

The Times Of India -21 May- 2024

# Govt looks at alternatives to Kaleshwaram water

## Cabinet Okays ₹500 Bonus To Farmers

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**Hyderabad:** The state cabinet on Monday decided to examine the possibility of drawing water from an alternative source and supply it to farmers, without storing a drop of water at Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages of Kaleshwaram lift irrigation scheme, and follow the recommendations made by National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA), both in its interim report submitted to the govt recently, and the final report.

The cabinet meeting, chaired



The NDSA report stated that even if repairs are taken up, they cannot guarantee the safety of the three barrages of Kaleshwaram and water should not be stored in them. CM directed irrigation officials to examine and explore an alternative point to draw water

— Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy |  
REVENUE MINISTER

red by chief minister A Revanth Reddy, has also decided to extend Rs 500 bonus in addition to the minimum support price (MSP) to farmers for the fine variety rice from the ensuing kharif season. Other

important decisions taken by the cabinet include procurement of rain-soaked yasangi paddy at MSP, stringent action against spurious seed dealers and retailers and release of Rs 600 crore to improve infrastructure and other facilities in govt educational institutions before schools reopen on June 12.

Briefing the media post the cabinet meeting at secretariat, ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, D Sridhar Babu and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said NDSA, in its interim report, had clearly stated that damages to the barrages were noticed in 2019 itself and despite suggesting repairs, the previous govt ignored it.

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The Hindu-21 May- 2024

# ‘T.N. will protect its rights in inter-State water disputes’

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

DMK general secretary and Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan on Monday maintained that the State government would protect the rights of Tamil Nadu in the inter-State water disputes with Karnataka and Kerala if the neighbouring States attempted to violate the verdict of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal.

In a statement, Mr. Duraimurugan said that the government would take not only legal measures but also all possible steps to protect the interest of Tamil Nadu in the Cauvery water dispute.

Even during the meeting of the Cauvery Water Management Authority on April 4, the Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department insisted on collecting information on water projects – even if small – undertaken by Karnataka and Kerala, the Minister said. “He will insist on that in future meetings too,” Mr. Duraimurugan said.

Whenever Karnataka or Kerala took steps that violated the Supreme Court judgment on the Cauvery dispute, Tamil Nadu opposed them through politi-



Building a check-dam across Silandhi river would block the flow of water to the Amaravathy dam, and farmers in Tamil Nadu would be adversely affected, BJP leader Annamalai said.

cal means, or through the Union government, or through meetings of the CWMA, he pointed out.

Mr. Duraimurugan was responding to AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami's statement criticising the DMK government over Kerala building a check-dam across Silandhi river at Peruguda. Silandhi in Kerala, which joins Amaravathy, is known as Thenaru in Tamil Nadu.

As for Mr. Palaniswami's contention that the DMK government was maintaining a furtive silence on the issue, Mr. Duraimurugan said that the AIADMK leader's actions in the past in terms of politics and political alliances proved that the description suited him better.

The Minister further claimed that under Mr. Palaniswami's regime, Tamil Nadu lost 14.75 tmc ft of water from the total share it got through the Supreme Court judgment.

Earlier, BJP State president K. Annamalai urged the Tamil Nadu government to condemn the Kerala government's action and take measures to stop the construction of the check-dam.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Mr. Annamalai said that the check-dam would block the flow of water to the Amaravathy dam, and farmers in Tamil Nadu would be adversely affected.

The DMK government was not concerned about the interest of the farmers, he said.



I/172854/2024

Deccan Chronicle-21 May- 2024

# Chennai suburbs: Floods in Dec, water scarcity in May

**N. RAVIKUMAR &  
P.A. JEBARAJ | DC**  
CHENNAI, MAY 20

Residents in the southern suburbs of Chennai, who suffered due to floods in December last year, are struggling to find even drinking water in May as the groundwater has hit rock bottom as the rainwater was allowed to flow into the sea.

About 2 lakh people are living in the suburban areas of Peerankaranai and Perungalathur in Tambaram Corporation. The area was flooded due to heavy rains after Cyclone Michaung. The water inundated the residential areas and entered the houses.

But, the situation is totally different just five months after the floods. The water bodies which were covered with common water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) did not take the water and remain dry this month.

When the water level is good in the lakes and ponds in the area, there is no depletion of groundwater. Most people in the area have installed water filters and water purifiers. They used to pump out the ground water and use them as drinking water after treatment.

The groundwater has depleted in the area now. The wells and the borewells are dry, forcing people to buy water cans for drinking water. Besides, they are also buying water in tankers for other purposes. The price of water cans, which was Rs. 30 last year, has increased to Rs. 40 this year. Even when people are ready to pay, there is a demand for water cans.

Tambaram Corporation used to supply water through pipes to houses for one hour every two days. But, it is reduced to 30 minutes and only two vessels could be filled since the flow is not suffi-

cient due to low pressure. The Corporation supplies water through tankers but allows only two vessels of water per house. The tankers are not regular either, the residents complain.

At some parts like Ranganathapuram, where more than a 1,000 families live, water is supplied through pipes only twice a week and there are complaints of sewage water mixing with drinking water. The same problem is reported in Chikkarayapuram, in Kundrathur, where water is supplied in pipes at night and people are unable to get it.

The residents' welfare associations complained that the water bodies should be maintained properly so that people did not face water shortage during summer. Most of the lakes and water bodies are fully covered with water hyacinth and sewage water is let out

into them.

They appealed to the Corporation officials to store water in the lakes during the rainy season so that they could be used in summer. Besides, storage in the water bodies will also protect the groundwater, they opined. If the Corporation and public works department (PWD) are unable to maintain them, the work should be entrusted to NGOs, the residents said.

The Corporation officials said the maintenance of the lakes comes under PWD and only small ponds are maintained by the Corporation. People are dumping garbage in the ponds and lakes and letting out sewage, which pollutes them. The Corporation is taking action to protect the water bodies. The scorching summer has led to water scarcity this year and the Corporation is supplying water through tankers, they said.

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Business Standard-21 May- 2024

## SOUTH WATER RESERVOIR LEVELS DOWN 46%

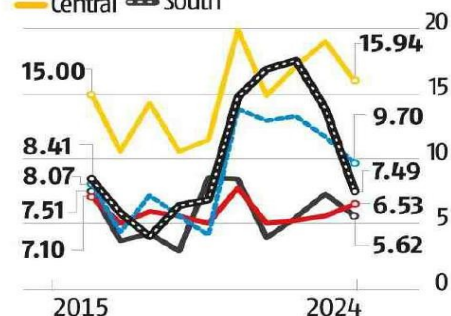
# SOUTH WATER RESERVOIR LEVELS DOWN 46%



## BIGGEST REGIONAL DECLINE FOR SOUTH

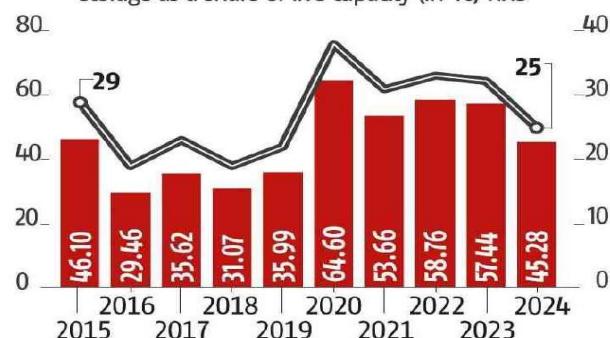
Current storage (in billion cubic metres)

— North — East — West  
— Central — South



## OVERALL, RESERVOIRS AT 25% CAPACITY

■ Live storage (in billion cubic metres) LHS  
— Storage as a share of live capacity (in %) RHS



Note: Data for 2024 is as of 16th May. The date closest to the current one has been taken for previous years since weekly bulletin are not released on the same date. The number of reservoirs differ in each year. Source: Central Water Commission

ANOUSHKA SAWHNEY

New Delhi, 20 May

Reservoirs in the southern part of the country have just about half the water they did around the same time last year.

They hold 7.49 billion cubic metres of water compared to 13.87 billion cubic metres in May 2023, a decline of 46 per cent, shows the latest bulletin from the Central Water Commission. In comparison, water levels in the north are down 23.4 per cent, west is down 17 per cent, and central Indian reservoir levels are down 16 per cent. Eastern India is the only one with gains of 17 per cent.

The live storage in 150 reservoirs of

the country was 45.3 bcm as on May 16, 2024. It was 57.4 bcm in 2023.

The data is available since 2015 when the storage was 46.1 bcm.

Comparisons with previous years are made based on the closest available data to the current bulletin release date. Capacity utilised, as per the bulletin released last week, was at 25 per cent down from 32 per cent around the same period in 2023.

According to the bulletin, 14 states, including Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh, had less storage than the corresponding period in last year. Conversely, storage has improved in seven states, while Uttarakhand remains at the same level as the previous year.



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The Hindu Business Line-21 May- 2024

# TN neglects small water bodies

**REMOVE THE CLOGS.** Water scarcity in the State can only be solved by restoring and increasing storage capacity of tanks



A NARAYANAMOORTHY

**T**he climate change experienced in recent years has not only changed the rainfall pattern but also accentuated water scarcity across India. In many parts of Tamil Nadu, for instance, people meet their daily needs by paying ₹10 for a bucket of water. The data released by the Ministry of Water Resources indicate that the demand for water will exceed supply by 2050 due to increased requirement for industry and agriculture. As the un-utilised water resources is shrinking at a faster pace, there is a need to renovate and rebuild existing small water bodies (tanks, etc), especially in Tamil Nadu where water scarcity is rampant already.

## BENEFITS OF TANKS

Unlike in the northern States, tanks have been the main water source of Tamil Nadu for centuries. The State has a total of 41,127 tanks with a total storage capacity of 347 tmc (thousand million cubic feet). This is more than the total water storage capacity of all the dams in Tamil Nadu. Therefore, the State's water scarcity cannot be solved without tanks. Although tanks are small in size, the benefits they provide are huge.

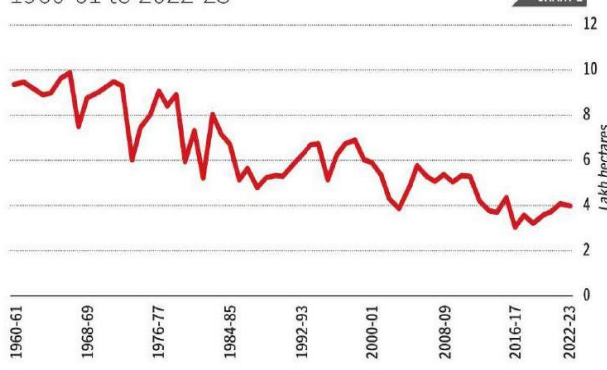
Due to the presence of tanks in all parts of Tamil Nadu, water is provided at a low cost for all purposes — drinking, domestic needs, animal husbandry, and irrigation. Unlike large dams, tanks are easy to manage due to their small size. The maintenance cost of tanks is also very low as compared to canal irrigation.

Unlike canal irrigation, conflicts between tail-end and head-reach farmers are negligible under tank irrigation. Since tanks are the main source of irrigation for resource-poor small and marginal farmers, they help improve their livelihood. Increased storage of water in tanks helps in recharge of wells, reducing the over-exploitation of groundwater. The tanks located in every village prevent women from having to walk long distances to fetch drinking water.

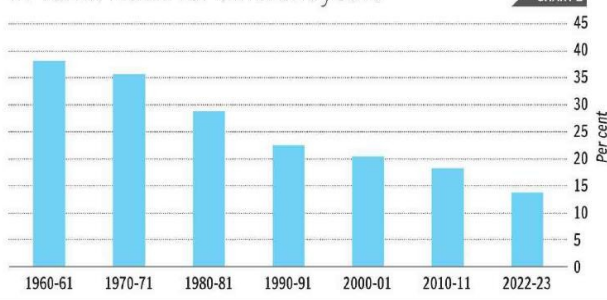
## PRESENT STATUS

The tanks which have been meeting the water needs for a long time are now rapidly disappearing. Analysis carried out using time-series data suggests that changes in rainfall patterns cannot be the

Trends in tank irrigated area in Tamil Nadu, 1960-61 to 2022-23



Share of tank irrigated area to net irrigated area in Tamil Nadu for different years



main reason for defunct tanks. Due to continuous encroachment in the catchment areas including the water-flow channels that carry rainwater to the tanks, their water storage capacity has declined, resulting in a sharp decline in the area irrigated by tanks.

India's tank irrigated area in 1960-61 was 46.30 lakh hectares (lha), which declined to 22.05 lha in 2021-22. During the same period, the tank irrigated area in Tamil Nadu decreased from 9.36 lha to 3.99 lha (see Chart 1). Most of the farmers who are cultivating crops using tank irrigation have left agriculture. Surprisingly, the tank-irrigated area in

**To face the challenges posed by climate change, immediate steps are to be taken to repair, renovate and restore the tanks to increase their storage capacity.**

Tamil Nadu has not increased even in years with above-average rainfall.

One of the main reasons for vanishing tanks is rapid urbanisation that has led to encroachment of water-spread area for construction of buildings. The Central Government's Standing Committee on Water Resources, in its 16th Report on 'Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies', has stated that municipal and panchayat bodies have mostly encroached upon tanks for construction and other purposes.

India's Fifth Minor Irrigation Census (2013-14) reports that of a total of 5.92 lakh tanks and small water bodies in India, 72,853 are defunct due to poor maintenance. Similarly, the First Census of Water Bodies published by the Ministry of Water Resources in 2023 states that 38,496 water bodies (mostly small ones) have been encroached upon in India. As many as 7,828 water bodies have been encroached in Tamil Nadu alone. As a result, the share of tank-irrigated area to net-irrigated area has consistently declined from 38 per

cent in 1960-61 to 14 per cent in 2022-23 in Tamil Nadu (see Chart 2). The unprecedented water scarcity experienced now in Tamil Nadu is partly due to the neglect of tanks.

## POINTERS FOR THE FUTURE

To face the challenges posed by climate change, immediate steps are to be taken to repair, renovate and restore the tanks to increase their storage capacity. Encroachments on catchment areas and water-flow channels should be removed, facilitating rainwater to flow unhindered to the tanks. Respecting the judgment by the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on September 6, 2014, the government should ban all construction activities in places where tanks are located.

Due to poor storage of water in tanks, groundwater continues to be over-exploited for agriculture and drinking water needs. The data from the Central Groundwater Board (March 2020) show that of the 1,166 blocks in Tamil Nadu, 723 are classified as over-exploited. Therefore, it is necessary to increase water availability from tanks to reduce the exploitation of groundwater.

In the past, under the 'Kudimaramathu' scheme of the Tamil Nadu government to renovate tanks, emphasis was given to increasing the water storage capacity by removing silt from the tanks' basin. Emphasis must, therefore, be given to repairing the water-flow channels blocked by encroachments.

To increase water retention, tanks also need to be renovated regularly by allocating adequate funds. Some corporates are involved in renovating tanks under the corporate social responsibility scheme. If the government joins hands with them in modernising tanks, the overall performance of the tanks can be improved.

Due to climate change, India received below-average rainfall in 17 of the 32 years from 1990 to 2021. Some have warned that rainfall may decrease due to climate change, further exacerbating water scarcity in States like Tamil Nadu, which has now the lowest per capita annual water availability (750 cubic meters) among the major States (1,544 cubic meters). Therefore, measures are needed to repair and restore all the tanks to increase their storage capacity and reduce water scarcity emanating from climate change.

The writer is former full-time Member (Official), CACP, New Delhi. Views are personal