

I/167516/2024

Hindustan Times - 24 March-2024

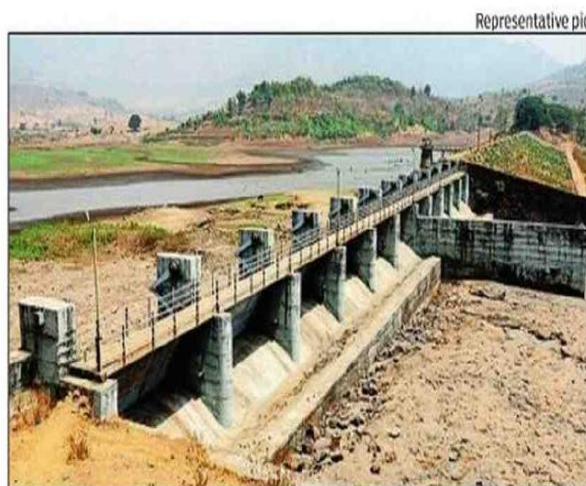
# 41% water left in state dams; it was 56% this time last year

Priyanka.Kakodkar  
@timesgroup.com

**Mumbai:** More than 70% of Maharashtra's talukas face a drought even as it heads into an election year. Now, as temperatures soar with summer approaching, a water crisis is looming with the live water storage in the state's dams down to 41% of capacity. Last year, at this time, water storage was 56.5% of the total capacity.

The arid Marathwada region has the lowest dam water storage. It is down to 21.3% of capacity compared with 46% at this time last year. In the sugar belt of Western Maharashtra, dam water storage is down to 41.5% of capacity compared with 69.5% at this time last year.

In North Maharashtra, too, dam water levels are low at 41.4% of the capacity compared with 57.5% last year.



The arid Marathwada region has the lowest dam water storage

Only in the Nagpur division, dam water levels are much higher than last year. The dam water level is at 50.7% of capacity compared with 33.3% at this time last year.

Already, 940 tankers are supplying water to 2,913 villages and hamlets in the state. Last year, at this time, only 29 tankers were in use. They were supplying water to 94 villages. This means the tanker supply has gone up

over 32 times since last year.

Maharashtra's water crisis stems from the lack of water management in the state, says Pradeep Purandare, retired associate professor at Aurangabad's Water and Land Management Institute (WALMI).

"We do not have water governance and we do not plan for water usage," he says.

He points out that 60% of water-guzzling sugarcane

crops are planted in the command area of irrigation projects, using up much of the irrigation water.

The state has around 1.25 lakh minor irrigation projects, including K T Weirs and percolation tanks, but there is barely any maintenance of this massive capacity, says Purandare.

"Instead of maintaining these minor irrigation projects which have already been built, govt is spending money on the Jalyukta Shivar scheme which has been ineffective," he says.

He is also critical of the farm pond scheme, which has led to a proliferation of farm ponds in the state.

"Finally, all the farm ponds are using groundwater. This evaporates in the farm ponds and then there is less groundwater available for villages which are downstream," says Purandare.

I/167516/2024

The Hindu Business Line - 24 March-2024

# Storage in 70% of southern reservoirs perilous

**GOING DRY.** Water level hits zero in four reservoirs as storage in the country's 150 major reservoirs drops for the 24th week in a row

**Subramani Ra Mancombu**  
Chennai

Four of India's 150 major reservoirs have gone dry with three of them in the southern region even as the storage in them declined for the 24<sup>th</sup> week in a row, data from the Central Water Commission (CWC) showed.

The situation in nearly 10 other reservoirs in South India is worrisome as the southern region is bearing the brunt of the El Nino impact. Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, in particular, have received deficient rainfall since June 2023.

According to CWC's weekly bulletin on live storage status of 150 major reservoirs, the level in these storages was 38 per cent of the 178.784 billion cubic metres (BCM) at 67,591 BCM. Last week, their level was 40 per cent of the capacity.

Overall, the storage in 104 of these reservoirs is less than 50 per cent of the capacity with the level being below 40 per cent in 79, a bulk of it in the southern region. According to the India

Meteorological Department, 49 per cent of the 710 districts in the country experienced deficient or no rainfall since March 1. For January-February, at least 60 per cent of the districts received deficient or no rainfall.

## WORRISOME AP

South India's storage is 23 per cent of the 53,334 BCM capacity at 12,287 BCM. The storage in 30 of 42 reservoirs is below 40 per cent of the capacity and in 5 below 50 per cent of the capacity.

In Andhra Pradesh, while the Yeluru reservoir has run dry, the storage in two - Somasila and Kandleru - of the other three is in single digits. Even Nagarjuna Sagar, which the State shares with Telangana, has a storage of four per cent of its capacity.

The storage in Srisailem, the other one, is 15 per cent of the capacity. Overall, Andhra has 69 per cent below normal storage, while in Telangana, which had a better share of the rainfall during south-west and north-

## Storage position of 150 major reservoirs

Percentage filled	This week* #	Last week#
100%	1	2
91%-99%	1	1
81%-90%	4	4
71%-80%	3	3
61%-70%	9	12
51%-60%	28	32
41%-50%	25	21
40% and below	79	75

Source: Central Water Commission weekly bulletin  
\*Against capacity # No. of reservoirs

east monsoon, it is 12 per cent lower than normal.

## PADDY, PULSES SUFFER

While the Priyadarshini Jurala reservoir has run dry, the storage in Kaddam (KNR) is 3 per cent of the capacity. Among other States in the region, Tamil Nadu's storage is 30 per cent and Karnataka's 24 per cent below normal respectively.

In Karnataka, the level in Krishnaraja Sagara, which serves drinking water to



**PARCHED.** A photo of dried up Tungabhadra river taken earlier this week by a businessline reader\* S CHANDRASEKARAN

Bengaluru city, is a precarious 15 per cent of the capacity, while in Tungabhadra, which irrigates key northern region in the State, besides Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the level is 5 per cent of the capacity. The Tattihalla reservoir had run dry a few weeks ago.

In Tamil Nadu, Aliyar and Sholayar — which serve the State's western region — have a level of 2 per cent of the capacity each. Last year, during the same time, the storage in Aliyar was 5 per cent and 3 per cent

Sholayar. Overall, the paddy crop, particularly in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, besides pulses, are starved of water in the region with some farmers allowing their farms to go dry.

## BIHAR IN DIRE STRAITS

The storage in the northern region is 33 per cent of the 19,663 BCM capacity at 6,439 BCM. However, with rains forecast in some areas and snow melting in the Himalayas, things are not as bad as in the southern region.

The level in 8 of the 10 reservoirs in the region are below 40 per cent of the capacity. Punjab's storage is 14 per cent and Rajasthan's 9 per cent below normal, respectively.

In the eastern region, the 23 reservoirs have a storage of 9,971 BCM or 49 per cent of the 20,430 BCM capacity. Bihar, though, has 65 per cent below normal level, while in Bengal it is 25 per cent below normal.

Of the 49 reservoirs in the western region, the level in 32 is below 50 per cent of the capacity. Overall, the region's storage was 16,768 BCM or 45 per cent of the 37,130 BCM capacity. In Maharashtra, where the water level is 12 per cent lower than normal, the Bhima reservoir has gone dry.

In the 26 reservoirs of the central region, the storage was 46 per cent of the 48,227 BCM capacity at 22,126 BCM. The level in 17 storages is below 50 per cent of the capacity. Uttar Pradesh's level is 28 per cent and Chhattisgarh's is 27 per cent below normal, respectively.