

Title: Need to accord environmental clearance to Varahi Lift Irrigation Project in Udupi, Karnataka.

SHRI VINAY KUMAR SORAKE (UDUPI): Dependence on erratic rainfall has often proved calamitous to farmers in Udupi and Kundapur Talukas of Udupi District of Dakshin Kannada region. It is in this backdrop an irrigation scheme of much utility was envisaged years back to irrigate 15,700 hectares of land in Udupi and Kundapur taluka areas. For this purpose, a scheme for constructing a pick-up dam at Horrible near Siddapur village was drawn up to harness 1100 cusecs of tail race water coming out of Varahi Hydel Project Upstream. Christened Varahi Lift Irrigation Scheme this project has so far failed to see the light of the day, despite expenditure incurred amounting to more than Rs.20 crore. In 1992, the Centre had accorded its approval for the scheme with an initial outlay of Rs.14.50 crore.

The matter is stuck up in procedural wrangles concerning accord of environmental clearance, as approximately 275 hectares of forest land is likely to be submerged in the dam area. This is too small and insignificant a factor weighed against the vast irrigation potential the scheme is expected to hold.

I would, therefore, strongly urge the Central Government to accord environmental clearance to the scheme in the larger interest of the farmers in Udupi and Kundapur who stand to benefit enormously from Varahi Lift Irrigation Scheme when commissioned.