be cleaned up.

"Whenever there is a case, they call the per-

son or establishment against whom there is a complaint and threaten them with action. Many of the officers voluntarily offer to close the case, demanding a bribe. Hence, BMTF is not able to perform," N R Ramesh said.

Pointing out how corrupt the officials in the department are, Rangaswamy N K, a city-based advocate who has filed a petition with the state information commission against the BMTF for denying information under the RTI Act, said that many officials even demand bribes for cases which do not even fall under the jurisdiction of BMTF.

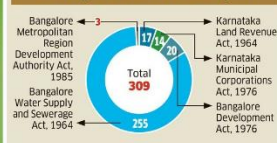
"For instance, complaints on violation of building bye-laws do not come under their jurisdiction. But in many cases, they receive the complaint and unnecessarily send a notice to the builder and demand a bribe. This is the level of corruption," he said.

Rangaswamy, pointing out that he was denied information on the nature of complaints and action taken, said that there was no transparency in the organisation.

"I have now filed an appeal with the state information commission. If there were no misdeeds, they should be open to providing the information since it is a public entity. Failure to put the data in the public domain shows that a lot is happening inside the organisation," he said.



Cases registered over the last five years



LAND RECOVERED

■ Between 2018 and 2021, BMTF collected Rs 24.81 cr by acting against illegal water connections and the same was transferred to BWSSB.

■ Till date, BMTF has recovered close to 1,010.71 acres of land worth Rs 4,089.81 cr

Challenges aplenty

While the activists pointed out a number of concerns on how the organisation was being run, Seemant Kumar Singh, ADGP, BMTF, said that there were many challenges and they were doing their best.

"Every time we receive an encroachment complaint, we have to speak to the concerned departments, contact the revenue department and get the records verified. We will then need to inspect and verify if there is a genuine

violation. All of it takes time and hence people may think there is a delay," he said.

Refuting allegations that the department served notices to people beyond their jurisdiction, Singh said that they have limited jurisdiction and they make sure they work within that.

He added that there are many legal hurdles in the process of encroachment removal since many of the encroachers tend to get a stay from the court.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.4, March, 17, 2024

A robust ad policy for Brand B'loru

A lot depends on a transparent licensing procedure and effective enforcement

RAGHUNANDAN SRIRAM

In the budget speech for 2024-25, the Government of Karnataka announced that a revised advertisement policy for Bengaluru would be adopted soon. The past few years have witnessed protracted litigation in the Karnataka High Court on the proliferation of unauthorised billboards in the city, including a direction to the state government on August 28, 2023, to formulate advertisement rules accordingly.

The regulation of outdoor advertising in Bengaluru has had a chequered history. The BBMP Advertisement Bye-Laws, 2006, was the first attempt to regulate outdoor advertising at the municipal level and generate revenue from the lease of advertising rights. In 2018, the BBMP Council adopted the Outdoor Signage and Public Messaging Bye-Laws, 2018, replacing the 2006 bye-laws and banning commercial hoardings in the city on all public rights-of-way on environmental and safety grounds. Both the 2006 and the 2018 bye-laws were issued by the BBMP in exercise of its powers under Section 134 of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976. The BBMP Act, enacted in 2020 exclusively for the governance of Bengaluru, provided for the BBMP to regulate out-of-home advertisements, through Section 157 of the legislation. However, in 2021, the state government exercised its own rulemaking powers under the Act to publish the BBMP Advertisement Rules, 2021, which sought to reverse the ban on commercial hoardings. Public backlash over the proposal led to the retraction of the proposed rules and the reinstatement of the 2018 bye-laws.

The most misused provision of the 2018 bye-laws is an exemption clause that allows 'sponsored advertisements' to be erected by private financiers of public infrastructure such as bus shelters and public toilets. This loophole has led to the development of public infrastructure by private entities solely for the purpose of attendant advertising rights, and without due scrutiny of its necessity or desirability.

Given that the licensing of outdoor advertisements is an important source of municipal revenue, the decision to formulate a new policy is indeed a welcome one. However, the success of the new policy would hinge on three planks: A hassle-free and transparent licensing procedure, restrictions in the interests of road safety, environmental and other considerations, and finally, an effective enforcement mechanism.

A liberal process for obtaining licences would add greatly to the city's coffers. The 2021 Rules provided for a single-window system, which would go a long way in cutting the red tape in obtaining the requisite clearances from different departments. The Rules also provided for a competitive bidding process for obtaining advertising rights, with base prices fixed on the basis of locality and the volume of road traffic. Above all, the entire licensing procedure ought to be digitised and transparent to minimise the scope for corruption in the grant of permits.

The need to enhance municipal revenue must not override other considerations that are equally important for the welfare of the city, as has been recognised in other regulations such as the Delhi Outdoor Advertising Policy, 2017. The proposed rules must prohibit dynamic displays on digital billboards on the grounds of road traffic safety since multiple studies have indicated a correlation between visual clutter and road accidents. As recently as last month, the high court issued notice to the state government in a petition seeking the regulation of LED billboards in the city in the interests of road safety. Advertisements must also be prohibited in areas declared as 'protected areas' under the Karnataka Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1961, and 'heritage precincts' notified under the BBMP Act, 2020. The policy ought also to contain restrictions on the materials used for hoardings since PVC hoardings are a large source of plastic pollution and pose major waste disposal problems. Finally, the new policy must include content regulations similar to those contained in the earlier bye-laws since unlike other forms of advertising, outdoor advertisements are visible to all persons on public roads, including children.

Lastly, the policy must institute a robust monitoring and enforcement mechanism. The high court has recommended that QR codes be embossed on all authorised billboards as has been attempted in Mumbai. These would allow anyone to access details such as permit number, time period of permit, etc. Municipal functionaries must also be empowered to take prompt action against violations and levy penalties.

The saga of unauthorised billboards in the city has gone on for far too long. It is hoped that the state government's new policy will strike a fair balance between the competing objectives of revenue generation on the one hand, and the imperatives of road safety, urban heritage conservation, environmental sustainability and aesthetic considerations on the other.

(The writer is a Research Fellow, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy)

Source: Deccan Herald, p.6, March, 18, 2024

Bonds in buckets: who got how much in the first two years

A look at the donors and political parties that encashed electoral bonds in four periods between April 12, 2019 and April 19, 2021

Details of bond purchases and encashments

Last week, the Election Commission of India (ECI) put up the list of donors who purchased electoral bonds and the political parties that encashed them. On Monday, the Supreme Court asked the State of Bank of India to make a "complete disclosure" of electoral bonds data including their unique hidden serial numbers by Thursday. While the numbers that link the purchasers and the donors are awaited, the following tables take a look at the share of bonds purchased and encashed across various dates, for which information is currently available in the public domain. By **Rebecca Rose Varghese** and **Gautam Doshi**

2019 LS polls: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between April 12, 2019 and May 10, 2019 coinciding with the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. It also looks at the parties that got the highest share of the bonds encashed between April 12, 2019 and May 22, 2019

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Keventer Foodpark Infra	13.1%
Madanlal Ltd.	12.5%
MEIL*	8.4%
Essel Mining & Industries	3.4%
Vedanta	3.3%
PHL Fininvest	2.7%
Lakshmi Niwas Mittal	2.4%
Sun Pharma	2.1%
Navayuga Engineering Company	2.0%
Interglobe Real Estate	1.3%
Grasim Industries	1.3%
Finolex Cables	1.3%
Bajaj Finance	1.3%
Haldia Energy	1%
Bharti Airtel	1%
Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	84%
Congress	8%
All India Trinamool Congress	2.5%
Bharat Rashtra Samithi	1.8%

■ Keventer Foodpark Infra bought ₹195 crore worth of bonds (13.1% of total purchases in the period), followed by Madanlal Ltd. (12.5%) and Megha Engineering and Infrastructures* (8.4%). In case of parties, the BJP encashed ₹1,771.5 crore worth of electoral bonds in the period (84% of bonds encashed) followed by the Congress at 8%

■ It is important to note that in this bucket, the full list of donors has not been revealed yet. For instance, parties could have encashed some amount of the bonds that they received in the 15 days before April 12, 2019 as well

Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Delhi polls: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between July 5, 2019 and January 22, 2020, just before and during polls in these States. It also looks at the parties that got the highest share of the electoral bonds encashed between July 11, 2019 and February 3, 2020

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Infina Finance	9.8%
DLF Commercial Developers	8.4%
Avees Trading Finance	6.7%
NCC Ltd.	5.6%
Navayuga Engineering Company	4.2%
Cipla Ltd.	4.2%
MKJ Enterprises	4%
Kaypee Enterprises	3.9%
UPL Ltd.	2.8%
Torrent Power	2.8%
S D Corporation	2.8%
Raju Kumar Sharma	2.8%
DLF Luxury Homes	2.8%
Apco Infratech	2.8%
Haldia Energy	1.9%
Mahalaxmi Vidyt Pvt. Ltd.	1.7%
Ultra Tech Cement	1.4%
Torrent Pharmaceuticals	1.4%
Prestige Southcity Holdings	1.4%
Prestige Notting Hill Investments	1.4%
Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	70.5%
All India Trinamool Congress	13.3%
Biju Janata Dal	5.6%
Shiv Sena	4.7%
Nationalist Congress Party	3.2%
Congress	2.2%

■ The share of Infina Finance was 9.8% of total purchases in the period, followed by DLF Commercial Developers Ltd. (8.4%). In case of parties, BJP's share was 70.5% of the total bonds encashed followed by the All India Trinamool Congress at 13.3%

Oct.-Nov. 2020: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between October 19, 2020 and October 28, 2020. It also looks at the parties with the highest share in the electoral bonds encashed between October 22, 2020 and November 7, 2020. This period also coincided with the Bihar elections

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Future Gaming and Hotel Services	53.1%
MEIL	7.1%
Essel Mining & Industries	7.1%
Haldia Energy	5.3%
Utkal Alumina International	3.5%
Ultra Tech Cement	3.5%
Grasim Industries	3.5%
S N Mohanty (individual)	2.8%
Welspun Corporation	2.5%
Penguin Trading & Agencies	1.8%
Jindal Saw	1.8%
G R Infraprojects	1.8%
Ardent Steel	1.4%
Genus Power Infrastructures	1.1%
Bajaj Auto Ltd.	1.1%
Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
YSR Congress Party	31.5%
DMK	28.3%
Biju Janata Dal	23.7%
Bharatiya Janata Party	7.4%
All India Trinamool Congress	6.2%
Congress	1.1%
Aam Aadmi Party	1.1%

■ Future Gaming and Hotel Services formed 53.1% of total purchases in the period, followed by Megha Engineering and Infrastructures (7.1%). In case of parties, YSR Congress Party's share was 31.5% of the total bonds encashed followed by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's 28.3% and Biju Janata Dal's 23.7%

■ The donor and purchaser lists were sourced from the ECI's disclosure on March 14
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Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Puducherry
The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between January 4, 2021 and April 9, 2021. It also looks at the parties with the highest share in the electoral bonds encashed between January 7, 2021 and April 19, 2021. The period coincides with the State elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Future Gaming and Hotel Services	14.8%
MEIL	10.6%
Haldia Energy	7.5%
Essel Mining & Industries	7.4%
Rungta Sons Pvt.Ltd.	6.8%
Phillips Carbon Black	4.1%
Honeywell Properties	4.1%
Bharti Telemedia	4.1%
Vedanta	3.4%
Infina Finance	3.4%
Rahul Bhatia	2.7%
Chander Commercial	2.7%
Misirlall Mines	2%
DLF Commercial Developers	1.4%
Torrent Power	1%
Torrent Pharmaceuticals	1%
Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	39.7%
Biju Janata Dal	15.7%
DMK	14.4%
All India Trinamool Congress	11%
YSR Congress Party	8.9%
Congress	8.9%

■ Future Gaming and Hotel Services formed 14.8% of total purchases in the period, followed by Megha Engineering and Infrastructures (10.6%), Haldia Energy (7.5%), Essel mining at 7.4% and Rungta Sons (6.8%). In case of parties, Bharatiya Janata Party's share was 39.7% of the total bonds encashed followed by the Biju Janata Dal's 15.7%, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's 14.4% and All India Trinamool Congress' 11%

Source: The Hindu, p. 9, March. 19, 2024

Bonds in buckets: who got how much in the last two years

A look at the donors and political parties that encashed electoral bonds in four periods between July 2, 2021 and January 24, 2024

Details of bond purchases and encashments

The Data Point published on March 19 listed the companies that purchased bonds and the parties that encashed them in the first two years between April 12, 2019 and April 19, 2021. The following tables look at the share of bonds purchased and encashed in the last two years between July 2, 2021 and January 24, 2024, for which information is currently available in the public domain. On March 14, the Election Commission of India disclosed the list of donors who purchased electoral bonds and the political parties that encashed them. On Monday, the Supreme Court asked the State Bank of India to make a "complete disclosure" of electoral bonds data including their unique hidden serial numbers by Thursday. The numbers that link the purchasers and the donors are awaited. By **Rebecca Rose Varghese and Gautam Doshi**

July 2021-January 2022: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between July 2, 2021 and January 10, 2022. It also looks at the parties that got the highest share of the electoral bonds encashed between July 9, 2021 and January 24, 2022. This period coincides with the State elections in Uttarakhand, Punjab, U.P., Goa and Manipur

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Future Gaming and Hotel Services	22%
Qwik Supply Chain	11.9%
MEIL*	8.6%
Vedanta	5%
Haldia Energy	4.3%
Essel Mining & Industries	2.5%
DLF Commercial Developers	2.5%
MKJ Enterprises	2.5%
Prarambh Securities	2.1%
Chennai Green Woods	2%
SWAL Corporation	1.5%
S N Mohanty (Individual)	1.5%
Modern Road Makers	1.3%
IFB Agro Industries	1.2%
Rashmi Metaliks	1.1%
Torrent Power	1%
Dhariwal Infrastructure	1%
Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	37.5%
All India Trinamool Congress	24%
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	10.1%
Congress	9%
Biju Janata Dal	8.8%
Bharat Rashtra Samithi	7.7%
Shiv Sena	1.5%

■ **Future Gaming and Hotel Services** bought ₹435 crore worth of electoral bonds (22% in total purchases in the period), followed by **Qwik Supply Chain** (11.9%) and **Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd.*** (8.6%). In case of parties, the **BJP** encashed ₹742.2 crore worth of electoral bonds in the period (37.5% of the bonds encashed), followed by the **AITC** (24%)

April 2022-April 2023: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between April 2, 2022 and April 12, 2023. It also looks at the parties that got the highest share of the electoral bonds encashed between April 6, 2022 and April 26, 2023. This period coincides with the State elections in Himachal, Gujarat, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Karnataka

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Future Gaming and Hotel Services	12.7%
MEIL*	8.8%
Vedanta	4.1%
Qwik Supply Chain	3.3%
Haldia Energy	3.2%
Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital	2.6%
Dhariwal Infrastructure	1.7%
MKJ Enterprises	1.6%
Birla Carbon India	1.5%
United Phosphorus India	1.3%
Essel Mining & Industries	1.3%
Chennai Green Woods	1.3%
Dr. Reddy's Laboratories	1.2%
Rithwik Projects	1.2%
DLF Commercial Developers	1.1%
Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	43.2%
Bharat Rashtra Samithi	16.5%
All India Trinamool Congress	13.6%
Congress	9.6%
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	6%
Biju Janata Dal	4.4%
YSR Congress Party	2.3%
Telugu Desam Party	1.8%
Aam Aadmi Party	1.2%

■ **Future Gaming and Hotel Services** bought ₹478 crore worth of electoral bonds (12.7% in total purchases in the period), followed by **Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd.*** (8.8%) and **Vedanta** (4.1%). In case of parties, the **BJP** encashed ₹1,628 crore worth of electoral bonds in the period (43.2% of the bonds encashed), followed by the **BRS** (16.5%)

July 2023-November 2023: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between July 3, 2023 and November 20, 2023. It also looks at the parties that got the highest share of the electoral bonds encashed between July 7, 2023 and December 4, 2023. This period coincides with the State elections in Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, M.P., Rajasthan and Telangana

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
MEIL*	7.9%
Western UP Power Transmission Co.	6.4%
Future Gaming and Hotel Services	4.5%
Utkal Alumina International	3.4%
Jindal Steel and Power	3.3%
Bharti Airtel	3.1%
Vedanta	2.4%
MKJ Enterprises	2.3%
B G Shirke Construction Technology	2.1%
Divis Laboratories	1.9%
Qwik Supply Chain	1.7%
Birla Carbon India	1.7%
Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital	1.6%
Haldia Energy	1.5%
Avees Trading Finance	1.4%
Sasmal Infrastructure	1.2%
Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	38.7%
Congress	20.3%
Bharat Rashtra Samithi	13.6%
All India Trinamool Congress	9.9%
Biju Janata Dal	7.8%
YSR Congress Party	2.8%
Shiv Sena	2.4%
Rashtriya Janata Dal	1.8%

■ **Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd.*** bought ₹235 crore worth of electoral bonds (7.9% in total purchases in the period), followed by its subsidiary **Western UP Power Transmission** (6.4%) and **Future Gaming and Hotel Services** (4.5%). In case of parties, the **BJP** encashed ₹1,149.3 crore worth of electoral bonds in the period (38.7% of the bonds encashed), followed by the **Congress** at 20.3%

January 2024: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between January 3, 2024 and January 11, 2024. It also looks at the parties that got the highest share of the electoral bonds encashed between January 8, 2024 and January 24, 2024, just a few months before the Lok Sabha elections

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Future Gaming and Hotel Services	11%
Rungta Sons Pvt. Ltd.	8.7%
Bharti Airtel	8.7%
Shirdi Sai Electricals	7%
Haldia Energy	6.1%
Western Up Power Transmission Co.	5.2%
Torrent Pharmaceuticals	4.5%
Torrent Power	4.4%
B G Shirke Construction Technology	4.4%
Natco Pharma	3.7%
Genus Power Infrastructures	2.6%
TVS Motor Company	1.7%
IFB Agro Industries	1.7%
Dr. Reddy's Laboratories	1.7%
Bharat Biotech International	1.7%
Sasmal Infrastructure	1.6%
Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	35.4%
All India Trinamool Congress	22.9%
Telugu Desam Party	20.7%
Congress	6.3%
Shiv Sena	4.4%
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	3.5%
Jana Sena Party	3.0%
Rashtriya Janata Dal	2.6%

■ **Future Gaming and Hotel Services** bought ₹63 crore worth of electoral bonds (11% in total purchases in the period), followed by **Rungta Sons Pvt. Ltd.** (8.7%) and **Bharti Airtel** (8.7%). In case of parties, the **BJP** encashed ₹202 crore worth of electoral bonds in the period (35.4% of the bonds encashed), followed by the **AITC** (22.9%)

Source: The Hindu, p. 12, March. 20, 2024

BWSSB seeks CSR funds to take up innovative water projects

It wants corporates to work on new technologies that will treat sewage in SWDs itself before it reaches lake

WATER WOES

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amidst a severe drinking water crisis, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has called for Expression of Interest (EOI) from corporates to take up projects with new cutting-edge technologies to alleviate the water situation in the city under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds.

The public notification says this initiative aims to collaborate on "the development of bio-retention systems and preservation of rainwater, the introduction of natural filtration in Storm Water Drains (SWDs), and the integration of green infrastructure with water and sewage treatment plants, thereby establishing global gold standards in urban water management".

One of the major reasons for severe fall in underground water table levels and drying up of



Residents of Bangarappanagar fetching drinking water supplied by BWSSB. A major reason for severe fall in underground water table levels and drying up of borewells is waterless lakes, experts say. K. MURALI KUMAR

borewells is waterless lakes, experts say.

As many lakes are under rejuvenation or have completed rejuvenation works, agencies have diverted sewage water away from the lakes, even as rainwater hasn't filled up these lakes due to a failed monsoon in 2023.

In a first step to correct this, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has now announced that 14 lakes in the city will be filled up with treated water on the

lines of the KC Valley project. This will improve underground water table levels around these lakes, it is hoped.

The projects that BWSSB now wants corporates to work on under their CSR funds are new technologies that will remediate and treat sewage water to some extent in the SWDs itself before they reach the lake.

"If we can do this, like many other cities in the world, we need not divert

sewage water away from the lakes even if there are no STPs and this will ensure water in the lakes," a senior BWSSB official said.

Pilot projects

"Many companies have come to us with new technologies to remediate sewage water in SWDs and that they have done it in other cities. We are not in a position to choose the best technology. So we have called for this EOI under CSR funds," K.N. Rajiv,

Chief Engineer (Projects), BWSSB.

"There are several technologies implemented elsewhere which remediate sewage water in SWDs before entering lakes. Apart from natural filters that remove solids, there are biotechnologies where bacteria are introduced into the water and they break down carbon, reduce Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) in the water. If we build brick walls it will provide surface area for these bacteria to grow and provide more time and contact for them to remediate the sewage water," said water conservationist S. Vishwanath.

Meanwhile, the public notice also calls for projects, including green infrastructure for water and sewage treatment. This pertains to artificially creating constructed wetlands in the lakebed area, which will act as an additional layer of bioremediation.

BWSSB is also seeking CSR funds from corporates to implement rainwater harvesting in public spaces.

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, March. 20, 2024

Over 39,000 residential buildings regularly fined by BWSSB for failing to implement rainwater harvesting

In 2009, the water supply board ordered that it was mandatory to either recharge rainwater or store it in a sump or a tank, for new residences constructed on a 30x40 ft site

WATER WOES

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Despite several awareness programmes and penalisation by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), the residents of Bengaluru remain reluctant when it comes to implementing rainwater harvesting (RWH) owing to infrastructure constraints.

According to the latest data provided by BWSSB, 1,96,591 residential buildings have implemented RWH systems and 39,213 buildings have not, despite being penalised every month. In 2009, the Board has been collecting ₹1.98 crore - ₹2 crore as penalty for non-implementation of RWH in residential buildings, every month.

In 2009, the Board ordered that it was mandatory to either recharge groundwater table by har-



BWSSB officials expect more implementation of RWH systems in the city going forward. FILE PHOTO

vesting rainwater or store it in a sump or a tank, for new residences constructed on a 30x40 feet site. The Bangalore Water Sup-

Implementation of RWH

Residential buildings with RWH 1,96,591
Residential buildings without RWH 39,213
Penalty collected for non-implementation of RWH ₹1.98 - 2 crore per month
Source: BWSSB

ply and Sewerage (Amendment) Act, 2021 made it compulsory for even old constructions on 60x40 feet and above sites to install RWH systems. "People are ready to pay penalty, but not to implement RWH systems," said Sanath Kumar, Additional Chief Engineer, Quality and Assurance Department, BWSSB. He said that while newer residences are more compliant with the rules as their plans do not get sanctioned without RWH, it is the older building owners who are more reluctant. "The ones who had built houses before the rules came into place, usually say that they have space constraints as they had already constructed the house on the entire site

with no empty space for RWH. We are trying to educate them. Even then, some people neglect it and keep paying penalty," Mr. Kumar added.

With more awareness, BWSSB officials expect more implementation of RWH systems in the city going forward. "Under new rules which are in effect from March 15, we do not allow people to drill borewells if they do not have RWH systems," Mr. Kumar said.

As Bengaluru battles water crisis currently, residents who had previously installed RWH systems vouch for its benefits. "Since the construction of our house, we are harvesting rainwater, ensuring a consistent water supply despite the persistent water scarcity in surrounding areas. We have been living here for more than a decade and have never had to call for a water tanker or depend on Gauvery water supply," said Gururaj B., a resident of R.R. Nagar.

Defunct borewells to be used as recharging pits

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amidst the ongoing water crisis in Bengaluru, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will now convert all its dry and defunct borewells into recharging pits to increase groundwater levels.

In a recently held press conference, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had said that out of 14,000 government borewells in the city, 6,900 have dried up.

On Wednesday, V. Ramprasad, Manohar, Chairman, BWSSB, said that maintenance of the borewells which come under it is the water supply board's priority.

"For this purpose, we have to strategically repair



Of the 14,000 government borewells in the city, 6,900 have dried up. FILE PHOTO

the borewells. We will convert the borewells in which the water availability is less into recharge pits. We have also instructed officials to ask plumbers in their respective zones to take up various works under which completely dried up bore-

wells can be used for groundwater recharging," Mr. Manohar said.

The BWSSB also conducted a training session for plumbers from all zones on Wednesday on recharging procedure for defunct borewells.

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, March. 21, 2024

Pay 40% of guidance value to build extra floors

Amended rules will be applicable across state

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU DHNS

The state government has introduced draft rules allowing additional floors to be constructed for a premium.

The Urban Development Department published the draft rules on March 16. The rules — expected to be published in the official gazette after the Lok Sabha elections — will help big builders and small-plot owners construct an additional 40% of built-up space. The beneficiary will have to pay 40% of the guidance value.

The Karnataka Planning Authorities (Amendment) Rules, 2024, will be applicable across Karnataka, including Bengaluru.

The zonal regulations of the approved master plan will form the basis for allowing the premium Floor Area Ratio (FAR). This means any FAR

beyond the permissible limits will not be allowed along narrow roads. Wherever allowed, the number of additional floors will be determined by the plot size.

For example, two extra floors (of 500 square metres each) can be built on a 1,000-square metre plot with a guidance value of Rs 50,000 per metre provided the builder or property owner pays Rs 2 crore as premium FAR charges.

D Vishnuvardhana Reddy, a former member of the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), said the planning authority and the local body should notify the maximum permissible premium FAR in each area, with the other applicable conditions, to ensure transparency in the whole process.

“The success of the whole scheme will depend on the difference between the land’s guidance value and market



Floor area ratio beyond the permissible limits will not be allowed along narrow roads. DH FILE PHOTO

BY THE NUMBERS

Area of the building site: 1,000 sq metre	Guidance value of the developed site at the plot: Rs 50,000 per sq metre
Value of the plot: Rs 5,00,00,000.00	
Ordinarily permissible FAR as per zonal regulations: 2.5	Allowable total built-up area: 1000 x 2.5 + 2500 sq metre (Permissible FAR)
Area of each floor: 500 sq metre	Additional FAR area required: 1,000 sq metre as premium FAR
Coverage: 50%	Permissible number of floors: 5
	Number of extra floors desired by the developer: 2 (for illustration purposes)

value. The greater the difference, the higher the incentive,” he said.

He noted that the draft rules would positively impact the redevelopment of old projects if

the guidance values stay unchanged in the next few years.

“If the government permits 100% premium FAR in redevelopment projects, there would be some fillip to take up redevelopment, and a value proposition can emerge to convince the owners of old buildings,” Reddy said.

Separate account

The charges collected from premium FAR will have to be deposited in a separate head of account only for land acquisition or development of public infrastructure.

“The funds shall not be utilised for repairs, maintenance and miscellaneous works at any time,” as per the rules.

The government has also asked the planning authority (Bengaluru Development Authority, for example) or the local urban body such as the BBMP to develop an app to issue and manage premium FAR in electronic form along with the original record.

However, the draft rules make no mention of the Transferable Development Rights (TDR), which are currently used for building additional floors. The government issues TDR to acquire private properties for public projects.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.2, March, 21, 2024

Karnataka Governor returns amendments to Endowments Bill

Move comes as a setback to the Congress government; the amendments seek to draw more money from rich temples to provide aid to poor ones

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a setback to the Congress government, amendments to the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act, 1997, that were cleared in the recently concluded Budget session amid opposition from the BJP, has been returned by Governor Thaa-warchand Gehlot.

Seeking clarifications on the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Governor has sought to know if the State government has conceptualised any legislation to encompass other religious bodies in similar fashion. The Governor's move is the first such since the Congress government came to power in May 2023, and comes close to the Lok Sabha election.

The Governor has also pointed out that amendments brought to the Bill earlier in 2011 and 2012 had been struck down by the Dharwad Bench of the Karnataka High Court. The High Court's decision has been challenged in the Supreme Court, which has stayed the High Court order. The case is in the stage of final hearing, he said. It is necessary to get more clarification on whether



Thaawarchand Gehlot

the amendments can be made while the case is pending, his office informed the State government while returning the Bill.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters, Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy said that issues raised will be clarified to the Governor.

The amendments to the Endowment Act, to expand social security measures to over 40,000 archakas (temple caretakers) in Muzrai temples and also develop C category temples using funds from the income of richer temples, had been defeated in the Legislative Council by the combined opposition of BJP and Janata Dal (Secular) before it was passed again by the Legislative Assembly and cleared by the Council during the recently concluded Budget session.

With the Bill, the State government proposed to seek 10% of the gross income of 87 temples with

annual income of over ₹1 crore and 5% of gross income from 311 temples with an annual income of over ₹10 lakh to be transferred to a Common Pool Fund, administered by Rajya Dharmika Parishath. It proposed to utilise the money for the welfare of archakas and development of over 34,000 'C' category temples whose annual income is less than ₹5 lakh.

The proposal was to bring an amendment to an earlier amendment in 2011 where 5% of the net income of temples with annual income between ₹5 lakh and ₹10 lakh, and 10% of the net income of temples with annual income of over ₹10 lakh, would come to the fund.

The government is hoping to collect approximately ₹60 crore from the move of which ₹25 crore would be spent on developing C category temples.

The BJP argued that since the government already provides approximately ₹170 crore to Muzrai department, it should allocate money to temple development and archakas' welfare from the budgetary allocation rather than levy more tax on richer temples. It also said instead of seeking money from the gross collection of temples, the government should take money from the net income.

Source: The Hindu, p. 9, March. 22, 2024

Real estate developers, mining cos contribute big to parties in K'taka

Sandeep.Moudgal
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Bengaluru: Real-estate developers and mining firms have emerged as major donors through electoral bonds for Karnataka's three prominent parties — BJP, Congress and JD(S) — as per EC data.

City's prominent real estate firm Prestige Developers' subsidiaries are the leading contributors with Rs 35 crore.

► **FULL COVERAGE: P 2, 10, 11**

Of this amount, Rs 20 crore was directed to BJP, and Rs 15 crore to Congress. Following closely behind is the Embassy Group, which bought bonds worth Rs 22 crore for JD(S).

Mining firms have collectively contributed Rs 18.5 crore, mainly favouring Congress. At an individual level, Biocon's founder and executive chairperson Kiran Mazum-

IFB donated in 'best interest' of company

Kolkata-based IFB Agro Industries, which purchased ₹92cr worth of EBs — TMC got ₹42cr — said in a stock exchange filing in 2022 that the board “in the best interest of the company and all its stakeholders decided to approve contributions to parties via EBs, aggregating not more than ₹40cr for fiscal 2023.” **P 8**

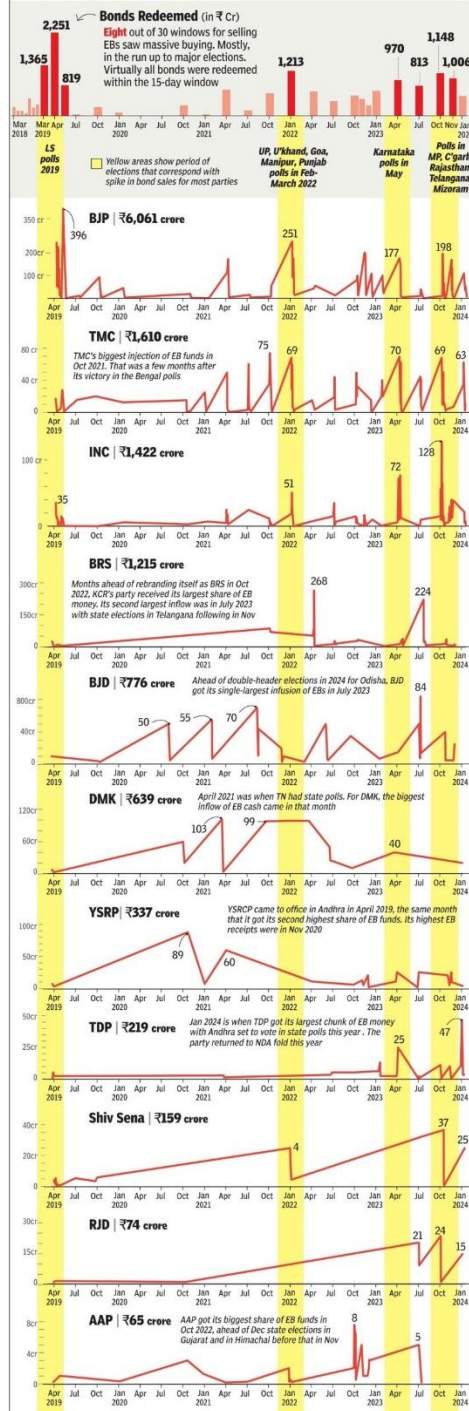
dar-Shaw is the leading donor with Rs 7.5 crore distributed among all three parties — BJP Rs 4 crore, JD(S) Rs 2.5 crore and Congress Rs 1 crore — from 2018 to 2023.

Three state-based special purpose vehicles for road infrastructure have contributed Rs 13.5 crore to BJP and Micro Labs has given Rs 6 crore to BJP & Rs 3 crore to Congress.

Source: The Times of India, p.1, March. 22, 2024

You know who got what. Here's the chronology

Only donors can explain when and why they decide to contribute to a party. Biggies like BJP, Trinamool, and Congress saw inflows of EB money around polls with intermittent spikes. For smaller parties, too, highest contributions often coincided with approaching state elections or following triumphant campaigns. The charts on party donations below track the period from April 2019. However, parties would have received more since the inception of the scheme in March 2018



Source: The Times of India, p.11, March. 22, 2024

Electoral Or Marital, A Bond Is A Bond

Businesses depend on govt not only for clearances but also to build targeted infra that can help them be globally competitive. When businesses seek an alpha male provider, they have to cough up the dowry

Narendar Pani



The stories that electoral bonds tell us are reminders that liberalisation has not altered the financial relationship between political parties and the corporate sector as much as was expected.

In the licensing era, it was taken for granted that corporate houses had to fund parties that might come to power if they hoped to remain in business. It was assumed that once the licence raj was over, this compulsion would disappear. Then, corporate support for political parties would be primarily a matter of ideology and personal preference.

More than three decades after liberalisation, there is little to suggest that this has happened.

A knee-jerk reaction to this reality is to assume that the controls have not really disappeared. Industries still require several clearances from govt, which could be weaponised. Even policies as well-intentioned as environmental clearances could reflect favour when they are given to projects that clearly destroy the environment, or disfavour when they are deliberately delayed.

But this is not the entire story. There are aspects of the liberalised economy that require a favourable govt.

Liberalisation in India has largely taken place in an environment of globalisation. The stock market has been boosted by foreign institutional investment. This investment has also played a role in the market value of individual companies, and hence their ability to raise capital. At the same time companies have sought foreign direct investment. Govt and companies have sought to benefit from the hypermobility of capital that drives globalisation.

This ability of corporate houses to attract capital is enhanced when they are a part of global supply chains. These supply chains operate within circuits that link command-and-control centres with resource-generating centres.

While there is the odd circuit where India can be the location of a command-and-control centre, notably the cricket circuit, most Indian industries are in the position of resource providers. The resources that are provided can range from basic raw materials to highly skilled technical manpower.

Providing resources to global supply chains, especially technical services, can be a very competitive business. Many of these companies need to present an image of functioning at the higher end of the global

business environment. This requires infra that is comparable to what is available in the West.

In a situation of resource constraints, the focus of most corporates is on infra that is relevant to them, especially when they woo foreign investors. Emphasis is thus on all that a foreign visitor would see, from airports to expressways to the campuses of individual firms.

Creating this infra requires govt initiatives in multiple areas. While there has been an increase in private investment in infra projects after liberalisation, govt remains a major investor in this domain.



Varani Sahu

Industries like to influence which infra projects are prioritised, whether in a city centre or relatively remote area. Some hope to get direct benefits from govt ability to acquire land

More than financial investment, it is govt alone that can take over land for infra development.

Industries would like to influence which infra projects are prioritised. Individual houses would like infra that benefits their operations, whether it is in the midst of an economically established area in a city or a relatively remote production centre. They may even hope to get some direct benefit from govt ability to acquire land.

The influence that corporate houses seek extends beyond direct material benefits. Global investment decisions have a prominent place for cities in which economic activities are to be located. Cities can gain an economic image of their own. The term Bangalore was once used to describe a worker's job being exported out of the West. Corporate houses would like to develop positive images of the cities they are associated with.

This is a task that cannot be done without govt resources. Corporate houses have tried, with varying degrees of success, to use public-private partnerships to influence how Indian cities come to be seen globally.

In their search for tangible, and less tangible, benefits from govt, corporate houses would prefer political parties that they believe are strong enough to take the decisions they would like. Some of these decisions, like creating global infra in a country that is still not doing very well on social indicators, would require highly centralised govts that would brook little dissidence. This lends itself to a preference for govts led by strongmen or similarly inclined women.

Corporate preference for parties that promise strong centralised govts is a double-edged sword. While it works very well for corporate houses when it is used in their favour, the danger remains that it can quite easily be turned against them. An all-powerful govt that cannot be questioned would be tempted to intervene in competition between firms. It may also seek to curtail the autonomy of firms, maybe going so far as to influence how companies carry out their corporate social responsibility.

The nature of the post-liberalisation economy has thus thrown corporate houses and political parties into a traditional Indian marriage where divorce is not an option even when there is considerable pain. As in these marriages there is a corporate preference for an alpha male political leadership even if that means paying out regular tranches of dowry whenever an election comes along.

Source: The Times of India, p.14, March. 22, 2024

Prestige and Embassy major donors for political parties in Karnataka

Firms Used Subsidiaries To Donate

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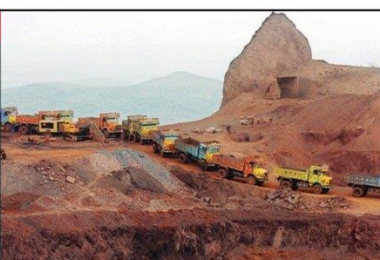
Bengaluru: Prestige and Embassy, alongside prominent mining firms like Sri Kumaraswamy Mineral Export Private Limited (SKMEPL), have emerged as the leading contributors to various political parties including BJP, Congress, and Janata Dal (Secular).

According to Election Commission of India (ECI) data, the contributions have been made by Prestige developers and its subsidiaries to BJP, amounting to a total of Rs 20 crore.

Under the banner of Prestige Estates Private Limited, Prestige Habitat Ventures, Prestige Notting Hill Investments, and Prestige South City Holdings Limited, each subsidiary has contributed Rs 5 crore to the BJP.

Similarly, Prestige, through its subsidiaries Prestige Garden Estates Private Limited,

BIG DONORS		
Prestige (through subsidiaries)		
BJP	Cong	
₹20 cr	₹15 cr	
Micro Labs		
BJP	Cong	
₹6 cr	₹3 cr	
Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw		
BJP	Cong	JD(S)
₹4 cr	₹1 cr	₹2.5 cr



OLD TIES: Mining companies have exclusively directed their contributions to the Congress, potentially owing to longstanding relations with the party

ted, Prestige Projects Private Limited, and Prestige Property Management and Services Limited, has channelled Rs 15 crore to the Congress, with each subsidiary contributing Rs 5 crore.

The disclosure also underscores the significant contribution of the Embassy Group, which has already donated Rs 22 crore to the Janata Dal (Secular) according to disclosures made by HD Deve Gowda, the national president of the regional party, to the ECI.

Interestingly, the mining companies in Karnataka have exclusively directed their contributions to the Cong-

ress, potentially owing to longstanding relations with the party. SKMEPL emerges as the largest contributor to the Congress, with a donation of Rs 8.3 crore, followed by Sandur Manganese and Iron Ores Company, Veerbhadrapa Sangappa and Co, and Ramgad Minerals and Mining Limited, contributing Rs 5.6 crore, Rs 5.5 crore, and Rs 2 crore respectively. The cumulative contribution of mining companies from the state to the Congress is estimated to be Rs 21.4 crore.

In addition to these contributions, the BJP has received significant funding outside of Prestige, notably Rs

13.5 crore from three special purpose vehicles formed by Ashoka Buildcon for the construction of highways in Karnataka. These vehicles include Ashoka Mudhol Nipani Roads Limited, Ashoka Hungund Talikot Roads Limited, and Ashoka Bagewadi Savandatti Roads Limited, each contributing Rs 5 crore, Rs 4.5 crore, and Rs 4 crore respectively.

The list of contributors to both BJP and Congress through electoral bonds also includes notable names such as Micro Labs, which contributed Rs 6 crore to BJP and Rs 3 crore to Congress, and Jubilant Life Sciences Limited,

JSW denies giving donation to JD(S)

Jindal Steel Works (JSW) has issued a clarification that it has not contributed the Rs 5 crore which party chief HD Deve Gowda has disclosed to the Election Commission of India. The company has also made a similar declaration to the BSE and NSE.

based in Bengaluru, which contributed Rs 1 crore to Congress.

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, executive chairperson of Biocon, has made substantial contributions to multiple parties, including Rs 4 crore to BJP and Rs 1 crore to Congress, totaling Rs 7.5 crore, possibly marking the highest individual contribution from Karnataka to political parties through bonds.

Smaller donors to BJP include three joint venture companies with solar power plants in Asia's largest solar park in Pavagada, Tumakuru, each contributing Rs 20 lakh. Conversely, companies like BMW Infrastructure have donated Rs 1 crore to the Congress.

Source: The Times of India, p.1, March. 22, 2024

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Social Issues

Dalits start entering temple in Cheeranahalli village of Mandya district

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The controversy over barring entry of Dalits into the Beereswara temple in Cheeranahalli in Mandya taluk in Karnataka was resolved on March 15 during a discussion among representatives of various castes in the village.

Since a few days, Dalits were not only denied entry into the centuries-old Beereswara temple, but also barred from participating

in the procession of the deity.

When the matter was taken up by activists of progressive organisations, led by advocate Lakshman Cheeranahalli, a team of government officials, led by Mandya Tahsildar Shivakumar Biradar and comprising Mandya taluk Social Welfare Officer and Revenue Department officials, visited the village. They directed the priest to allow entry of people of all castes without



Beereswara temple in Cheeranahalli in Mandya taluk of Karnataka.

discrimination. The visit of the govern-

ment officials to the temple, which falls under the purview of the Muzrai Department, was followed by a series of talks with elders of various castes in the village.

"Finally, a decision was taken by the village elders to allow entry of people of all castes into the temple without any discrimination," said Lakshman Cheeranahalli.

On March 15, Dalits, who had stayed away from the temple due to practice of

untouchability, entered the premises in the presence of government officials and performed puja.

Revenue Department official T. Aravind Kumar pointed out that discriminating against people of any caste and preventing their entry into the temple is against the law and called upon the people of the village to live in harmony.

Lakshman Cheeranahalli said the country's Constitution had outlawed dis-

crimination against Dalits. "All the leaders of our village agreed not to allow such discrimination and give Dalits access to the temple," he said.

"The entry of Dalits into Beereswara temple in Cheeranahalli is also a model for Mandya district, as the matter was resolved through talks with people of all castes, who were convinced about the law without giving any room for conflict," Lakshman Cheeranahalli said.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, March. 17, 2024

ವರ್ಷದಿಂದ ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚುತ್ತಿರುವ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ | ಬಡತನ, ಅಸಹಾಯಕತೆಯ ದುರ್ಬಳಕೆ ಮಾನವ ಕಳ್ಳ ಸಾಗಣೆಗೆ ಅಸ್ತಮಾನವ ಸಾಗಣೆ: 3 ವರ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ 1003 ಕೇಸ್!

■ ರಾಯಸಾಬ್ ಅನಾಸರಿ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

rayasab.anasari@timesgroup.com

ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾನವ ಕಳ್ಳ ಸಾಗಣೆ ನಿರಾತಂಕವಾಗಿ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ಕಳೆದ ಮೂರು ವರ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಟ್ಟು 1003 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ದಾಖಲಾಗಿವೆ.

ವಿವಿಧ ಕಾರಣಗಳಿಂದಾಗಿ ಅಪ್ರಾಪ್ತರು, ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು, ಬಡವರು ಮಾನವ ಕಳ್ಳ ಸಾಗಣೆಯಂತಹ ಕೃತ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಬಲಿಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. 2021 ರಿಂದ 2023 ರವರೆಗಿನ ಅಂಕಿ-ಅಂಶ ಗಮನಿಸಿದರೆ, ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ವ್ಯತ್ಯಾಸ ಕಂಡು ಬರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಕಡಿವಾಣ ಹಾಕಲು ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸಿಬಿಡಿ ಘಟಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾನವ ಕಳ್ಳ ಸಾಗಣೆ ತಡೆ ಘಟಕ (ಆಂಟಿ ಹ್ಯೂಮನ್ ಟ್ರಾಫಿಕಿಂಗ್ ಸೆಲ್) ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಅಲ್ಲದೆ, ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಹಲವು ಬಗೆಯ ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಂಡರೂ, ಅವುಗಳ ಕಣ್ಣಿಟ್ಟಿ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಿತವಾಗಿ ದಂಧೆ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಅನುಮಾನಕ್ಕೆ ಎಡೆಮಾಡಿದೆ.

ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಬಾಲಾಪರಾಧ ನ್ಯಾಯ ಕಾಯಿದೆ, ಬಾಲ್ಯ ವಿವಾಹ ನಿಷೇಧ ಕಾಯಿದೆ, ಪೊಣ್ಣು ಮತ್ತು ಇತರ ಕಾಯಿದೆಗಳು ಜಾರಿಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದರೂ ಪರಿಣಾಮಕಾರಿಯಾಗಿ ಅನುಷ್ಠಾನವಾಗದ ಕಾರಣಕ್ಕೆ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು, ಅಪ್ರಾಪ್ತರ ಕಳ್ಳ ಸಾಗಣೆ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ಹೆಚ್ಚುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಯಾವುದೇ ಪೊಲೀಸ್ ಠಾಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಾಪತ್ತೆ ಪ್ರಕರಣ ದಾಖಲಾದರೂ ಅದನ್ನು ಗಂಭೀರವಾಗಿ ಪರಿಗಣಿಸುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ, ಹಲವು ವರ್ಷಗಳಾದರೂ ಈ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ಅಂತ್ಯ ಕಾಣುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ ಎಂಬ ಆರೋಪ ಕೇಳಿ ಬಂದಿದೆ.

1003 ಪ್ರಕರಣ ದಾಖಲು: ಮಾನವ ಕಳ್ಳ ಸಾಗಣೆ ಸಂಬಂಧ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ 2021 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಒಟ್ಟು 254, 2022 ರಲ್ಲಿ



ದಾಖಲಾದ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ			
ವರ್ಷ	ಮಹಿಳೆ	ಹುಡುಗ	ಹುಡುಗಿ
2021	216	21	17
2022	321	31	39
2023	299	04	27
2024 (ಜ.31)	24	00	04
ಒಟ್ಟು	860	56	87

391 ಹಾಗೂ 2023 ರಲ್ಲಿ 230 ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ಕಳೆದ ಮೂರು ವರ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ 1003 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ದಾಖಲಾಗಿವೆ. ಇನ್ನು 2024 ರ ಜನವರಿ 31 ರವರೆಗೆ ಒಟ್ಟು 28 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ದಾಖಲಾಗಿವೆ ಎಂದು ಮಹಿಳಾ ಮತ್ತು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ತಿಳಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಮಹಿಳೆಯರೇ ಹೆಚ್ಚು: ಮಾನವ ಕಳ್ಳ ಸಾಗಣೆಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರೇ ಬಲಿಯಾಗಿರುವುದು ಕಂಡು ಬಂದಿದೆ.

ಬಡತನ, ಅಸಹಾಯಕತೆ ದುರ್ಬಳಕೆ

ಮಾನವ ಸಾಗಾಟ, ಮಾರಾಟ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲೆಡೆ ಸರಪಳಿಯಾಗಿ ವ್ಯಾಪಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿದೆ. ಬಡತನ, ಅಸಹಾಯಕತೆಯನ್ನೇ ಆಸ್ತವಾಗಿ ಬಳಕೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಮಕ್ಕಳು, ಮಹಿಳೆಯರನ್ನು ಈ ಜಾಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಿಲುಕಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಹುಡುಗಿಯರ ಅಮಾಯಕತೆ ದುರ್ಬಳಕೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಬಲವಂತದ ಮದುವೆ, ಕೆಲಸ ಮತ್ತು ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ದಾಸ್ಯದ ವಿಚಾರಕ್ಕೆ ತಳ್ಳುವುದಲ್ಲದೆ, ಅಂಗಾಂಗಗಳ ಮಾರಾಟ, ಬಾಲ ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕ, ಬಾಲ್ಯ ವಿವಾಹದಂತಹ ಅನಿಷ್ಟ ಪದ್ಧತಿಗೆ ಮಾನವ ಕಳ್ಳ ಸಾಗಣೆ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಮತ್ತು ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಸಾಗಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದು ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ 18 ವರ್ಷದೊಳಗಿನ ಹೆಣ್ಣು ಮಕ್ಕಳೇ ಹೆಚ್ಚು.

ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ 2021 ರಲ್ಲಿ 216 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ದಾಖಲಾಗಿದ್ದರೆ, 2022 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ 321 ಕ್ಕೆ ಏರಿದೆ. 2023 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಅದು 299 ಕ್ಕೆ ತಲುಪಿದೆ. ಅದೇ ರೀತಿ ಹುಡುಗರಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ 2021, 2022 ಹಾಗೂ 2023 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಕ್ರಮವಾಗಿ 21, 31, 4 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ದಾಖಲಾಗಿವೆ. ಇನ್ನು ಹುಡುಗಿಯರಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ 17, 39, 27 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ದಾಖಲಾಗಿವೆ. ಇವೆಲ್ಲವೂ ಅಧಿಕೃತವಾಗಿ ದಾಖಲಾದ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳಾದರೆ, ಕಾನೂನು ಕಣ್ಣಿಟ್ಟಿ ನಡೆದ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಇದಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿದೆ ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ.

Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.06, Mar.20, 2024

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Urban Affairs

'Water situation is of concern, but not as alarming as it is being projected'

About 34 tmcft of water is being stored in four Cauvery basin reservoirs, which is sufficient for taking care of the needs of Bengaluru and other cities until the next monsoon, says BWSSB Chairman

INTERVIEW

Ram Prasath Manohar

K.C. Deepika
BENGALURU

As the water situation in Bengaluru and regions around the Cauvery basin continues to dominate headlines after a drought-hit 2023 in Karnataka, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar, in an interview to *The Hindu*, says though the situation is concerning, drinking water needs will be fulfilled until the monsoon. Here are the excerpts:

What is the status of water availability right now for Bengaluru? What's the usual demand and supply scenario compared to the current situation?

Bengaluru has a population of 1.4 crore. we have 1,450 MLD supply through the Cauvery network which extensively covers the core areas and parts of the CMC and TMC limits of the BBMP limits. In addition, there are 110 villages which are solely reliant on borewell water. The reason for the current shortage is that borewell levels have



Ram Prasath Manohar, BWSSB Chairman

gone down here due to the shortage of rainfall. However, we are taking steps to augment the supply. Overall, the water situation is of concern, but not as alarming as it is being projected.

Are we getting the required quantum of water from the Cauvery?

The required quantum is 1.56 tmcft per month. We have enough for drinking purposes, but not for irrigation. About 34 tmcft of water is being stored in four reservoirs, which is sufficient for taking care of the needs of Bengaluru and other cities until the next monsoon as we require eight to 10 tmcft for the next four to six months for drinking water purposes for Bengaluru.

Citizens are alleging that the government was caught napping despite the drought last year. Was the

government prepared for this situation given that drought was declared last year?

The government was aware of the situation and that is why in December, we started writing to the Cauvery Neeravari Nigam to store sufficient water for drinking water needs. Secondly, we have also identified about 257 water stressed areas in the BBMP limits and have taken steps to put booster pumps here. We have also procured additional tankers. All these were part of preparatory measures. But there is an overreaction due to social media and media reports.

We assure you that there is enough water for drinking and cooking purposes. For other purposes, we urge citizens to use treated water which is eco-friendly and better than borewell water. We have 1,300 MLD available and it needs an attitudinal change. The construction industries have come forward to use



We assure you that there is enough water for drinking and cooking purposes. For other purposes, we urge citizens to use treated water which is eco-friendly and better than borewell water.

it already. We have started an app, Parisara Jalasnehi, for this. It is also very cheap – ₹10 for 1,000 litres. At this point, providing tankers from the BWSSB will be difficult, but consumers can take it by hiring their own tankers. If need be, we can also make this free.

What is the government doing to rejuvenate the city's lakes, rivers, and waterbodies that played an important role in maintaining the water balance of Bengaluru but have fallen to disuse or have been encroached upon now?

Bengaluru is a city with lakes, mostly man-made and built in such a way that rainwater dropping in the northern portion flows down to the south and fills the lakes. Unfortunately, due to extraneous urbanisation, the lake system has been disturbed. Now, it is our duty to protect the

lakes and their channels so that they can be a source of water for future generations.

Vrishabhavati needs a long-term and comprehensive project. The government is looking into that.

Though it has been mandatory for certain categories of structures, rainwater harvesting continues to be poor. What will the BWSSB do about this?

Rainwater harvesting is a beneficial activity for consumers. It will directly benefit them by recharging their borewells. But rainwater is being let into the drains. Apart from this, people should also come forward to set up percolation pits in their vicinity and for community rainwater harvesting.

What are the long-term steps the government is taking to secure the water security of the city?

We have three sources – Cauvery, groundwater and used and treated water. Treated water should be used to bridge the gap. As for rainwater, we have had flooding earlier due to excessive rain. If this is harvested by everyone, groundwater can be saved and percolated to the ground and become a natural sump.

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, March. 17, 2024

First section of suburban rail project to be commissioned by Dec. 2025

Minister M.B. Patil says that about 20% of permanent work of the project has been completed so far

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The initial segment of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP), covering a distance of 7.4 km from Chikkabanavara to Yeshwantpur, is set to be operational by December 2025, said Infrastructure Development Minister M.B. Patil on Saturday.

At a press conference following a visit to the Gollahalli casting yard near Devanahalli to inspect what is being termed as the country's inaugural 100-ft (31-m) U-girder, he announced that this technological milestone would debut in the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project. Previously, metro railway projects have utilised 28-m U-girders.

Mr. Patil said, "The 31-m-long U-girder span is being used for the first time in



A file photo of the work on Corridor-2 of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project at Lingarajapuram.

India, for the BSRP. This relatively new and innovative concept in bridge deck design will reduce construction time, enhance aesthetic appearance, add durability and is also economical. For the first time, these girders will be used to construct a viaduct (elevated section) of around 8 km from Hebbal to Yeshwantpur which is a part of the 'Mallige' line or Corridor-2 of the BSRP and this

requires about 450 girders. The L&T yard at Gollahalli also casts I-girders and pier caps and 323 and 283 of them, respectively, will be used along the stretch."

Land acquisition

On the progress of the BSRP work, the Minister said that about 20% of permanent work had been completed so far. Of the total 120.44 acres of land required for Corridor-2

(Chikkabanavara to Benniganahalli), 119.18 acres had been acquired (98.5% of the land).

"Works related to Corridor-2 have been progressing well with efforts to address challenges such as encroachments and coordination with multiple stakeholders for utilities and land acquisition. Discussions are also ongoing with various stakeholders such as the BBMP, BDA, BWSSB, Bescom, BSNL, and private telephone agencies for utilities shifting/diversions and land acquisition," he said.

Mr. Patil stated that the entire project, valued at ₹15,677 crore and spanning 148.17 km, is slated for completion by December 2027. He appealed to the Railway Ministry for assistance in providing encroachment-free land as outlined in the DPR and timely approval of project

designs. Additionally, he urged the Railways to approve the alignment and handover of land for Corridor-1 (KSR Bengaluru to Devanahalli) and Corridor-3 (Kengeri to Whitefield) by June 2024 to ensure adherence to the established timelines.

Mr. Patil also informed that the K-RIDE was also considering plans to connect the BSRP with the Peripheral Railway Network which the Railways intends to take up in the coming years. "Later, we want to extend it to satellite towns. We will discuss with the Railways and convince them regarding this," he said. Dismissing reports of the Railways alleging K-RIDE lacked technical expertise, Mr. Patil said the K-RIDE is competent enough to handle mega projects such as the BSRP. Such blame games will only lead to politicising, he added.

Source: The Hindu, p. 5, March. 17, 2024

Siddaramaiah to review drinking water crisis in Bengaluru today

It comes amidst various measures having been announced to tackle the crisis, even as the State government has drawn criticism over lax implementation of the same on the ground

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will chair a meeting on the drinking water crisis in the city on Monday afternoon. While Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D.K. Shivakumar has held multiple meetings on the crisis, this will be the first time the Chief Minister will review the situation.

The review meeting comes amidst various measures having been announced to tackle the crisis, even as the government has drawn criticism over lax implementation on the ground. For instance, civic agencies have also not been able to effectively implement the ban of potable water for non-essential purposes.

Meanwhile, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage



Civic agencies have also not been able to effectively implement the ban on the use of potable water for non-essential purposes in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

Board Chairman V. Ramprasad Manohar said around 95% of water tankers had already registered with the civic body. 1,732 water tankers have registered with Bruhat Bengaluru

Mahanagara Palike as on March 15, which was the last date for registration.

However, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashok said that the government had

themselves said there were around 3,500 water tankers in the city and only 1,732 have registered.

The government is yet to implement the price cap it announced and it hasn't

even pasted stickers of the price cap on all registered tankers. He demanded that the government install GPS to track tankers and end the mafia.

Flying blind

Meanwhile, a senior official said both BWSSB and BBMP are supplying free water to 110 villages and the erstwhile City Municipal Corporations and Town Municipal Corporation areas were added to BBMP in 2007. However, the official said that there was no study on the water needs of these areas and presently they were "flying blind".

Based on the population and available groundwater resources, there is a need for BWSSB to conduct a study and identify the water needs of an area after which civic agencies must try to supply water to these areas. "Presently, it is very ad hoc," the official said.

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, March. 18, 2024

City facing shortage of 500 MLD of water: CM



Parched city: A tanker supplying water to the residents of Dwaraka Nagar, Hosakerehalli, in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that Bengaluru is facing a shortage of 500 million litres per day (MLD) of water and the State government has taken various measures to mitigate its impact. This is the first time that the water shortage the city is facing this summer has been quantified.

"The city needs 2,600 MLD of water, of which 1,450 MLD is coming from

the Cauvery and 650 MLD from the underground water table through borewells. There is a shortage of 500 MLD," he said.

The Chief Minister was speaking after chairing a review meeting on the water crisis in the city on Monday. This is the first meeting that Mr. Siddaramaiah has helmed on the crisis plaguing the city.

CONTINUED ON

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RELATED REPORT

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6,900 government borewells have dried up in city: Siddaramaiah

'We are drilling new borewells at 313 places and rejuvenating 1,200. Funds are not a problem'; he adds that treated water will be filled in dry lakes of the city on the lines of the K.C. Valley project

WATER WOES

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that of the 14,000 government borewells in the city, almost half of them - 6,900 - have dried up, an indicator of how bad the water crisis in the city is. He was speaking after chairing a review meeting of the drinking water crisis here on Monday.

"We are drilling new borewells in 313 places and rejuvenating 1,200. Funds are not a problem. We have given enough funds for drinking water purposes," he said.

The Chief Minister said that treated water will be filled in dry lakes of the city on the lines of the K.C. Valley project. Treated water from K.C. Valley in the city is being used to fill lakes and tanks in Kolar and Chickballapur districts.

"We have identified 14 lakes in the city for the project. This will help revive and improve the underground water table levels around these lakes," he said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah directed the Bruhat Bengaluru

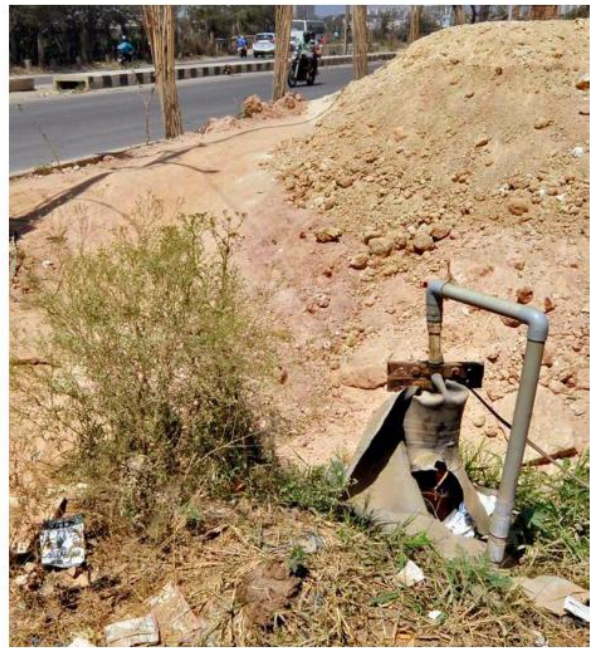
Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) officials to increase the number of control rooms and attend to complaints of water shortage immediately. "You will be held responsible if people suffer from water shortage," he told officials.

He said the officials have been directed to commandeer any private tankers, including the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) tankers, to supply water.

'Robotic technology'

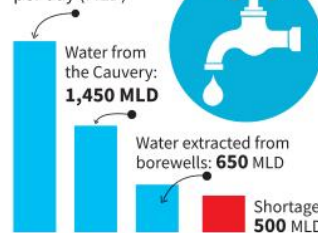
Meanwhile, BWSSB Chairman V. Ramprasath Manohar held a meeting with contractors maintaining the BWSSB's borewells and directed them to adopt robotic technology.

"Many BWSSB borewells have gone dry owing to improper maintenance, mainly because of using the motor even when there is no water. So it is better if we adopt robotic technology to maintain these borewells. This will help the board monitor all borewells, their water levels but can also be programmed such that motors are switched off when the water is not there. This will help in better maintenance of our borewells," he said.



Fact sheet

City's water needs:
2,600 million litres
per day (MLD)



- Core Bengaluru, served by the Cauvery, needs **1.6** tmcft of water a month
- Core Bengaluru needs **5.6** tmcft of water from Cauvery till June-end
- Storage in KRS: **11.02** tmcft
- Storage in Kabini reservoir: **9.02** tmcft
- Total storage available in Cauvery basin: **20.04** tmcft

Total government borewells in Bengaluru Urban district: around **14,000**

Number of borewells that have dried up: **6,900**

New borewells being drilled up: **313**

Borewells being rejuvenated: **1,200**

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, March. 19, 2024

Water woes of Bengaluru: Think long term, go beyond knee-jerk reactions, say experts

A recent BWSSB notification prohibits water use for washing vehicles, gardening, fountains, constructions and such other activities. It threatens violators with fines

Rasheed Kappan
BENGALURU

Bengaluru's desperate dependence on an external drinking water source, while offering scant regard to alternatives, came out starkly in that one single notification. But is the latest Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) directive banning drinking water for non-essential uses a sign that the city is finally on track with a sound conservation strategy?

Not many are convinced. The notification, prohibiting water use for washing vehicles, gardening fountains, construction and roads, does threaten violators with ₹5,000 for first offence and an additional daily penalty of ₹500 thereafter. But for decades, lax enforcement of rules have had big players get away with massive misuse of the precious Cauvery water supplied to the city at great cost.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has admitted that Bengaluru is facing a shortage of 500 Million Litres per Day (MLD) water every day.

Lack of regulation

The clear lack of a regulatory mechanism to first put conditions on water usage and stringently enforce them is seen as a big problem. N.S. Mukunda from Bengaluru Praja Vedithe notes, "You give permission to all these highrises just by saying that the Water Board will make its best efforts to supply water. You stop at that and do nothing, what is the use? You need to insist that they follow certain rules and procedures."

The ban imposed through the notification, he says, is only a temporary knee-jerk reaction of the government to see through the day as they



Women and children standing in the scorching heat to collect potable drinking water from a public tap, supplied by BWSSB, at Nayandahalli off Mysuru road. © MURALI KUMAR

have to manage with whatever water is available for the next two months. This is another proof of the absence of a long-term vision.

Ad-hocism can be risky

At a time when climate change is playing havoc with rainfall patterns, ad-hoc short-term reactions can get extremely risky. "Empirically speaking, we now see that over a five-year period, there will be at least two years of drought, one year of excessive rainfall and two years of normal rainfall," he points out.

The concretisation of wetlands and public spaces besides the white-topped roads have meant there are no long-term strategies. "It is critical to ensure some other ways to let groundwater recharge into the concrete. We are now

doing the opposite. White-topped roads are totally impermeable to water, you can't even drill into that," says Harini Nagendra, who leads the Azim Premji University's Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability.

Climate change has meant there are extremes of excess water or too little water. "There are no average rainfall days left in our future. We should explore ways to let the excess water into the ground through the concrete. Maybe by drilling very small and very deep recharge tubes into the ground on roads, in government offices, in public places they should be doing this. It should be mandatory for the government to act first," she elaborates.

Another solution, as Mukunda says, could be to ensure that the city's storage capacity is twice the

annual requirement. "That should be the first fundamental objective. Immediately after a drought year, you ration the supply for four hours per day in the morning and four hours in the evening. Do that and definitely you will not face a dire shortage problem," contends Mukunda.

Dual piping, tech tweaks

Dual piping for potable and non-potable / treated water is mandated for new constructions. But what about lakhs of older constructions? Is there a way to retrofit and boost consumption of treated water? Harini draws attention to Chennai, where strict enforcement of the dual-piping rule had dramatically addressed the drinking water crisis of the early 2000s. "We need to look at



A man carrying water cans to get drinking water at farm in Hesarghatta.

innovative tech fixes to look at older constructions," she says.

The Vedithe had proposed a comprehensive water mapping of the city in terms of sources and capacity. The platform had also suggested that the ultimate ownership of the city's ground water resources should be the BWSSB, which then connects all ground water sources by pipeline and regulates the supply to people in dire need of drinking water.

The drinking water crisis might seem severe now. But the warning signs had begun to show years back. But they were mostly ignored. At a Indian Institute of Science (IISc) conference in 2008, Mukunda recalls, the then BWSSB chairman had warned that if the city was allowed to grow without regulations, water would dry out by

2014. "He was made to shut up and sit down, and not allowed to speak further."

Impact on Cauvery 5th Stage

The current crisis is likely to impact the launch of the Cauvery 5th Stage. Although the initial plan was to kickstart the process of supplying drinking water to 110 villages on the city's outer areas by May, the linkage with the larger BWSSB pipeline network could take a year. Former BWSSB Engineer-in-Chief N Thippeswamy notes the prevailing storage crisis could delay it even more.

"In the context of the current storage levels, the commissioning of the fifth stage may not be possible till the next monsoon sets in," he says, drawing attention to a proper planning lacuna both at the govern-

ment and BWSSB levels. "These are to be expected due to the impact of climate change. This will continue in the years to come. Both the Water Board and Government should seriously look at how best other water resources can be utilised to meet the demand."

Currently, BWSSB supplies 1,470 Million Litres per Day (MLD) of water daily to the city. Cauvery 5th stage is expected to boost this by an additional 775 MLD. The Board Chairman Ramprasad Manohar had recently stated that the city and its outskirts require a daily supply of 2,100 MLD. Insisting that there is no need to panic, he informed that the dams had 34 tmcft of water against the city's demand for 17 tmcft till July.

On March 12, the Board decided to reduce water

supply by one to 20% to companies, hospitals, airports and the railways. This move to mitigate the crisis is expected to release more water to 257 areas identified as badly impacted by the water shortage. Among the regions are HSR Layout, Bommanahalli, Peenya, Balagunte, KR Puram, Ramamurthy Nagar, Marathahalli, Hosakerehalli and D J Halli.

Follow Cape Town template

But does this give much confidence to Bengalureans, lakhs of whom on the outskirts are now reeling under the full impact of the crisis? Thippeswamy suggests following the Cape Town template, when that South African city hit global headlines in 2018 while being precariously close to Day Zero of running totally out of water.

The pushback there started with a steep tariff penalising heavy users, prohibition of water for pools, lawns and non-essential use, and installation of a new water pressure system.

Restrictions were imposed on allocation of water to surrounding agricultural areas. Aggressive advertising on electronic boards reminded people how many days the water supply would last. City-wide water usage maps were released to help people compare their consumption with their neighbours.

These government mandated measures were complemented by active community efforts.

Social media users widely circulated water-saving tips, tourists were advised by hotels to take short showers and flush toilets only when required, and restaurants reduced making pasta and boiled vegetables.

Source: The Hindu, p.5, March. 19, 2024

City falling short by 500 MLD water: CM

BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru city needs 2,600 million litres of water daily (MLD) and is short by about 500 MLD, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Monday.

Addressing the media after he met government and Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) officials, Siddaramaiah said: "The city needs 2,600 MLD of water for both drinking and industrial purposes."

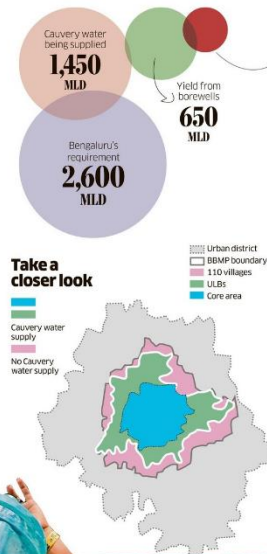
"Of this, 1,450 MLD is being provided by the Cauvery river and 650 MLD is being provided by borewells in the city. There is a shortage of 500 MLD of water," he added.

He said the government will form an expert committee to put an end to the crisis in the future. Authorities have deployed 143 task force teams to stop wastage of water and will add more. Citizens can file complaints of water wastage on the helpline 1916 or on WhatsApp. The chief minister assured that complaints received will be addressed immediately.

Siddaramaiah mentioned that 6,900 borewells in the city out of 14,000 have dried up and 55 out of the 110 villages added to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) are facing water crisis. He assured that the Cauvery Stage V project will be completed by the end of June to ensure 775 MLD is available to meet the needs of the 110 villages.

Authorities will dig new borewells in 313 spots and rejuvenate 1,200 of them. Officials are working in slums, high grounds, and with those dependent on borewell water in 110 villages to ensure they do not face a shortage.

Private tankers, including those from the Karnataka Milk Federation, have been directed to supply water.



DH

Deficit
500MLD

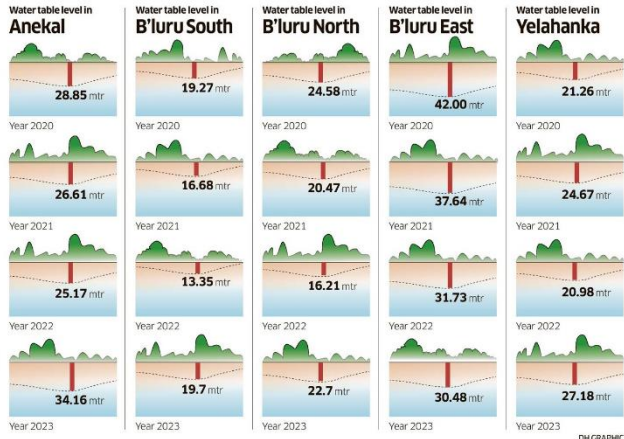
Worst affected areas: **Varthur, Whitefield & surrounding areas** | BBMP helpline: **1533** | BWSSB helpline: **1916**

Number of public borewells
14,781

Number of dry borewells
6,997

Number of water tankers registered and working with government
1,732

Villages in the city's periphery that were added to the BBMP limits in 2008 since they do not have Cauvery water supply
110



Robotic technology to monitor borewells

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will use robotic technology to maintain around 11,000 public borewells in its jurisdiction.

The technology aims to enhance efficiency in managing borewells, besides reducing their technical failures.

"A few borewells in the city have stopped working due to

lack of maintenance and technical faults. There have been instances when the borewells were switched on when water was not available and the pump sets were run for longer than expected. In such cases, the borewells turn inactive," BWSSB Chairman Dr Ramprasad Manohar V told DH.

The robotic technology will allow the BWSSB to monitor the state of the pump set and water flow levels, while also allowing

RAMPRASATH MANOHAR
BWSSB Chairman

"If the borewells have turned dry and we are not able to rejuvenate them, they can be converted to rainwater harvesting (RWH) structures."

officials to turn them on and off. "Constant monitoring will prevent frequent breakdown of borewells and reduce inconve-

nience caused to the citizens," Manohar added.

Manohar also directed the officials to survey the condition of borewells in the city and repair defunct ones.

The BWSSB is also thinking of converting defunct borewells into rainwater harvesting (RWH) structures. "If the borewells have turned dry and we are not able to rejuvenate them, they can be converted to RWH structures," Manohar said.



I have instructed officials to increase the groundwater level by filling important lakes in the city with treated water.

Siddaramaiah
Chief Minister



Source: Deccan Herald, p.3, March, 19, 2024

Only 1 out of every 5 homes in city harvests rainwater

₹2cr Collected
In Fines From
40k Houses

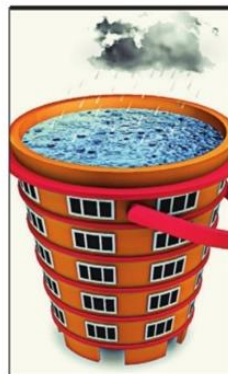
Nithya.Mandiyam
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: With only about 2 lakh of the 10.8 lakh homes in Bengaluru having installed rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) believes the water situation wouldn't have been as dismal as it is now if everyone had opted for RWH.

On its part, BWSSB has imposed penalties totalling nearly Rs2 crore on 40,000 households for not installing RWH systems, hoping that might push people into embracing the sustainable solution. West zone, including areas such as Nagarbhavi, RPC Layout, Vijayanagar, and Rajarajeshwari Nagar, tops the list with 12,796 homes not compliant with the RWH mandate; the zone has seen penalties running up to Rs 51.7 lakh being levied. East zone follows closely with 11,475 violations but has seen higher penalties at Rs 59.6 lakh.

While there are 17,591 apartments with less than 20 houses implementing RWH, there are 3,034 apartments with over 20 households in an apartment complex that have adopted the practice.

Suresh B, engineer-in-chief of BWSSB, said that since Dec 2011, RWH has been mandatory for houses built on plots larger than 60x40ft. In 2020, it was also made



HOW RESIDENCES & BUILDINGS FARED

Zone	RWH compliant	Penalised	Total penalty collected (in lakh rupees)
East	50,867	11,475	59.6
West	54,024	12,796	51.7
North	30,835	6,499	35.2
South	60,847	8,443	51.9
Total	1,96,573	39,213	198.4

— Source: BWSSB

For domestic connections not following the mandate, BWSSB imposes 50% penalty on water consumption bill for the first three months and 100% thereafter. For commercial connections, penalties are 100% for three months and 200% afterwards



mandatory for houses on plots measuring 30x40ft, with penalties for violations.

For domestic connections, BWSSB imposes a 50% penalty on water consumption bill for the first three months and 100% thereafter. For commercial connections, it is 100% for three months and 200% afterwards.

Arun Bala Rao, a resident of Jayanagar, said his house has benefited from RWH and is experiencing reduced water shortage. Sheela Nagarajun from Rajarajeshwari Nagar also said they use harvested rainwater for various household purposes.

However, despite the advantages, many residents view RWH as an expense rather than a long-term investment. This perception contributes to lower adoption rates, especially among households with smaller dimensions that face acute water shortage.

Source: The Times of India, p.4, March. 19, 2024

'51% pvt tankers not registered with BBMP'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Contradicting BWSSB's claims that more than 95% of private tankers have registered with Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), as mandated by the state govt, chief minister Siddaramaiah on Monday revealed that only 49% of the tankers have registered despite the deadline being extended till March 15. Bengaluru, as per transport department data, has about 3,500 private tankers.

After chairing a long meeting with civic agencies about the water crisis in Bengaluru, the CM said,



2 DEADLINES LATER

"The deadline to register private tankers ended on March 15 and a total of 1,700 tankers had registered with the govt. All the registered tankers have been supplying water from private borewells, as di-

rected by the state."

According to BBMP data, a total of 1,732 tankers have registered with it so far. Bengaluru South leads with 456 such tankers, followed by East zone (406). The state govt, which had originally set March 7 as the deadline, extended it till March 15. On the lapse of the first deadline, the percentage of registered tankers was 44.

Govt sources told **TOI** that both transport and civic officials would be tracking the movement of unregistered vehicles, and they'd collectively crack down on them and initiate legal action against such operators.

Siddaramaiah also appealed to citizens to raise complaints on the centralized helpline by dialling 1916 or through WhatsApp if they come across any violations and problems.

BBMP chief commissioner Tushar Giri Nath also held a meeting with officials and directed them to work in coordination with BWSSB engineers for distribution of water tankers. Giri Nath instructed officials to prepare for the onslaught of pre-monsoon (summer) showers and asked them to remove silt and debris from storm-water drains to prevent flooding and waterlogging.

Source: The Times of India, p.4, March. 19, 2024

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗೆ ಇದುವೇ ಕಾರಣ | ಸಿಎಂ ನೇತೃತ್ವದ ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ವಿವರಿಸಿದ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು | ಅಂತರ್ಜಲ ಮಟ್ಟ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಲು ಸಂಸ್ಕರಿಸಿದ ನೀರನ್ನು ಬಳಸಲು ಸೂಚನೆ

ಶೇ.50ರಷ್ಟು ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿಲ್ಲ

ನಿ ವಿಶ್ವವಾಣಿ ಸುದ್ದಿಮನೆ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

ರಾಜಧಾನಿ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನದಿಂದ ದಿನಕ್ಕೆ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದಂತೆ ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿ ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ ಅವರು ಸಭೆ ನಡೆಸಿದ್ದು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಯಾವುದೇ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿನ ಕೊರತೆಯಾಗದಂತೆ ಎಚ್ಚರವಹಿಸಲು ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಸೂಚನೆ ನೀಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

- 313 ಹೊಸ ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್ ಕೊರೆಸಲು ಕ್ರಮ
- ಕೆಆರ್‌ಎಸ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ 11.02 ಟಿಎಂಸಿ ನೀರು ಸಂಗ್ರಹ
- 110 ಹಳ್ಳಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು

ಗೃಹಕಚೇರಿ ಕೃಷ್ಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ನಡೆದ ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯ ಕಾರಣಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆದರು. ಪ್ರಮುಖವಾಗಿ ಮುಂಗಾರು, ಹಿಂಗಾರು ಕೈಕೊಟ್ಟಿರುವುದರಿಂದ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ

ಶೇ.50 ರಷ್ಟು ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್‌ಗಳು ಬತ್ತಿಹೋಗಿವೆ. ಮುಂದಿನ ಮಳೆಗಾಲದವರೆಗೆ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಉಲ್ಬಣಿಸದಂತೆ ಎಚ್ಚರವಹಿಸಲು, ಸಂಸ್ಕರಿಸಿದ ನೀರನ್ನು ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಕೆರೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಬಿಟ್ಟು, ಅಂತರ್ಜಲ ಮಟ್ಟ ವೃದ್ಧಿಸುವಂತೆ ಸೂಚನೆ ನೀಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಸಭೆಯ ಬಳಿಕ ಸುದ್ದಿಗೋಷ್ಠಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತನಾಡಿದ ಸಿಎಂ ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಲ್ಲಿ 1,470 ಎಂಎಲ್‌ಡಿ ನೀರು ಮಾತ್ರ ಕಾವೇರಿ ನದಿಯಿಂದ ಪೂರೈಕೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಉಳಿದದ್ದು 14,000 ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್‌ಗಳ ಮೂಲಕ ಪೂರೈಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಬೇಸಿಗೆ ಆರಂಭಕ್ಕೂ ಮುನ್ನ 6,900 ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್‌ಗಳು ಬತ್ತಿ ಹೋಗಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ನೀರು ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ಯೂ 110 ಹಳ್ಳಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಜೂನ್ ವೇಳೆ ಕಾವೇರಿ 5ನೇ ಹಂತದಿಂದ 75 ಎಂಎಲ್‌ಡಿ



ಸಭೆ ಬಳಿಕ ಸಿಎಂ ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ ಸುದ್ದಿಗೋಷ್ಠಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತನಾಡಿದರು.



ಭವಿಷ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಎಂಥಾದ್ದೇ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲೂ ನೀರಿನ ಕೊರತೆಯಾಗದಂತೆ ತಜ್ಞರ ಸಮಿತಿ ರಚಿಸಲು ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗಿದೆ. ದೂರು ಬಂದರೆ ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ, ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿ ಹೊಣೆ ಎಂದು ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟವಾಗಿ ಹೇಳಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿಗೆ 500 ಎಂಎಲ್‌ಡಿ ನೀರು ಕೊರತೆಯಿದೆ. ಈ ಕೊರತೆ ನೀಗಿಸಲು ಅಗತ್ಯ ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್‌ಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ ಜನರಿಗೆ ನೀರಿನ ತೊಂದರೆಯಾಗದಂತೆ ಕ್ರಮ ವಹಿಸಲು ಸೂಚಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

- ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ, ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿ

ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ನೀರನ್ನು ಪೂರೈಸಲಾಗುವುದು. ಆಗ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿಗೆ ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ನಿವಾರಣೆಯಾಗಲಿದೆ ಎಂದು ವಿಶ್ವಾಸ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಪಡಿಸಿದರು.

ಕಾವೇರಿ, ಕಬಿನಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿಗೆ ಅಗತ್ಯ ವಿರುವಷ್ಟು ನೀರನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಜೂನ್ ಅಂತ್ಯದವರೆಗೂ ಸಾಕಾಗುವಷ್ಟು ನೀರನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಕೆಆರ್‌ಎಸ್ ಜಲಾಶಯದಲ್ಲಿ 11.02 ಟಿಎಂಸಿ, ಕಬಿನಿಯಲ್ಲಿ 9.02 ಟಿಎಂಸಿ ನೀರು ಸಂಗ್ರಹವಿದೆ. ಇದರೊಂದಿಗೆ

ಕೆರೆಗಳ ಭರ್ತಿಗೆ ಸೂಚನೆ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಹೊರ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಕೆ.ಸಿ.ವ್ಯಾಲಿ ರೀತಿ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಕೆರೆಗಳನ್ನೂ ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡುವಂತೆ ಸೂಚನೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಬತ್ತಿ ಹೋಗಿರುವ ಪ್ರಮುಖ 14 ಕೆರೆಗಳನ್ನು ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಲು ಸೂಚನೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ ಅಂತರ್ಜಲ ಭರ್ತಿ ಆಗಿ ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್‌ಗಳಿಗೆ ಮರುಜೀವ ಬರುತ್ತದೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿಗೆ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿಗೆ ಹಣದ ಕೊರತೆಯಿಲ್ಲ. ನೀರಿಗೆ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿರುವಷ್ಟು ಹಣವನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಮತ್ತು ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ ಒದಗಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಪ್ರತಿದಿನ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಸಭೆ ನಡೆಸಿ ವಾರಕ್ಕೊಮ್ಮೆ ಕ್ರಿಯಾಯೋಜನೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಪಡಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎಂದು ಸಿಎಂ ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ ಭರವಸೆ ನೀಡಿದರು.

14000 ಸರಕಾರಿ ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್‌ಗಳಿಂದ ನೀರು ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ 6900 ಕೊಳವೆ ಬಾವಿಗಳು ಬತ್ತಿ ಹೋಗಿವೆ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂದರು.

1200 ಬೋರ್‌ಗಳಿಗೆ ಮರುಜೀವ: ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ 313 ಸ್ಥಳಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಸದಾಗಿ ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್ ಕೊರೆಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಇದರೊಂದಿಗೆ 1200 ನಿಷ್ಕ್ರಿಯ ಬೋರ್‌ಗಳಿಗೆ ಮರುಜೀವ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು. ನಗರದ ಕೊಳೆಗೇರಿಗಳು, ಎತ್ತರದ ಪ್ರದೇಶ ಹಾಗೂ ಬೋರ್‌ವೆಲ್ ಮೇಲೆ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ಸೇರಿ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಲು ಹೇಳಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಇನ್ನು ಕಂಟ್ರೋಲ್ ರೂಮ್‌ಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಿದೊಂದುಬಂದ ತಕ್ಷಣ ಆ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಿಗೆ ನೀರು ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡಲು ಸೂಚಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಪಾರ್ಕ್‌ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರು ಬಳಸದಂತೆ, ಶುದ್ಧೀಕರಿಸಿದ ನೀರು ಬಳಸುವಂತೆ ಸೂಚನೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂದು ಮಾಹಿತಿ ನೀಡಿದರು.

Source: Vishwavani, p.03, Mar.19, 2024

ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿ ಸೂಚನೆಗೂ ಇಲ್ಲ ಕಿಮ್ಮತ್ತು; ಖಾಸಗಿ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಮಾಲೀಕರು ಹೇಳಿದ್ದೇ 'ಬೆಲೆ'

ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ದರಕ್ಕೆ ಸಿಗದ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ನೀರು

• ಆರ್. ಮಂಜುನಾಥ್

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು: 'ನಿಮ್ಮ ಏರಿಯಾಗೆ ನಮ್ಮ ಸೇವೆ ಇಲ್ಲ', 'ನಾವು ಅಲ್ಲೆಲ್ಲ ಬರೋಲ್ಲ', 'ಅವರೇನೋ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಅಂತ ನಾವು ಬರೋಕಾಗಲ್ಲ', 'ನಮ್ಮ ರೇಟ್ ಕೊಟ್ಟರೆ ಈಗಲೇ ಬರುತ್ತೇವೆ...'

ಸರ್ಕಾರ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ದರ ನೀಡಿ ನೀರು ಖರೀದಿಸಲು ನಾಗರಿಕರು ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ನವರಿಗೆ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿದಾಗ ಸಿಗುತ್ತಿರುವ ಉತ್ತರಗಳು ಇವು.

ಇಲ್ಲಿನರಗೂ ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿ 1,732 ಖಾಸಗಿ ನೀರಿನ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳು ನೋಂದಣಿಯಾಗಿವೆ. ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಡಳಿತ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ದರದ ಪ್ರಕಾರವೇ ಇವರಿಂದ ನೀರು ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು ಎಂದು ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಮಾಲೀಕರ ಹೆಸರು, ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ, ನೀರು ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡುವ ಪ್ರದೇಶದ ವಿವರಗಳಿರುವ 'ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಟ್ಟಿ'ಯನ್ನು ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ-ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಹೊರಡಿಸಿವೆ. ಇವರ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಗೆ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಮಾಲೀಕರು 'ಬೆಲೆ' ನೀಡುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಆದರೆ, ಎಂದಿನಂತೆ ಒಂದೂವರೆ ಎರಡೂವರೆ ಸಾವಿರ 'ಬೆಲೆ' ನೀಡಿದರೆ ಒಂದು ಗಂಟೆಯಲ್ಲೇ ನೀರಿನ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ನಾಗರಿಕರ ಮನೆ ಬಾಗಿಲಿರುತ್ತದೆ..!

'ರಾಜರಾಜೇಶ್ವರಿ ನಗರ, ಮೈಲಸಂದ್ರ, ಕೆಂಚೇನಹಳ್ಳಿ, ಹಲಗೆವಡೇರಹಳ್ಳಿ (ಎಚ್.ವಿ. ಹಳ್ಳಿ) ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಿಗೆ ನೀರು ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡುವ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ ನೀಡಿದೆ. ಅವರಿಗೆ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ, 'ನಾವು ನಿಮ್ಮ ಪ್ರದೇಶದವರಲ್ಲ, ಬನಶಂಕರಿ ಕಡೆಯವರು' ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಇದ್ದರೆ ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿಯ ಕಾಲ್‌ಸೆಂಟರ್ 1916ಗೆ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಎಂದಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಕಾಲ್‌ಸೆಂಟರ್‌ಗೆ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ, ಅಲ್ಲಿ, ಎಂಜಿನಿಯರ್ ಒಬ್ಬರ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ನೀಡಿದರು. ಅವರಿಗೆ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸ್ವಿಚ್ ಆಫ್ ಆಂತ ಬಂತು. ಮತ್ತೆ ಕಾಲ್ ಸೆಂಟರ್‌ಗೆ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ, 'ಎಂಜಿನಿಯರ್ ಅವರೇ ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು, ನಮಗೆ ಇಷ್ಟೇಗೊತ್ತು' ಎಂದು ಸುಮ್ಮನಾದರು. ನಾವು ಇನ್ನಾರನ್ನ ಕೇಳಬೇಕು, ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಬಗೆಹರಿಸದ ಕಾಲ್‌ಸೆಂಟರ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಏಕೆ ನೀಡಬೇಕು' ಎಂದು ರಾಜರಾಜೇಶ್ವರಿನಗರದ ಎಂ. ಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಪ್ರಶ್ನಿಸಿದರು.

ದಾಸಹರಳ್ಳಿ, ಬೊಮ್ಮನಹಳ್ಳಿ, ಮಹದೇವಪುರ, ವಿಜಯನಗರ, ರಾಜಾಜಿನಗರ, ಯಲಹಂಕ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳ ಮಾಲೀಕರು ನಿಗದಿತ ದರಕ್ಕೆ ನೀರು ಪೂರೈಸಲು ಆಸಕ್ತಿ ತೋರುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. 'ನಮ್ಮ ದರ ಕೊಟ್ಟರೆ ಈಗಲೇ ಬರುತ್ತೇವೆ, ಆದರೆ ಯಾರಿಗೂ ಹೇಳಬಾರದು ನೋಡಿ.. ಇಲ್ಲದಿದ್ದರೆ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಇಷ್ಟ' ಎಂದು ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ- ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿಯ 'ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಟ್ಟಿ'ಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳ ಮಾಲೀಕರೋ ಅಥವಾ ಚಾಲಕರೋ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಹೀಗಿದ್ದಾಗ ನಾವೇನು ಮಾಡೋದು' ಎಂದು ಹಲವು ನಾಗರಿಕರು ಅಳಲು ತೋಡಿಕೊಂಡರು.

ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳ ಮಾಹಿತಿ		
ವಲಯ	ನೋಂದಣಿ ಅಗಿಯವು	ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚುಯಿರುವುದು
ದಕ್ಷಿಣ	456	348
ಪೂರ್ವ	406	298
ಮಹದೇವಪುರ	341	241
ಯಲಹಂಕ	141	103
ಬೊಮ್ಮನಹಳ್ಳಿ	117	94
ದಾಸಹರಳ್ಳಿ	98	42
ಆರ್.ಆರ್.ನಗರ	86	66
ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಮ	87	58
ಒಟ್ಟು	1,732	1250

ಸರ್ಕಾರ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ನ ನೀರಿನ ದರ

ವಿವರ	6,000 ಲೀಟರ್ ನೀರು (ಜಿಎಸ್‌ಟಿ ಸೇರಿ)	8,000 ಲೀಟರ್ ನೀರು (ಜಿಎಸ್‌ಟಿ ಸೇರಿ)	12,000 ಲೀಟರ್ ನೀರು (ಜಿಎಸ್‌ಟಿ ಸೇರಿ)
5 ಕಿ.ಮೀ ವರೆಗೆ	₹600	₹700	₹1,000
5ರಿಂದ 10 ಕಿ.ಮೀ ವರೆಗೆ	₹750	₹850	₹1,200

ರಾಜಕಾರಣಿಗಳ ಛಾಯೆ!

ನಗರದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳ ಮಾಲೀಕತ್ವ ರಾಜಕಾರಣಿಗಳದ್ದು ಅಥವಾ ಅವರ ಹಿಂಬಾಲಕರದ್ದು. ಹೀಗಾಗಿಯೇ, ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಡಳಿತ, ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ, ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿ ಆದೇಶಗಳಿಗೆ 'ಬೆಲೆ' ಇಲ್ಲ. ಅವರು ನಿಗದಿ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದೇ 'ಬೆಲೆ'. ಅದನ್ನು ಕೇಳುವಂತಿಲ್ಲ ಎಂಬ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ ನಗರದಲ್ಲಿದೆ.

'ಖಾಸಗಿ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳ ನೋಂದಣಿ ಕಡ್ಡಾಯ ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಲಾಗಿದ್ದರೂ, ನೋಂದಣಿ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳದವರ ಮೇಲೆ ಏನೂ ಕ್ರಮವಾಗಿಲ್ಲ. ಶಾಸಕ, ಸಚಿವ, ಪ್ರಭಾವಿ ನಾಯಕರೇ ನಮ್ಮ ಮಾಲೀಕರು. ಅವರನ್ನೇನು ಮಾಡಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯ ಎಂಬುದು ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಡ್ರೈವರ್‌ಗಳ ಮಾತು. ಅದು ನಿಜವೇ ಆಗಿದ್ದು, ಅವರ ಹೇಳುವ ದರವನ್ನೇ ನೀಡಿ ನಾವು ನೀರು ಖರೀದಿಸಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ. ಇಲ್ಲದಿದ್ದರೆ ನಮಗೆ ನೀರು ಇರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ' ಎಂದು ಲಗ್ಗೆರೆಯ ಅಪಾರ್ಟ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ನಿವಾಸಿಯೊಬ್ಬರು ತಮ್ಮ ಸಂಕಷ್ಟ ಹೇಳಿಕೊಂಡರು.

ಹೇಳಿದ್ದೊಂದು, ಇರುವುದೊಂದು!

'ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರದಲ್ಲಿ ಖಾಸಗಿಯ ಸುಮಾರು 3,500 ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳಿದ್ದು ಅವುಗಳೆಲ್ಲವೂ ನೋಂದಣಿಯಾಗಬೇಕು. ಇಲ್ಲದಿದ್ದರೆ ಅವರ ಮೇಲೆ ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ' ಎಂದು ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಆಯುಕ್ತ ತುಷಾರ್ ಗಿರಿನಾಥ್ ಹಾಗೂ ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷ ರಾಮಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಮನೋಹರ್ ಹೇಳಿದ್ದರು.

ಗಡುವು ಮುಗಿದಿದ್ದರೂ 1,732 ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳು ಮಾತ್ರ ನೋಂದಣಿಯಾಗಿವೆ. ಆ ಪೈಕಿ ಎಲ್ಲರೂ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಡಳಿತ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ದರಕ್ಕೆ ನೀರನ್ನು ನೀಡಲು ಒಪ್ಪಿಲ್ಲ. ಇಷ್ಟಾದರೂ ಅವರೆಲ್ಲರ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ, ಪ್ರದೇಶವನ್ನು ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿ ಅವರಿಂದ ನೀರು ಪಡೆಯಿರಿ ಎಂದು ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ- ಜಲಮಂಡಳಿ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಟ್ಟಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಿವೆ. ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿಯೇ ನೀಡಿರುವ 'ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಟ್ಟಿ'ಯಲ್ಲಿ 1,250 ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳಷ್ಟೇ ಇವೆ. 482 ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯೇ ಇಲ್ಲ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ಇವರು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಒಂದು, ವಾಸ್ತವದಲ್ಲಿ ಇರುವುದೇ ಒಂದು ಎಂಬಂತಾಗಿದೆ.



ಜಲ ಪರಿಹಾರ

ನೀರಿನ ಬವಣೆ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿಗೆ ಹಾಹಾಕಾರ ಉಂಟಾಗಿದೆ. ನಿಮ್ಮ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ನೀರಿನ ಬವಣೆ ಇದ್ದರೆ ಬರೆದು ಕಳುಹಿಸಿ

ವಾಟ್ಸಾಪ್ ನಂಬರ್:

9606038256



'ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್' ಜಪ್ತಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತೇವೆ'

'ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ದರಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಹಣ ಕೇಳುವಂತಿಲ್ಲ. ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿದಾಗ, 'ಅ ಪ್ರದೇಶ ನಮ್ಮದಲ್ಲ' ಎಂದೆಲ್ಲ ಹೇಳುವಂತಿಲ್ಲ. ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ ಎಲ್ಲವನ್ನೂ ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸಿಯೇ ಆಯಾ ಪ್ರದೇಶಕ್ಕೆ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿ, 'ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಟ್ಟಿ'ಯನ್ನು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಿದೆ. ಅದರಂತೆಯೇ ನಾಗರಿಕರು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿ ನೀರು ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಮಾಲೀಕರು ನೀರು ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಮಾಡದಿದ್ದರೆ ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನೇ ಜಪ್ತಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತೇವೆ' ಎಂದು ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ವಿಭಾಗದ ವಿಶೇಷ ಆಯುಕ್ತ ಸುರೋಚ್ಚರ್ ವಿಕಾಸ್ ಕಿಶೋರ್ ಹೇಳಿದರು.

'ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಮಾಲೀಕರು ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಿದಾಗ ನೀರು ಸರಬರಾಜಿಗೆ ಒಪ್ಪದಿದ್ದರೆ ಬಿಬಿಎಂಪಿಯು 1533 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಗೆ ಕರೆ ಮಾಡಬಹುದು. ನಮ್ಮ ವಲಯ ಆಯುಕ್ತರು ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದವರ ಮೇಲೆ ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಇನ್ನು ಎರಡು ದಿನಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಟ್ಟಿ'ಯನ್ನು ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು' ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು.

Source: Prajavani, p.3A, Mar.19, 2024

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