

From the States:

Meetings on Water Resource Distribution in Ballari and Anathapur

The following resolutions were passed in these meetings:

Reach the people of Karnataka, Andhra and Telangana extensively to sensitize them about the real causes of drinking and irrigation water problems and clear the misconceptions among them;

Demand the Union government to repeal the laws through which it is snatching the rights of States on dams;

Convey to the governments, the advice of experts on alternative projects through memorandum.

On the occasion of these meetings, organisers reached out to people of different areas extensively and sensitised them on the issues.

AIKMKS affiliated peasant unions, Karnataka Rajya Rythu Sanga, Rythu Coolie Sangham and AFTU (New) organised two public meetings on March 5th & 6th of 2023 on the topic of 'Upper Bhadra Project- Water Disputes - Privatization of Dams'. Retired engineers of Tungabhadra Dam, experts on drought & water resources, and leaders of farmers, farm labour unions spoke in the meeting.

In the wake of the upcoming elections, the ruling BJP in Karnataka has allocated Rs. 5,300 crore for the Upper Bhadra project. As a result, since a month there are discussions among people that if water is diverted from Bhadra to the Upper Bhadra (Lift Irrigation) project, the Tungabhadra reservoir will not get enough water and so the Tungabhadra Ayacut farmers, mainly residents of Rayalaseema, will suffer. In this scenario these two meetings were held. The speakers explained that the statements of the ruling party and some opposition parties are making people in the upper and lower regions of Andhra, Telangana and Karnataka suspect each other and that the real reasons for the drinking and irrigation water problems of the farmers are the water policies followed by the ruling classes.

Governments are not taking any steps to remove the silt that has been accumulating for years in the Tungabhadra dam which is one of the largest dams and main water resource to the farmers of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Tungabhadra dam retired engineer Mr. Dwarkanadh said that even though all dams across the country are losing at least 1/2 TMC of storage capacity each due to silt accumulation every year, governments are apathetic. In both of these meetings he suggested that the cost on silt removal can be reduced by reusing the silt for various purposes. He appealed the governments to solve the

water allocation problem by lifting the river waters flowing west into the Arabian Sea at two or three places and diverting them into the Bhadra River, thereby bringing plenty of water resources into usability.

Other speakers said that the central and state governments are making budget allocations according to the needs of corporate companies without paying attention to new technologies or heeding to the suggestions of the experts and are not even allocating minimum funds for the maintenance of the existing projects and canals.