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1. Dam Safety Bill controversy

- What is dam safety bill?
- What is the need for dam safety bill for India?
- What are the salient features of the bill?
- Why is Tamil Nadu opposing the bill?

GS paper 2 (Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation)

In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.

The above article has been retrieved from:

Pradeep

Kaushal. (2018, December , 22). Dam Safety Bill: its objective, the objections. Indian Express. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/dam-safety-bill-its-objective-the-objections-5503055/>

What is the context about?

- When the government introduced the Dam Safety Bill, 2018 in Lok Sabha last week, BJD floor leader Bhartruhari Mahtab questioned Parliament's competence to do so.
- Days later, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami wrote to the Prime Minister flagging his concerns about the Bill.

- ❑ In June, too, the Tamil Nadu Assembly had passed a resolution demanding the Bill be kept in abeyance till a consensus was arrived at with all states.

What is dam safety bill?

- ❑ The Bill provides for “surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of specified dams for prevention of dam failure related disasters and to provide for institutional mechanism to ensure their safe functioning”.

What is the need for dam safety bill for India?

- ❑ Of India’s 5,254 large dams, some 75% are over 25 years old, and 164 more than 100 years old. There have been 36 dam failures. There has been a lack of a uniform law and an administrative regime for dam safety. While the Central Water Commission (CWC) has made efforts through National Committee on Dam Safety, Central Dam Safety Organisation and State Dam Safety Organisations, these agencies do not have statutory powers and can only make recommendations.

What are the salient features of the bill?

- ❑ The bill address all issues concerning dam safety including regular inspection of dams, comprehensive dam safety review, emergency action plan, adequate repair and maintenance funds for dam safety, instrumentation and safety manuals.

- ❑ It lays onus of dam safety on dam owner and provides for penal provisions for commission and omission of certain acts.
- ❑ The Bill provides for proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all specified dams in the country to ensure their safe functioning. It mandates constitution of National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS) which will evolve dam safety policies and recommend necessary regulations as may be required for the purpose.
- ❑ The Bill also provides for establishment of National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) as regulatory body which shall discharge functions to implement policy, standards and guidelines for dam safety in the country.
- ❑ It also provides for constitution of State Committee on Dam Safety (SCDS) by State Government.

Why is Tamil Nadu opposing the bill?

- ❑ The TN resolution proposed that the Bill had contentious clauses.
- ❑ The Bill allows the NDSA to inspect dams situated across intra-state rivers. This is being viewed as an attempt to encroach on the state's powers and rights.
- ❑ This is especially with respect to Dams constructed by the State Government in the neighbouring State.

- ❑ It is said to cause various problems in their maintenance and operation.
- ❑ It wants the Centre to arrive at a consensus with the states. Till then, it asks the Centre to keep in abeyance the process of legislating on the Bill.