

Karnataka will see 10-25% increase in rainfall in coming years: scientists

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Governments have to focus on management of floods, particularly in urban areas, and storage of water in dams, experts have said in their report

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File photo of flooding in Bengaluru. Experts have warned that such events will only intensify in the coming decades.

Karnataka will witness 10 to 25% increase in rainfall and areas under drought or drought years will decline drastically by mid-2030 and the increase in rainfall will be accompanied by larger magnitudes in the intensity and frequency of heavy rainfall and floods, according to N.H. Ravindranath and G. Bala, authors of multiple UN IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reports and professors at IISc., Bengaluru.

With the latest IPCC report estimating the chances of crossing the global warming level of 1.5°C in the next decades, Prof. Ravindranath and Prof. Bala said, "A district-level multi-model projection shows that rainfall is projected to increase by 10 to 25% in districts of

Karnataka even by the mid-2030s.”

Focus areas

Besides coastal districts of the State, regions of the Krishna and the Cauvery basins will witness heavy rainfall in the coming years and the monsoon rainfall variability between years will increase with some years receiving very high rainfall and a few recording deficient rainfall. Karnataka has already been experiencing unprecedented floods in the recent years, they said.

Prof. Ravindranth told *The Hindu* that with global warming reaching 1.5-2° Celsius in the next two decades, high rainfall and rise in sea levels would be irreversible in the coming years. Shrinking glaciers, melting of ice sheets, rising seas, species loss, and more acidic oceans would be irreversible changes, he said.

“One-third of the biodiversity in the Western Ghats of Karnataka will be damaged by 2050 and there will be reduction in fish production in the sea because of acidic oceans,” said Prof. Ravindranath, who is also part of the Karnataka State Action Plan on Climate Change, 2021, report, which is yet to be made public.



File photo of flooding in Bengaluru. Experts have warned that such events will only intensify in the coming decades.

Rainfall would be high intensity and rainfall would be 50 mm to 100 mm in one day or some days and it would be difficult to forecast monsoon in advance owing to global climatic change factors, Prof. Ravindranath said.

Authors said with regular years of rainfall, drought years would be fewer in the coming decades. The State governments have to focus on management of floods, particularly in urban areas and cities and storage of water in dams. “Bengaluru and many cities and towns have all experienced flood events in recent years and they will only intensify in the coming decades,” they said.

Damage to properties

Scientists have suggested to the government to undertake construction of railway network, bridges, building, and dams by taking into consideration changes in the climate. “Biggest problem,” according to them, “is management of water in the coming years.” Damage to public and private properties would be immense if authorities did not incorporate climate change in their policies, Prof. Ravindranath and Prof. Bala warned.

Chairman of Bangalore Climate Change Initiative-Karnataka chapter and former Minister B.K. Chandrashekar, who has read the report, said political parties must include climate change in their poll manifestos.