TROPICAL STATUS OF THE RIVER TUNGA

The river Tunga is one of the important rivers in Karnataka state and it flows in the Sringeri and Koppa taluk of Chickmagalur district and Thirthahalli and Shimoga taluk in Shimoga district (Karnataka State). River Tunga has been a lifeline of the people of Shimoga district. It flows through the heart of the Shimoga city. The total length of the river is 130 Kms. of which the length of the river in Shimoga district is 64 Kms.

SHIMOGA DISTRICT:

A district in the North West; situated between 13° 27' and 14° 39' north latitude and between 74° 38' and 76° 4' east longitude. It spreads East-West in a distance of 152 Kms and from the North-South 128 Kms. It is bounded on the East and South by Chitradurga and Chickmagalur districts respectively, while on the North by Dharwar and on the North-west by North Kanara and on the West by South Kanara district.

CLIMATE:

The greater part of the district is known as Malnad with a heavy rainfall. The total area of the district is divided into three natural divisions namely Malnad, Semimalnad and Maidan. The climatic conditions vary from one region to other region i.e., from West to East.

The climate of the district is typically monsoon type. There is marked periodicity in it with three main seasons,
characterised by different climatic conditions. Rainy season (June-September), with cool and moist weather. It receives rain fall both from south-west monsoon and north-east monsoon winds, Post monsoon (October-January) and Summer season (February-May).

The average Temperature varied in between 14°c to 35°c, Humidity 75% and Rainfall is 1526 mm. The annual rainfall at Agumbe is 316.59".

AGRICULTURE:

The principle agriculture pattern of the district is irrigated and dry farming. The important crops are Paddy, Sugarcane, Arecanut, Pepper, Ragi, Maize, Sorghum, Cotton and Varieties of pulses.

The Shimoga district has a rich and varied flora. The major contributing factors to this variety are the differences in rainfall and topography with in the district. The Western part of the district is a hilly area occupied by moist deciduous and dry deciduous forests. Eastern part is open land with scrub forest. Therefore, there is a rapid transition from scrub to the monsoon forests existing in the area.

GEOLOGY:

The Geology of the district belong to a most ancient period of earth’s history and consists of patches of Dharwar Schists underlain by Granites and Gneises of different series. The Schists consists of scales and small
flakes of green chlorite and granular quartz. Some areas are very important from geological point of view, on account of different types of rock formation and economic minerals viz., Iron, Limonitic ore, Manganese, Limestone etc. The soil in the Malnad region is loose and sandy, while that of garden lands in clayey and maidan is loamy.

SHIMOGA CITY:

Shimoga city is a district headquarter place in Karnataka state. It is located along Bangalore-Honnavar Road, 272 Kms away from Bangalore. It is in the vicinity of western ghats and is known for scenic beauty.

The city is situated at 568.5 mt above Mean Sea Level on the bank of the river Tunga and it is the main source for drinking water. The other climatic conditions are detailed below. Average rainfall 916.4 mm per annum. Temperature is between 20° c and 32° and Relative humidity 69%.

ORIGIN OF THE RIVER TUNGA:

The Tunga river rises at Gangamoola on the Varaha parvata in the western ghats at an elevation of about 1,199.0 meters above MSL in Chickmagalur district. It enters Shimoga district at Thirthamattur near Thirthahalli. It unites with river Bhadra at Kudli, 14.5 Kms away from Shimoga to constitute the river Tungabhadra, which further flows through various districts of Karnataka and merges with the river Krishna in Andra Pradesh.
The river Tunga receives about 75 tributaries while flowing. The river itself branches out near Mandagadde to form seven streams called "Yelu Kavalu". The river bed is of rocky outcrop. The water of this river has a fine taste which has given rise to the saying "Bathe in the Ganga, but drink of the Tunga".

At Gajanur 12 Kms away from Shimoga an Anecut has been built across this river so as to harness its water to 8700 hectares of land.

LEGENDA:

The legendary sources say that when Lord Vishnu took the avatar of Pig, he picked up earth from the depths of the ocean and the water that dripped from his left tusk came to be known as Tunga river.