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## After Karnataka government formation, will JD(S)'s HD Kumaraswamy change track on Yettinahole project?

By Deepthi Sanjiv, Bangalore Mirror Bureau | May 22, 2018, 04.00 AM IST



*Greens want the new government to make its stand clear on the controversial water project*

After all the political hullaballo, HD Kumaraswamy is set to take oath as state's 25th Chief Minister on Wednesday. What awaits him is a clutch of crucial issues which need immediate attention.

Though a 'good monsoon' is expected, water issues, be it Cauvery or Mahadayi, pose a bigger challenge him. A major bone of contention between the JD-S and the Congress will be the controversial Yettinahole project which aims to provide drinking water to parched areas of the state. For the record, it was one of the pet projects of the Siddaramaiah government. Greens across the state have been demanding to scrap what they call as "unscientific project".

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During his visit to Mangaluru before the polls, Kumaraswamy said that he had an alternative solution for the Yettinahole project which would not harm the interests of citizens of Dakshina Kannada, Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Tumakuru, Bengaluru Rural, and Ramanagaram districts. He alleged that the Congress government had initiated the project to loot money.

Interestingly, the JD(S) manifesto too said efforts would be made to bring 60 tmc of water from the Western Ghats to provide drinking water to Arasikere, Tiptur, Chikkaballapur, Kolar district. It said: "Bengaluru water supply needs would be met through this project. JD(S) would commit to implement the project on a bigger scale than limiting itself to Yettinahole project."

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Sahyadri Sanchaya's environmentalist Dinesh Holla, who is fighting to protect the Western Ghats, said, "At a meeting convened by Kumaraswamy in Mangaluru before the elections, along with Shashidhar Shetty, convenor, National Environment Care Foundation, we asked Kumarawamy about his stand on Yettinahole project. He assured us that justice would be done to the people of the Coastal region and those in parched areas. We will soon ask the government as well as elected representatives of respective constituencies in the Western Ghat region to give in writing their stand on Yettinahole. We fear that the government could opt for bigger projects."

In the past, when Kumaraswamy visited the project site in Sakleshpur, he said that the state government should complete the Yettinahole drinking water project at the earliest. People in the dry areas have been eagerly waiting for the completion of the project. When the foundation stone was laid, it was assured that the project would be completed within three years.

**CONGRESS'S PET PROJECT**

*The 'Integrated Drinking Water Project' has been designed to provide drinking water to parched areas of Kolar, Chikaballapur, Ramanagaram, Tumakuru, Bengaluru Rural and Hassan districts by taking water from Yettinahole, a west-flowing stream near Sakleshpur of Hassan district, and transport it through a pipeline and open canal through a distance of 274 km. Greens and IISC experts have termed this project unscientific. The project cost is about Rs 13,000 crore.*