

Justification in response to FAC observation dated 19-06-2018 in FAC meeting.

Observations of FAC:

1. The State Government shall initiate action for the violations as per the Government of India guidelines No. 11-42/2017-FC dated 29-01-2018.
2. The State Government shall explore the possibility of establishing the university campus on alternate non-forest land with a detailed analysis of at least three possible sites.
3. On DSS analysis, the land use change is restricted to a small portion of forest area. The State Government shall demarcate and submit details of the actual forest area under non-forest use, along with the shapefile.

1. Justification for unintentional violation.

On 31-01-1990, through reference GO-RD 62 LGL 89, an order was issued to reduce the proposed 72.1757 Ha in Sy. No. 1/1 of Bhutramanahatti Village under Rule 97(4) of the KLR Rules, 1966, granted in favour of Karnataka University, Dharwad. (Annexure 1)

On 15-03-1990, through reference RB/LBP/CR98/89-90, the Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi, issued an order to reduce an area of 72.1757 Ha from the Gayarana in Sy. No. 1/1 of Bhutramanahatti Village and mutate the name of KUD.

On 26-03-1990, as per Form VI (Agreement Bond) by the Administrator, KUD, an agreement bond was executed before the Tahsildar, Belagavi. A mutation entry (No. 379) was made after execution of the possession certificate on the same date.

A stay order was sought by the DCF, Belagavi, and CF, Belagavi, through references B4/FOP/GFL/LAND/1990 dated 23-04-1990 and C1/GFL/LND/UNY/3/90-91 dated 26-04-1990, against the above-mentioned DC order dated 15-03-1990 and M.E. No. 379 dated 26-03-1990 of Bhutramanahatti Village.

On 06-09-1990, as per RB/LBP/CR98/89-90, the DC, Belagavi, observed that although a notification was issued in 1960 declaring Sy. No. 1/1 as RF, the Forest authorities did not take steps to reflect the same in the revenue records, and hence the legal status of the land was Gayarana. There was no revenue record confirming that Sy. No. 1/1 of Bhutramanahatti Village was forest land. Therefore, as a proposal was submitted to the Government, the land was granted in favour of KUD.

Therefore, the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Forest, Ecology and Environmental Conservation Department, through Compliance Report D.O. FEE 101 FLL 2016 dated 04-05-2017 (Annexure 2) to the MoEF, New Delhi, stated that the records were not updated by the Forest Department and that the violation was unintentional and in good faith.

2. Justification in response to DSS analysis and reduction of proposed area from 72.1757 Ha to 27.3963 Ha

The initial proposal was submitted for the forest clearance with a Proposal number FP/KA/SCH/20566/2016. After review of the proposal and DSS analysis central government has recommended to reduce the area and consider the minimal area for the diversion. Therefore, the proposal is now prepared for resubmission with a reduced area of 27.3963 Ha after the meeting dated 21-08-2025 in the presence of District Collector, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Registrar and Horticulture Superintendent, RCU considering the DSS analysis and scope of future projects undertaken by RCU. The proceedings of the meeting is enclosed(Annexure 3)

Shapefiles of the same shall be submitted to the respective authorities and on the PARIVESH portal in the form of KML.

3. Justification for alternate land

The RCU has been allotted with 51.09 Ha of Non forest land in Hirebagewadi and Halagimaradi village. The current land in Bhutaramanahatti is suitable and inevitable for the following reasons.

- i. The current location is suitable for providing higher education facilities to students from Bijapur and Belagavi districts, catering to 1,683 students during the academic year 2024–25. Establishing or relocating the campus to Hirebagewadi would create a significant gap in access to higher education for potential students from Bijapur district and nearby towns, as Hirebagewadi is comparatively farther than Bhutramanahatti.

The detailed category-wise enrolment data supporting the above statement is attached.

Table: Decadal Enrolment details of RCU located in Bhutaramanahatti village.

| Year | GM | SC | ST | OBC | Total |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 2012 - 13 | 95 | 105 | 24 | 253 | 477 |
| 2013 - 14 | 101 | 116 | 26 | 286 | 529 |
| 2014 - 15 | 112 | 129 | 29 | 317 | 587 |
| 2015 - 16 | 117 | 143 | 33 | 359 | 652 |
| 2016 - 17 | 130 | 160 | 43 | 391 | 724 |
| 2017 - 18 | 137 | 177 | 48 | 441 | 803 |
| 2018 - 19 | 151 | 196 | 53 | 491 | 891 |
| 2019 - 20 | 158 | 218 | 59 | 554 | 989 |
| 2020 - 21 | 176 | 231 | 66 | 625 | 1098 |
| 2021 - 22 | 195 | 256 | 73 | 695 | 1219 |
| 2022 - 23 | 215 | 291 | 74 | 773 | 1353 |
| 2023 - 24 | 243 | 315 | 110 | 857 | 1525 |
| 2024 - 25 | 146 | 389 | 143 | 1005 | 1683 |
| Total | 1976 | 2726 | 781 | 7047 | 12530 |

With reference to the above table, approximately 12,081 students have enrolled in the University to date. The University has recorded a steady increase in enrolment, with an average annual growth rate of 8.3% from 2012–13 to 2024–25. Considering this sustained growth trend, any relocation of the University is likely to adversely affect students in the coming years. Furthermore, the enrolment growth rate is projected to increase to around 12% in the forthcoming academic years, which would further amplify the potential impact of such relocation.

The RCU campus is situated in a Scheduled Tribe (ST) reserved constituency and plays a vital role in enabling students from the ST community to access higher education at an affordable cost. The primary objective of establishing RCU at Bhutaramanahatti is to offer academic programmes in Humanities, Commerce, Languages, and MBA, which are essential for the holistic development of society. These disciplines are offered by only a limited number of institutions in the region, and RCU is one of the key institutions providing such opportunities. The proposed location at Bhutaramanahatti is easily accessible to students from Chikkodi, Raibag, Hukkeri, Gokak, Belagavi, Athani, and Sankeshwar who are eligible for higher education. In the absence of RCU at this location, private colleges in Belagavi city would be the only alternative, which are geographically distant and financially less affordable for many students. Relocating the Campus to Hirebagewadi which is 40 kms away from the Bhutaramanahatti will be an injustice to the Existing and Future ST students.

- ii. The present campus is located adjacent to a National Highway, ensuring convenient connectivity and ease of commuting for students, faculty, and officials.
- iii. The proposed land at Hirebagewadi comprises 51.09 Ha of predominantly hilly terrain. Even after extensive levelling, only about 10 - 12 Ha would be technically suitable for construction. This extent of usable land would be insufficient to accommodate the future expansion plans and developmental projects of RCU.
- iv. From the past 40 years, RCU has invested approximately 100 Crores in establishing Authority, Land, Infrastructure, Compliance fees, Library, Faculty and staff in the campus located in Bhutaramanahatti. The investment is related to run Humanities, Language, Commerce related courses. Relocating the campus to Hirebagewadi will cost 100 Crores more and will affect the expansion projects.

Considering the above justification, kindly consider the revised proposal for approval.

Annexure 1

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

Sub:- Grant of land in Sy.No.1/1 of Bhutaramanahatti Village of Belgaum in favour of the Karnataka University for Post-Graduate Centre at Belgaum.

Read: Correspondence resting with letter No.RS.LND:CR:64/89-90, dt:23-10-89 from the Divisional Commissioner, Belgaum.

PREAMBLE :

The Divisional Commissioner, Belgaum in his letter read at above has reported that the Vice-chancellor, Karnataka University Dharwad has represented that the Post-Graduate Courses of the Karnataka University has been started at Belgaum about 7 years ago, but the University does not have a separate campus for running the said courses and has been conducting the courses in different Colleges at Belgaum City, much to the inconvenience of the students and staff. This is also one of the reasons for the student agitation at Belgaum. The Vice-Chancellor, Karnataka University has also inspected this land and has agreed to the location of the post-Graduate campus in the said land. The Divisional Commissioner, Belgaum has thereforerequested the approval of Government for reduction of 178-14 acres of gomal land in Sy.No.1/1 of Bhutaramanahatti Village of Belgaum Taluk, under rule 97(4) of the Karnataka Land Revenue Rules, 1966 and its subsequent grant in favour of the Karnataka University for establishment of the post-Graduate Centre at Belgaum at Rs.6200/- per acre.

GOVT ORDER NO.RD 62 LGL 89, BANGALORE, DATED: 3/11/1990.

After careful consideration of the all aspects of the case, sanction is accorded for reduction of 178 acres 14 guntas of Gomal, land in Sy.No.1/1 of Bhutaramanahatti village of Belgaum Taluk, under rule 97(4) of the Karnataka Land Revenue Rules, 1966 and its subsequent grant in favour of the Karnataka University, Dharwad for establishment of the post-Graduate Centre at Belgaum @ Rs.6,200/- (six thousand two hundred) only per acre and also subject to other usual conditions as per the Karnataka Land Grant, Rules 1969.

By Order and in the name of the
Governor of Karnataka,

Sd/-

(BETTAVEERIAH)

Under Secretary to Government,
Revenue Department.

To:

The Divisional Commissioner, Belgaum,
The Deputy Commissioner, Belgaum
The Under Secretary to Govt., Deptt. of Cabinet Affairs,
(Cabinet) vide subject No.16/90, dt:18-1-90).

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Depto.
RegistrarRani Channamma University
Vidyasangama
Belagavi - 591150ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಧಾರವಾಡ.

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Government of Karnataka

P. RAVI KUMAR, IAS.,
Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Forest, Ecology & Environment Department.

D.O. No. FEE 101 FLL 2016

Date:04.05.2017

Dear *Sander,*

Sub: Diversion of 72.177 Ha of forest land in Sy. No. 1/1 of Bhutaramanahatti village, Belgaum Taluk and District for Establishment of Rani Chennamma University in favour of the Registrar, Rani Chennamma University, Belgaum.

Ref: 1) This office letter of even number dated: 04.10.2016.
2) Your letter No. F.No.8-58/2016-FC dated:12.01.2017.

* * *

Please refer to our discussion on the above subject at New Delhi, with reference to your letter dated 12.01.2017.

Two issues have been raised in your letter,

1. State Government to explain the circumstances under which the reserved forest was considered as Gomal land and lease was executed in violation of Forest Conservation Act, 1980.
2. State Government shall fix the responsibility of officials for carrying out violation of provisions of Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

Vide State Government notification No. AFD13 FAF 60 dated 28.04.1960 certain lands in 6 villages were notified as Reserved Forest (Annexure - A). Consequent to the notification, except for Sy.No 1 of Bhutaramanahatti and Sy. No 7 of Bandeholi village,

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all other notified Sy. No's were incorporated into the Revenue records as Reserved Forest. But these Survey numbers continued to be recorded as Gomal(Pasture land) from 1960 onwards, maybe by oversight. Since this had happened more than 57 years ago, the reasons are not available. Neither the Forest Dept nor the Revenue Department had taken any action to get the records corrected. Nor the Forest Department took action to take over the land and developing any plantation.

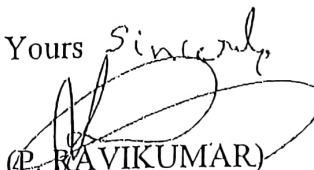
Government of Karnataka vide its order number RD 62 LGL 89; dated 30.01.1990 accorded sanction for reduction of 178 acres 14 guntas of Gomal(Pasture Land) land in Sy. No 1/1 of Bhutaramanahatti village of Belgavi taluk under the provisions of The Karnataka Land Revenue act, and leased it in favour of Karnatak University, Dharwad for establishment of Post Graduate centre at Belgavi.

The DCF, Belgavi had requested to DC, Belgavi for a stay of mutation of land in favour of the Karnatak University. But the Government of Karnataka, Forest department vide letter dated 9.9.1991 directed the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest not to interfere with the activities of the Karnataka University as the Government had decided to permit the university to go ahead with the construction in Sy. No 1/1 of Bhutaramanahatti village. Further it was also directed that if clearance under FC Act 1980 for necessary, it shall be dealt separately.

Government has established Rani Chennamma University at Belgavi in 2010 and as decided to transfer all the asset of the PG centre of Karnataka University, Dharwad, at Belgavi to the new university for setting up of its administrative office and other infrastructure. The University has started functioning, imparting Higher Education to the students of backward districts of North Karnataka, The colleges of Belagavi, Bagalkot and Vijayapura Districts are comprised within this University and thousands of students are getting the benefit and the University is very much essential. The Registrar, Rani Chennamma University has now submitted a proposal for diversion (post facto approval) of 72.177 Ha of forest land.

As seen from the circumstance explained above, as the revenue records continued to show the said Sy No as Gomal(Pasture Land) , the State Government had followed the process of law under the Land Revenue act and leased the land to the Karnataka University for setting up the post graduate centre, to the cater to needs of border districts of the State. From the records it is clear that this action of the Government happened only because the records were not updated and not a deliberate action to violate the provisions of the FC Act. The officials acted in good faith in accordance with the directions of the Government. The only lapse on the part of the officials is not getting the Revenue records changed to incorporate the said Survey No as Forest land. This matter is more than 50 years old and the officials working then have all retired long ago. Therefore State Government is of the view no action can be initiated against the officers responsible for the violation, as it was not a deliberate and intentional violation but action in Good Faith . This can be considered sympathetically as the land was leased for a public purpose for setting up of a centre of Higher Education, and the issue may be dropped and the Forest Clearance under FC Act 1980, as recommended by State Government, for 72.177Ha in favour of Rani Chennamma University, Belgavi may be granted at the earliest.

With best wishes

Yours Sincerely,

(P. RAVIKUMAR)

Sri. Sandeep Sharma
Assistant Inspector General of Forests (FC)
MoEF, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,
New Delhi - 110 003.

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**RANI CHANNAMMA UNIVERSITY**

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Date : 21-08-2025.

MEETING PROCEEDINGS**Subject:** Proceedings of the meeting regarding diversion of forest land in favour of RCU Belagavi.**Meeting Date:** 21/08/2025 **Venue:** Residential Office District Collector Belagavi Karnataka**Members of the Meeting Committee:**

- District Collector, Belagavi
- Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF Belagavi)
- Registrar, Rani Channamma University, Belagavi
- Horticulture Superintendent Rani Channamma University, Belagavi

Meeting Agenda:

Discussion on the diversion of forest land in favour of RCU Belagavi after providing Compensatory Afforestation (CA) land and payment of required fees.

Meeting Proceedings Summary:**1. Clarification on CA land utilization:**

The District Collector sought clarification from the Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) regarding the transfer and usage of Compensatory Afforestation (CA) land.

The DCF explained that once the CA land is transferred to the Forest Department, it will be locked and cannot be reclaimed.

However, he added that the CA land may be utilized for other forestry-related compensatory purposes, subject to applicable norms.

Nevertheless, in the 3rd FAC meeting it was clearly mentioned that the user agency is restricted to a limited area of 27-28Hectors. Therefore, he advised that the specific area required should be clearly demarcated and the proposal should be resubmitted accordingly to obtain post-facto approval from the Central Government.

The District Collector Belagavi questioned about requirement of land.

The Registrar Rani Channamma University Belagavi explained that, the land is Consistently to tribal community people residing at border areas and who are offering humanitarian courses. It is a valid point (students coming from Chikkodi, Gokak etc.).

Directions by the District Collector Belagavi :

- The DC instructed the RCU Registrar to demarcate approximately 70 acres of land required for university use.
- A comprehensive master plan should be prepared considering all relevant aspects and the revised proposal should be resubmitted to the competent authorities for necessary approval.

Conclusion:

The meeting concluded with consensus on the need for proper demarcation, preparation of a master plan, and resubmission of the proposal in compliance with forest diversion norms for obtaining post-facto approval, with minimum area of 27 to 28 hectares.

Prepared by: Horticulture Superintendent Rani Channamma University, Belagavi


Registrar,
Rani Channamma University,
Belagavi
Registrar
Rani Channamma University
Belagavi