

Minister (I)

Dy. No 574(VIP)/2024

Date 19/03/2024



**H.D. DEVE GOWDA**

Former Prime Minister of India  
Member of Parliament - Rajya Sabha

March 15, 2024

Respected Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji,

**Subject : 1) Severe drinking water crisis in Bengaluru Metropolitan City and other areas lying in Cauvery Basin of Karnataka**  
**2) Expediting clearance to the DPR of Mekedatu Drinking water supply project.**

**Reference: My letter dated 23.09.2023 addressed to your kindness.**

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1. In my letter dated 23.09.2023, I had presented a clear picture of the severe shortage in drinking water supplies to Bengaluru and other areas caused due to heavy deficit rain fall during the monsoon of 2023 and irrational decisions taken by the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) directing Karnataka to release water to Tamil Nadu despite acute shortage in the storage position of Karnataka Reservoirs viz. KR Sagar, Kabini, Harangi & Hemavathi. I had also requested in my said letter to give directions to the Ministry of Jalashakti and the CWMA for taking immediate action on the following issues :-

- (i) To arrange for conducting Reservoir Operation studies as directed by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal in its Award dated 05.02.2007;
- (ii) To get an appropriate distress formula prepared by an external agency;
- (iii) To appoint a committee of 5 experts to immediately undertake visits to the reservoirs of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to take stock of the prevailing ground realities; and
- (iv) To direct the CWMA and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) to undertake periodical visits to all the designated reservoirs in Cauvery Basin.

2. It is really heart rendering that the drinking water crisis in Bengaluru has aggravated so much that the people of the city have resorted to daily protests leading to violence quite often. The total storage capacity of the said 4 reservoirs in Karnataka being 114.571 TMC, the present storage position as on 16.03.2024 is only 41 TMC out of which the dead storage which cannot be used is 10 TMC. Thus only 31 TMC is available as live storage. Considering the inevitable evaporation losses, the water available for actual use will be hardly 25 to 26 TMC.

Secretary (WR, RD & GR)





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3. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 16.02.2018 allocated only 4.75 TMC of Cauvery water to Bengaluru city, which was determined based on the population of 2011 census. As against the population of 89 lakhs in 2011, the current population of the city has far exceeded 135 lakhs. The present requirement of the city for drinking water is about 2 TMC per month. As the monsoon rains will commence only in July, due to the change in the monsoon cycle caused due to global climate change, about 8 TMC of water will be required for Bengaluru city alone from March to June. Considering the requirement of drinking water for other cities like Mysuru, Mandya, Tumkur, Hassan etc. the total requirement of water for the ensuing 4 months will exceed 15 TMC.
4. Further, as per order dated 16.02.2018 of the Honb'ble Supreme Court, Karnataka has to release 10 TMC of water from its reservoirs to TN towards environmental flow at the rate of 2.5 TMC per month from February to May. This issue has also added to the woes of Karnataka in meeting its drinking water requirements.
5. Due to severe shortage in the monsoon rainfall of 2023, the State has suffered huge crop losses mounting to hundreds of crores of rupees and the farmers have been driven to desperate condition of unimaginable proportions.
6. In the background of the above, the only possible solution to over-come the drinking water problems of Bengaluru and other neighbouring areas is to implement the Mekedatu drinking water supply project for which the DPR was sent to CWC in January 2019 itself. The CWC forwarded the DPR of the project to the CWMA for its consideration where the matter was not at all taken up for discussions for more than 5 years. The CWMA has now returned the DPR to CWC in February 2024 on the ground that it is only the CWC which is the competent authority to examine the DPR of the project.
7. The storage capacity of the proposed Mekedatu project is 67 TMC. The Hydrology Directorate of CWC has already given its opinion in March 2019 stating that 30.65 TMC of water is available for Mekedatu Project from out of the allocation for Karnataka. Though Tamil Nadu has filed a Petition in the Supreme Court objecting to the Mekedatu Project, there is no stay for considering the DPR of the Project for clearance. The objection of Tamil Nadu is





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unfounded due to the fact that Tamil Nadu itself had submitted before the Hon'ble Supreme Court that Karnataka should consider the possibility of building a new dam at the border point to mitigate its water problems.

8. In my honest opinion, it would be appropriate to construct the Mekedatu Dam in two stages. In the first stage the storage can be limited to such a level as to utilize 30.65 TMC admitted by the Hydrology Directorate of CWC. In the second stage, the storage can be increased as and when surplus waters are available which has to be decided by another Tribunal or by mutual consultations among the Party States.
9. Having struggled for more than 60 years for resolving the Cauvery water dispute, I am now at the fag end of my political career. I am writing this letter to your kind self with the trust that Karnataka will at last get justice from your able leadership, which is the only ray of hope that I can foresee.

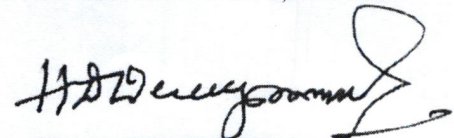
With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Sd/-

(H.D.DEVEGOWDA)

Shri Narendra Modi  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
South Block,  
New Delhi -110011.

Copy to : Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister for Jala Shakti, Government of India, Shram Shakti Bhawan, Rafi Marg, New Delhi-110 001, for kind information and need full action.

  
(H.D.DEVEGOWDA)