

Deccan Chronicle- 15- October-2021

AP hands over Krishna river projects to KRMB

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, OCT. 14

The Andhra Pradesh Government on Thursday relinquished its rights over water-related projects on River Krishna and handed over the project components as also the offices, plant, machinery and equipment and staff to the Krishna River Management Board.

This was necessitated as the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti had taken over the jurisdiction of the board through a gazette notification on July 15. The state government order GO 54 was issued on October 14 and came into effect with immediate effect.

As per GO 54, the AP

government handed over Srisailem project spillway and rivers sluices, the Pothireddypadu head regulator and SRMC, the Handri Niva Lift Irrigation Scheme, the pump house and appurtenant works, the Muchumarri lift irrigation scheme pump house and appurtenant works. The revenues from these projects continue to be received and utilised by the state government like before. The government order further states that the posts sanctioned under various cadres in respect of the above components of the Srisailem project shall come under the jurisdiction of KRMB and the present incum-

bents in these posts shall be on diversion to KRMB until further orders.

Equipment, furniture vehicles, detailed project reports, records or documents maintained since the inception of the operation of the project or component, any other infrastructure pertaining to the project any other accessories incidental thereto shall go to KRMB.

A water resources employee said the state government has no control over the projects on Krishna river now. It can only take the revenue from these projects. "We all have come under KRMB purview. Don't know what lies ahead of us," he said.

The Morning Standard- 15 October 2021

MANAGING AP-T'GANA RIVER DISPUTES

SOLVING river water disputes between two states in India is extremely complicated. The Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards, tasked with the management of irrigation projects on the two rivers that flow through Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, would require skill sets of a very high order if they want to leave neither state fuming. The gazette notification in July by the Ministry of Jal Shakti that all the 107 projects on the two rivers would have to come under the control of the two boards by October 14 marked a watershed in finding a solution to the Gordian knot of sorting out the disputes between the two states. But the issue of the notification is only a tiny step forward as the problem reminds one of the famous rabbit-raven illusion, with both the states appearing justified in their arguments.

Parallely, the Telangana state withdrew its petition in the Supreme Court, filed under Section 3 of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, paving the way for the Centre to refer the fresh division of river waters between the two states to either the existing Br-jesh Kumar Tribunal or a new one. No one knows how many years it would take to decide the share of each state.

It may take a long time for the tribunal and the boards to sort out the disputes. During the process, the states tend to lose heavily and even if one state has the last laugh, it would be a pyrrhic victory. For now, the KRMB has asked the two states to hand over 16 outlets under Nagarjuna Sagar and Srisaillam projects. Both the states have different opinions. Telangana wanted the hydel power generation stations to be out of the ambit of the board and AP said that though it was ready to issue a GO handing over its project, it would not agree to hydel stations being left out of the board's control, raising the curtain on another conflict. In the present circumstances, the only sensible solution is that both the states should resolve the issue with mutual trust and in a spirit of accommodation. The Centre too should take an active role in finding an amicable solution.

The Tribune-15 October 2021

189 K'shetra villages to have water safety plans

Move aimed at improving groundwater level

NITISH SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KURUKSHETRA, OCTOBER 14

As many as 189 villages of the Pehowa, Ladwa and Shahabad blocks, identified as dark zones, in Kurukshetra will have area-specific water safety plans to improve their groundwater level.


According to a survey report of June 2021, the groundwater level has dropped to 33.42 m in Ladwa, 39.54 m in Pehowa and 44.39 m in Shahabad.

As per the information, 51 villages of Pehowa, 65 of Shahabad and 75 of the Ladwa block have been identified under the Centre's Atal Bhujal Yojana to improve the groundwater level.

The survey of 20 Pehowa villages has been completed so far.

Groundwater expert Dr Navin Nain, who is working on this project, said: "Village-level surveys are being conducted. The extraction rate of groundwater in the Pehowa block is quite high and due to overexploitation, the level is decreasing year by year.

"In Pehowa, 20 water safety plans of different villages have been approved. Micro-irrigation schemes and crop diversification patterns were also proposed to stop overexploitation of groundwater."



JUNE SURVEY REPORT

- **33.42 M DIP**
in groundwater level in Ladwa
- **39.54 M DIP**
in groundwater level in Pehowa
- **44.39 M DIP**
in groundwater level in Shahabad

CROP DIVERSIFICATION PROPOSED

“Village-level surveys are being conducted. In Pehowa, 20 water safety plans of different villages have been approved. Micro-irrigation schemes and crop diversification patterns have been proposed to stop the overexploitation of groundwater. Dr Navin Nain, GROUNDWATER EXPERT

Irrigation Department Superintending Engineer Arvind Kaushik said: "Groundwater is depleting at an alarming rate and it has gone down by nearly 100-ft over the last 40 years.

"Under the area-specific plans, the water budget and requirement of the villages will be prepared and programmes will be implemented accordingly.

"We need to educate people through special awareness drives about groundwater conservation and rainwater harvesting. "Pani Ki Panchayats" are being organised to save groundwater in these blocks."

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Mukul Kumar said: "A survey of

20 villages of the Pehowa block has been completed and the remaining ones will be covered soon. All the departments working to save groundwater have been directed to put up a collective effort to improve the level."

Haryana Water Resources Authority chairperson Keshni Anand Aroora, however, said: "Special focus will be on these blocks and people will be educated to save the groundwater for future.

"Farmers are being motivated to use micro-irrigation schemes and crop diversification. They are also being encouraged to take the benefits of government schemes to save groundwater."

The Business Standard- 15 October 2021

NUMBER WISE

CITIES LEAK MONEY SUPPLYING TAP WATER

ISHAAN GERA

New Delhi, 14 October

Since 2019, India has provided tap water connections to 50 million rural households. Of its 192 million rural households, 42.8 per cent now have a tap water connection. Till 2019, only 16.8 per cent did.

As more people get water at home, Jal Boards, state-run utilities that supply water in cities, are leaking money.

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB), which controls water and sewage management in the national capital, had its deficit ballooning 23 per cent between 2015-16 and 2019-20. DJB's budget data shows that its gross deficit was ₹4,204 crore in 2019-20. The utility does not have enough money to service interest on its loans.

Water utilities in Bengaluru, Chennai,

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Kolkata and Mumbai haven't performed any better. The problem is over-subsidising water. Delhi spent ₹87.7 in supplying 1,000 litres (1 kilolitre or kl) of water, but it earned just ₹60.86. Bengaluru spent ₹70 per kl and earned ₹41.9. Chennai spent ₹59.2 per kl and earned ₹44.4.

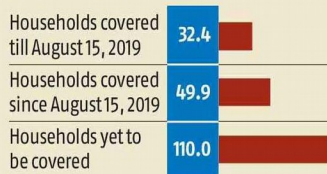
Delhi charges businesses more than it does households for water supply — a practice common in other cities. Delhi provides free water to households if their water consumption does not exceed 20 kl in a month. That means 530,000 households do not pay a penny, while the city spends ₹1,754 every month on each of these households (assuming each uses 20 kl). Even households that consume more than 20 kl in Delhi pay a pittance. The charge per kilolitre for a household using 20-30 kl of water is ₹26.36. Delhi adds a service charge of ₹219.6: at the highest consumption level (30kl), it would only amount to an additional ₹7.3 per kl. For households using over 30 kl of water, the charge

is ₹43.93 per litre, with an additional service charge of ₹292.8.

For Bengaluru, the lowest category pays one-tenth the cost of water supply; the second-lowest pays one-seventh; and the second-highest, one-third. The highest category could only cover two-thirds of the cost.

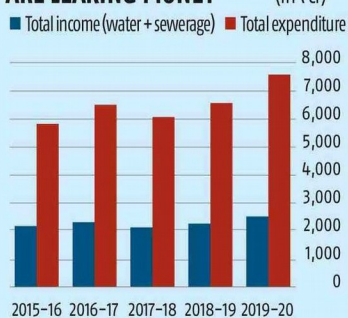
Chennai's charges are similar to those in Bengaluru. Mumbai has a flat rate for different categories of customers. The municipal corporation last year put on hold a plan to

1. INDIA HAS COVERED 42% HOUSEHOLDS WITH TAP WATER (tap water connections, in million)



Source: Jal Jeevan Mission

2. BUT STATE WATER UTILITIES (LIKE DELHI JAL BOARD) ARE LEAKING MONEY (In ₹ cr)



Source: Delhi Jal Board

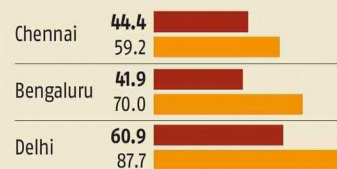
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3. THEY EARN LITTLE COMPARED TO THEIR SUPPLY COST (In ₹)

■ What they receive
■ What they pay for supplying kilolitre of water



Delhi and Bengaluru data for 2019-20; Chennai data for 2017-18

Source: BS analysis

4. HOUSEHOLDS PAY EVEN LESS (In ₹)

What utilities pay for supplying a kilolitre of water	What households pay for receiving a kilolitre of water				
	Cost	Lowest	Second lowest	Second highest	Highest
Delhi	87.7	0	—	26.36	43.93
Bengaluru	70	7	11	25	45
Chennai	59.2	4	16	24	40

Categories are decided on the basis of water consumption (in kl). Delhi only has three categories of households

Source: BS analysis

introduce telescopic rates — bills rise as consumption increases.

Cities need to rationalise water prices, but they also must improve supply and recycling. Delhi recycles just over a quarter of its wastewater. As more households get tap drinking water, the government must keep pricing in check. Privatisation is one solution, but it cannot be a silver bullet. Issues like subsidies, illegal groundwater extraction and recycling need to be addressed as well.

Financial Express- 15 October 2021

Building water security

Groundwater conservation is key; for that, MSP rethink needed

WATER MANAGEMENT, conservation and access to clean water have been high on the Centre's agenda. Indeed, PM Narendra Modi spoke of the need to focus on long-term water security at the recent launch of the Jal Jeevan Mission app. A key focus of water security in India has to be rational groundwater use, replenishment and conservation—as per the Groundwater Resource Estimation Committee's report (from 2015), 1,071 out of 6,607 blocks in the country are over-exploited; this is likely to have worsened over the years.

India's groundwater usage exceeds that of China and the US combined—more than a third of the country's population lives in water-stressed areas, and this number is expected to shoot up. Per capita water availability in the country had fallen to just under a third of 1950 levels by 2011, both because of rising population and increasing unsustainable use, and it is projected to fall to a fourth that in the next 20 years. A large part of this problem can be attributed to agriculture. The rapid rise in tubewell-irrigation and the acreage under water-guzzling crops like sugarcane and paddy—and this is, in no small measure, because of flawed policies like MSP-led public procurement and government fixing cane prices—has left India under acute groundwater distress.

Indeed, agriculture, as this newspaper has repeatedly highlighted, accounts for 78% of all freshwater used annually in the country, with 64% of this chunk being from groundwater. To that end, the government—both the Centre and the states—must act rapidly on groundwater conservation if Jal Se Jeevan and other flagship water-access programmes are to be a success. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee (ABV), by the launched Jal Shakti Ministry in 2019, is the flagship conservation programme, but some experts believe the model proposed could take decades to get implemented across the country—and it is amply clear from water-availability projections that India doesn't have that kind of time. The ABV dashboard shows that the expenditure against the targets set under various heads, as also the release of funds, has been alarmingly low for the past as well as the present year. While the Centre must step up, the states also need to get their act together if groundwater conservation is to meet meaningful goals. Many talk of mandating withdrawal limits, and to that end, the National Water Policy 2020—which has specific strategies and deadlines unlike previous iterations—gives the “highest priority to [groundwater] governance and management” through a “Participatory Groundwater Management (PGWM)” approach, writes Mihir Shah, the chairman of the committee that submitted the NWP 2020 report, in Business Standard. Also, the government needs to stop encouraging (via MSP-led procurement, SAP/FRPs) cultivation of water-intensive crops; crop diversification is a crucial step towards this, and that the 2018 PM-AASHA (Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan) proposes up to 40% procurement of crops that are not as water-intensive (millets, nutri-cereals) if these are successfully integrated into the PDS. A few more aspects need addressing. Pricing of water, timely data on usage/availability/depletion, etc, also need policy attention if conservation efforts are to fruitfully lead to increased access and water security.