

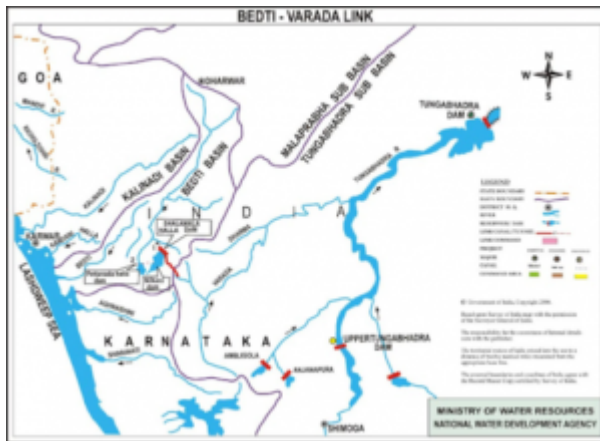
Bedti-Varada project

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In news-Recently, environmental groups in Karnataka have criticised the project to link the Bedti and Varada rivers in Karnataka, calling it 'unscientific' and a 'waste of public money'.

What is Bedti-Varada project?

- **The project was envisaged in 1992 as one to supply drinking water by the then government.**
- **The plan aims to link the Bedti, a river flowing west into the Arabian Sea, with the Varada, a tributary of the Tungabhadra river, which flows into the Krishna, which in turn flows into the Bay of Bengal.**
- The Bedti is known as Gangavali in the estuary region.
- **A massive dam will be erected at Hirevadatti in Gadag district under the project. A second dam will be built on the Pattanahalla river at Menasagoda in Sirsi, Uttara Kannada district.**
- Both dams will take water to the Varada via tunnels of length 6.3 kilometres and 2.2-km.
- The water will reach at a place called Kengre. It will then go down a 6.88 km tunnel to Hakkalumane, where it will join the Varada.
- **The project thus envisages taking water from the water surplus Sirsi-Yellapura region of Uttara Kannada district to the arid Raichur, Gadag and Koppal districts.**
- A total of **302 million cubic metres of water** from **Pattanahalla and Shalmalahalla tributaries of the Bedti and Varada rivers**, while **222 million cubic metres of water will be drawn** from the barrage at Suremane built against the Bedti river.



Problem associated with the project-

- It is claimed that **over 500 acres of forests will be lost.**
- It is also claimed that **both rivers do not have so much water to feed three districts for both domestic and farming purposes.**
- **It would need 61 megawatts of power to pull the water all the way to Gadag. It is difficult to redirect a westward-flowing river to flow eastward.** In February, which is early summer, the Bedti and Varada rivers begin to dry up.
- In addition, flora and fauna will also suffer due to this project. **The Bedti valley has been designated as an active biodiversity zone by the International Union for Conservation of Nature(IUCN).**
- The area is home to 1,741 types of flowering plants as well as 420 species of birds and animals.
- It would affect the nutrients that the river carries with it are responsible for sustaining fish stocks, especially in the Bedti's estuary in Dedi.