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Decade-old Water Act yet to evolve

NR Madhusudhan

BANGALORE: Though the state government had enacted the Karnataka Ground Water Act ten years ago to protect the sources of public drinking water, it is yet to be implemented by the government authorities concerned.

In accordance with the government's responsibility to provide safe drinking water and safeguarding the sources of drinking water, the state government had enacted the Karnataka Ground Water Act in 1999.

The act came to be known as Karnataka Ground Water (Regulation for Protection of Sources of Drinking Water) Act, 1999.

According to provisions of the Act, no person is supposed to sink any well for extracting or drawing water within 500 metres of the source of public drinking water without obtaining permission from the appropriate authority.

The appropriate authority may, on the advice of the technical officer, grant permission in writing for the sinking of a well or reject the application after considering the drinking water needs of the general public in the area.

However, the Act permits the government or local authority to dig a well to serve as a public drinking water source.

The appropriate authority means the Deputy

Commissioner (DC) or any officer, not below the rank of an Assistant Commissioner, appointed by the government and the technical officer is an officer of the Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Karnataka, who is not below the rank of a geologist.

There are many Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board sunk bore-wells, especially on the outskirts of the city.

Yet, people are sinking their own borewells without obtaining the DC's permission.

Regarding the implementation of the Act, the Bangalore Urban Deputy Commissioner G N Nayak said, "We will consider the application if

anybody applies for sinking a well within the prohibited area and take legal action against those who have violated the Act by sinking their own wells near the public drinking water source.” Sources in the Mines and Geology Department said the deputy commissioner's office has not sought the opinion of their officers regarding sinking of wells near the public drinking water sources till date.