

Hindustan Times- 02- October-2023

Battle over the Cauvery

The cycle of protests, bandhs over sharing its waters must make way for sensible dialogue

Karnataka saw two bandhs over the Cauvery waters last week. Tamil Nadu, the lower riparian state, has also witnessed protests against Karnataka for not releasing its due share of water. The Supreme Court has also been seized of the matter. The Cauvery tribunal award proposed a formula for water sharing in 2018 though it did not spell out what is to be done when rains fail. Karnataka has released about a third of the water that the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee set for Tamil Nadu, citing lack of rainfall and low storage in reservoirs. Tamil Nadu is worried that if Karnataka refuses its share, the *kuruvai* (June-September) crop in the Cauvery delta will be destroyed. Both states have a case, but the fact is that the monsoon this year in the Cauvery basin has been very poor: Interior southern Karnataka, which is the Cauvery catchment area, has reported a nearly 30 per cent deficit. The affected parties in neither state seem ready to listen to the other side's pleas; and, politicians in both states are more interested in potential political gains than in resolving the dispute.

The fact is the Cauvery is a much-exploited river. There isn't enough water in the river to feed all the demands made of it, be it by Tamil Nadu or Karnataka. Tamils were early to develop the Cauvery delta, which today yields three harvests. Karnataka was relatively late in harnessing the river and its attempts to dam the Cauvery have been opposed by Tamil Nadu. When the monsoon is deficient, water becomes a concern and the dispute eventually spills over to the streets.

The first step to amicably dealing with the dispute is to accept that water is a finite resource and has to be harvested intelligently. Both states have been making unreasonable demands on the Cauvery. Karnataka, for instance, now wants the river to feed Bengaluru while allowing the numerous lakes and other water sources in the city's vicinity to be destroyed. Similarly, Tamil Nadu has been callous in polluting the Cauvery's tributaries such as the Noyyal and the Bhavani. Both states may have to reconsider the choice of crops and cropping patterns in the Cauvery basin. Localised solutions will have to be considered to meet the needs of urban centres. Farmers associations have to be part of this conversation. The annual farce of protests and bandhs has to make way for dialogue and negotiation.

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Cauvery reservoirs getting more inflows: Karnataka

Deputy Chief Minister says inflows have increased to 15,000 cusecs a day bringing relief, about 6,500 cusecs of water is additionally reaching T.N. daily owing to rain in and around Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who also holds the Water Resources portfolio, has said that cumulative inflows into the reservoirs in the Cauvery basin have increased to 15,000 cusecs a day bringing some sort of relief to the State.

Speaking to presspersons in Bengaluru on Sunday, Mr. Shivakumar said though the State was not releasing water to Tamil Nadu through the Krishnaraja Sagar reservoir, about 6,500 cusecs of water a day was reaching that State owing to rain in and



Members of a farmers' association staging a protest in Tiruchi on Sunday seeking release of Cauvery water for Tamil Nadu. ANI

around Bengaluru. This had showed that more rain would strengthen Karnataka's position with respect to Cauvery water sharing, he said, and asserted that

the State was ready for a legal fight with respect to the issue.

The State had filed an appeal before the Cauvery Water Management Auth-

ority seeking that it should reconsider its direction to Karnataka to release water to Tamil Nadu. He pointed out that such an appeal had been filed after consulting several retired judges and senior advocates.

Meanwhile, former Union Minister and veteran BJP leader S.M. Krishna observed that the Centre should put an end to the row over the sharing of Cauvery river water by evolving a distress formula in consultation with all the four riparian States.

Speaking to presspersons in Bengaluru, Mr. Krishna said consultations with all the riparian States to evolve a distress formula was the only way out.

Why water politics has come to a boil

The Cauvery water tussle isn't just a farm matter; it's also the lifeblood of two cities steering their state economies. It keeps flowing, stirring up water politics, with little sign of a trickle-down or a pipe dream solution. **SHINE JACOB** writes

The Cauvery River supplies 70-80 per cent of the water requirements for 14.5 million people in India's Silicon Valley, Bengaluru. On the other hand, about 347 kilometres (km) away, Chennai, dubbed as the Detroit of Asia with a population of 12 million, also depends on it for 15-20 per cent of its water requirements during peak times. Hence, the battle for Cauvery water is not only about the agricultural sector but also the lifeline of the two cities that drive the economies of their respective states.

While political parties blame both sides and treaties for the over a century-old dispute, several experts cite the root cause of the concerns regarding Cauvery as its nature of being a monsoon rain-fed river.

According to the India Meteorological Department, Cauvery Basin districts are experiencing a 32 per cent rainfall deficit during the current year, becoming a trigger for dispute this time, even though the Supreme Court gave its verdict on the issue in 2018.

Farmers from both states have taken to the streets, seeking a higher share of water. The current controversy emerged after Karnataka became reluctant to adhere to previously agreed-upon water release quantities.

The majority of the cities in India have a nearby water body, but Bengaluru is forced to bring water from the Cauvery, which flows through the Mandya district and its tributary, the Kabini River, in the Mysuru district, covering over 100 km.

State authorities call the process Asia's biggest pumping exercise to lift water from TK Halli to Bengaluru, which is 3,000 feet above sea level.

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board has already raised concerns earlier this month that reservoirs feeding the city are fast depleting due to water releases to Tamil Nadu.

On the other hand, Chennai also heavily depends on Veeranam Lake, 180 km away in the northern district of Cuddalore, to meet its water needs. The situation here is even more alarming, with water storage levels down to 531.6 million cubic feet (mcf) on September 29, around 61 per cent down compared to 1,367.8 mcf on the same day last year. More importantly, data shared by water authorities shows that the storage level now is only 36 per cent of the total capacity.

While the two metros are struggling, farmer woes are more alarming.

"Around 3 million acres of farmland in the Cauvery Delta region are dependent on Cauvery water for agriculture. Our land is dry now, with Karnataka not releasing enough water. Like Karnataka, we also have equal rights to the Cauvery River," said T. Jayaraman, an environmental activist from the Cauvery Delta region.

As a sign that the majority of farmers are hesitant to cultivate, reports suggest that the area under cultivation in the Cauvery Delta this Samba season has come down by 45 per cent. Jayaraman adds that Tamil Nadu's food dependence on the Delta region is around 40 per cent, making it more vital for the state.

The immediate reason for the current protests



BJP workers stage a protest against the release of Cauvery River water, in Bengaluru. PHOTO: PTI

HELL OR HIGH WATER

Cauvery share as on 2018



Storage level at Veeranam on September 29

Storage (mcf)	% of capacity	Storage on same day last year (mcf)
531.6	36.29	1,367.80

sq. km: Square kilometre; tmcf: Thousand million cubic feet
mcf: Million cubic feet; Source: Reports, Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board

on both sides is that Tamil Nadu demanded the release of 10,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) of water over 15 days.

The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) directed Karnataka to release 5,000 cusecs. After much deliberation, CWMA directed Karnataka to release 3,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu daily until October 15 and also rejected Tamil Nadu's plea to supply backlog water.

In addition to agriculture, around 17 million people, or 20 per cent (including Chennai) of its population spread across 19 districts, depend on Cauvery for around 17 thousand million cubic feet (tmcf) of water every year.

The Karnataka story of water supply is not only Bengaluru-specific; the river quenches the thirst of Mysuru, Mandya, and 48 other towns and 600 villages in Karnataka.

"Even the 3,000 cusecs are not yet given. Unless they give it, 40 per cent of Tamil Nadu's agriculture will be finished," added Jayaraman.

According to Karnataka farmers, they can grow only one paddy crop a year, while their Tamil Nadu counterparts can grow three a year.

Dispute swells

The two agreements between the erstwhile Madras Presidency and the Princely State of Mysore are the primary cause of the controversy.

According to the deal in 1924, to construct dams or storage facilities in the region, Mysore had to get permission from Madras, while the share was 75:23:2 between Tamil Nadu, Mysore, and the erstwhile Travancore (now Kerala).

After Independence, the formation of Kerala and Puducherry further complicated the issue. Though a Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal was set up in 1990, it took 17 years to come up with a verdict in 2007. The verdict allotted 419 tmcf of water to Tamil Nadu, 270 tmcf to Karnataka, 30 tmcf to Kerala, and 7 tmcf to Puducherry. In 2018, the apex court reduced the annual share of water released in Karnataka from 192 tmcf to 177.25 tmcf.

"The major contribution of water to Cauvery is from Karnataka and Kerala, whereas its economic benefits mainly go to Tamil Nadu because of age-old deals. The development of agriculture was stalled in the upper state as they were not allowed to build reservoirs and dams," S Raja Rao, Karnataka's former secretary of the minor irrigation department and an irrigation expert, told *Business Standard*.

"The problem with Tamil Nadu is that it doesn't have enough water storage facilities to hold the water during the monsoon season.

Hence, all the water is going to waste," Rao added.

Rao's argument has some validity too, as the state reportedly got 3.5 times more water from Karnataka during the previous water year. Between June 2022 and May 2023, it received 667.67 tmcf of water, against the legal mandate of 177 tmcf. Experts like Rao argue that Tamil Nadu should construct more reservoirs to preserve the additional water coming in such good years. Well, Bengaluru is not far behind in wasting its water. According to February data, around 29 per cent of the daily water supply to the city is wasted due to transmission losses.

Plumbing the depths

On one hand, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister (CM) M K Stalin is seeking Centre's intervention for the release of water. On the other hand, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah has already approached CWMA, stating that the water cannot be released, and has also sought permission to build a balancing reservoir across the Cauvery River at Mekedatu near Kanakapura.

Bengaluru has seen two bandhs in the past week, with the protesters alleging that the Congress government is releasing water to its INDIA alliance ally Stalin, against the wishes of the people in the state. The Karnataka Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unit is also echoing this.

"Siddaramaiah is trying to divide the nation, along with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu. The CWMA has complete control of all the dams. If the state is not releasing water, it will be in contempt of court. You have to share what you have. The DMK is also fooling the public of Tamil Nadu by not condemning the Congress," said Narayanan Thirupathy, spokesperson for the BJP in Tamil Nadu.

On Friday, Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (popularly known as KaRaVe), a pro-Kannada organisation, conducted a mock funeral procession, symbolically targeting ruling Congress Members of Legislative Assembly and Stalin. On the other side of the border, farmers too are raising the pitch, with some going on strike and even showcasing protests like holding dead rats in their mouths.

Amid the political slugfest, farmers and cities dependent on Cauvery water are keeping their fingers crossed.

THE RISING TIDE

1892: Cauvery dispute kicks off after Madras Presidency opposes the Princely State of Mysore's plan to build irrigation systems, citing concerns it might affect the flow of water

1924: Madras and Mysore reach a

deal, allowing Mysore to build the Krishna Raja Sagara dam. This agreement remains valid for 50 years until 1974

1974: The 1924 water-sharing agreement lapses

1986: Tamil Nadu seeks the

Centre's intervention and asks for

a tribunal to be set up

June 1990: The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT), led by Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee, is formed

February 2007: CWDT issues final verdict, allocating 419 thousand million cubic feet (tmcf)

to Tamil Nadu, 270 tmcf to Karnataka, 30 tmcf to Kerala, and 7 tmcf to Puducherry

2018: SC declares Cauvery a national asset, upholds CWDT's water-sharing arrangements. In June 2018, the Cauvery Water Management Scheme constituted

The Economic Times- 02- October-2023

APPEAL TO CAUVERY PANEL TO REVIEW ORDER

Recent Rains Enough for TN: Shivakumar

6,500 cusecs of uncontrolled water has flowed through rain, seepage to TN

Our Political Bureau

Bengaluru: Deputy CM DK Shivakumar on Sunday said the recent rains in and around Bengaluru have increased the outflow of the Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu and there would be no need to release much water from the reservoirs to the neighbouring state.

"Although no water has been released to Tamil Nadu through the KRS dam, 6,500 cusecs of uncontrolled water has flowed through rain and seepage in Bengaluru and its surrounding areas," he said. Shivakumar, who also holds the water resources portfolio, added that the government has appealed to the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) to review its directive of releasing 3,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu.

The deputy CM's statement comes at a time when farmer and pro-Kannada organisations are ramping up protests against releasing Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu while Karnataka is undergoing a water crisis.

Farmer leader Kurubur Shanthakumar announced on Sunday that his Karnataka Water Conservation Committee would hold a silent sit-in in Bengaluru on Gandhi Jayanti to urge the government to start the construction of the disputed Meke-

datu balancing reservoir to ensure enough water for the state.

The farmer organisations would hold protests in Bengaluru every day from Monday till chief minister Siddaramaiah convenes a special assembly session to overturn the CWMA's orders, Shanthakumar told ET. "We discussed this with the CM in our meeting on Friday," he said, adding, the CM had said he would provide an answer the next day, but there has been no announcement yet.

"We ask the government to call a special assembly session and get the

PROTESTS CONTINUE



Farmer and pro-Kannada bodies continue to ramp up protests against releasing Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu

Supreme Court to form a new unbiased body to deal with the Cauvery dispute," he said. The Meke-datu would resolve most of southern Karnataka's drinking water issues, he added.

Farmer and pro-Kannada organisations had called for two bandhs last week, disrupting life in Bengaluru and south Karnataka. Forty-four flights to and from Bengaluru were cancelled on Friday, and most tech companies had to ask their employees to work from home on both the days. Malls, schools and universities also remained shut.

Rajasthan Patrika- 02- October-2023

नर्मदा बांध का जलस्तर भी 138.26 मीटर पर

गुजरात के प्रमुख बांधों में 95% से अधिक जल संग्रह, 73 लंबालब



राज्य में पूरे साल पानी की कोई किल्लत नहीं होगी

पत्रिका न्यूज नेटवर्क
patrika.com

अहमदाबाद, गुजरात में इस साल मौसम की 100 फीसदी से अधिक बरसात हो जाने के कारण राज्यभर के प्रमुख बांधों में जलस्तर की स्थिति भी बेहतर हो गई है। बांधों में किल्लहाल क्षमता के मुकाबले 95.34 फीसदी जल संग्रह है। सबसे बड़े नर्मदा बांध का जल स्तर भी 138.26 मीटर पर है। 73 बांध पूरी तरह से लंबालब हो गए हैं। ऐसे में राज्य में पूरे साल पानी की कोई



नर्मदा डैम फाइनल फोटो ।

किल्लत नहीं होगी।

प्रदेश में खिखार की स्थिति में 207 बांधों में 24086.2 मिलियन क्यूबिक मीटर (एमसीएम) जल संग्रह हो गया है। जबकि इनकी कुल संग्रह क्षमता 25262.29 एमसीएम है। नर्मदा बांध की क्षमता 9460

एमसीएम है, इसके मुकाबले 9324.73 एमसीएम जल संग्रह मौजूद है जो 98.57 फीसदी है। राज्य के आधार पर देखा जाए तो दक्षिण गुजरात के बांधों में जल संग्रह की स्थिति सबसे अच्छी है। इस राज्य के कुल 13 बांधों में 8617.73

112 बांध हाईअलर्ट, 19 अलर्ट

राज्य के नर्मदा बांध को छोड़कर अन्य 206 में से 112 में बांध हाईअलर्ट मोड पर हैं। इन बांधों में 90 फीसदी से अधिक जल संग्रह है और 73 बांध तो 100 फीसदी भरे हुए हैं। 19 बांधों में 80 फीसदी से अधिक और 90 फीसदी से कम

जल संग्रह है, जिससे इन्हें अलर्ट और 15 बांधों में 70 फीसदी से अधिक और 80 फीसदी से कम जल संग्रह होने पर वर्निंग के रूप में दर्शाया गया है। किल्लहाल राज्य के 60 बांधों में 70 फीसदी से कम जल संग्रह है।

एमसीएम की क्षमता है जिसके मुकाबले 8526.61 एमसीएम पानी जमा हो गया है, जो 98.94 फीसदी है। यहां के अठ बांध लंबालब हैं। मध्यगुजरात के 17 बांधों में से 11 लंबालब हैं।

राज्य के सभी बांध की कुल क्षमता 2331.01 एमसीएम है और किल्लहाल 2292.68 एमसीएम जल संग्रह है, जो 98.36 फीसदी है। सबसे अधिक 141 बांधों वाले सौराष्ट्र राज्य में 41 बांध लंबालब हैं। इनकी कुल संग्रह क्षमता

2588.49 एमसीएम है और किल्लहाल इनमें 2126.87 एमसीएम जल संग्रह हो गया, जो 82.17 फीसदी है। उत्तर गुजरात के 15 बांधों में से एक पूरी तरह से भरा हुआ है। इन बांधों की कुल क्षमता 1932.79 एमसीएम है इसके मुकाबले 1568.72 एमसीएम (81.16 फीसदी) जल संग्रह है। किल्लहाल कच्छ राज्य के 20 बांधों में से भले ही 12 बांध लंबालब हैं लेकिन यहां सबसे कम 74 फीसदी ही जल संग्रह अभी मौजूद है।