

## **Karnataka to denotify 6,64,000 hectares of deemed forest land**

29 September 2020

Bengaluru: Last week the Karnataka government announced that it is set to drop 6,64,000 hectares of land from 'deemed forest' classification. As of now the deemed forest land stands at 9,94,000 hectares (ha) which after reduction would come down to 3,30,000 ha. Minister for Forests B.S. Anand Singh said that the decision on reduction of the deemed forest land was taken following reports by district-level committees constituted by the Forest Department to examine the issue. A notification in this regard would be issued soon.

Further, Revenue Minister R Ashok is piloting Karnataka Land Revenue Amendment Bill for extension of deadline for regularisation of unauthorised cultivation under Bagair hukum scheme. Ashok has also confirmed that 6,64,000 ha had deemed forests would be de-notified and used by Government institutions and Civic amenities besides regularizing the encroachments. Deemed forests refer to land that appears to be a "forest", but have not been notified so by the government. Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, B.K. Singh said that the move will stop the ecological services as these forest areas are catchment areas for the rivers. He explained that a team of experts headed by S Nagraj while working as chief conservator of forest (CCF) identified deemed forests in the State of Karnataka, based on the direction of the Supreme Court in Godavarman judgment in 1996.

"Last four five years' development is quite against conservation. Government constituted district level committees headed by respective Deputy Commissioners to have a relook on the deemed forest lists. All district reports were compiled at the State level and the deemed forest land of 9,94,000 ha, were brought down to 3,30,000 ha. Reasons for the decrease was that the areas in forests and revenue records were overlapping, some revenue records were subsequently amended and further the areas below 5 ha were removed from the list," Singh said. The former PCCF also stated that the Forest department never drew a plan for the management of these forests.

Source:<https://www.thehansindia.com/karnataka/karnataka-to-denotify-664000-hectares-of-deemed-forest-land-648456>