

Title : Regarding problem of drought and depleting ground water level in Karnataka

DR. K. SUDHAKAR (CHIKKABALLAPUR): Sir, Karnataka experienced one of the most severe droughts in the year 2023. The droughts have had a profound impact on almost all the *talukas* within our State with small and marginal farmers being the most severely affected. In my constituency of Chikkaballapur, and in the neighbouring Kolar and Tumkur districts which have a significant farming population, people play a crucial role in providing sustenance to the urban city of Bengaluru. Unfortunately, the groundwater levels have witnessed a significant depletion over the years. The underground water has dropped as deep as 1,500 feet. It is imperative that we find a permanent solution to address this pressing issue.

Instead of finding a permanent solution, the State Government is trying to utilise the STP water and they are filling up the ponds and lakes in these districts. We do not know the effects of using the STP water. 80 lakh people are using water for their agriculture and drinking purposes. This may be one of the rare cases in the entire country that the STP water is being utilised to fill up the tanks and use this water for agriculture and drinking purpose. One potential solution could be the transportation of at least 5 tmc of water from the Krishna River to our region through construction of canals and completion of Yettinahole Project at the earliest. Also, special river catchment improvement plans have to be enabled for Palar, Ponnaiyar, and Pennar rivers. The basin, river banks and drainage of these rivers must be protected and desilting should be done. In addition, it is crucial to revitalize and restore the village ponds and other water structures in the area. Therefore, I earnestly request the Government to consider my request for finding a permanent solution to this crisis to save the lives of not just humans but also of animals and protect the flora and fauna of the region.

