



Inter-State River Water Sharing Disputes

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On the complaint made by the State Governments, the Central Government has, so far, set up eight tribunals to settle water disputes among the States under the Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956.

Government of Bihar sent a request on November 27, 2013 under provision of ISRWD Act, 1956 to this Ministry for constitution of a Tribunal for adjudication of river water disputes related to Sone basin. Negotiations were carried out by Chairman, Ganga Flood Control Commission and Chairman, Central Water Commission with the States of U.P. and Bihar. It has been agreed that the two States of U.P. and Bihar would meet periodically and try to solve the issue bilaterally. The dispute has since been settled.

State of Odisha has also filed complaint dated November 19, 2017 under Section 3 of ISRWD Act, 1956 with respect to Mahanadi basin. The Central Government constituted a Negotiation Committee comprising members from basin States and concerned Ministries of Central Government, Central Water Commission, India Metrological Department, National Institute of Hydrology for settlement of the dispute through negotiation. The Negotiation Committee held two meetings on February 28, 2017 and May 22, 2017 and submitted its report in which it mentioned that any further meetings of this Committee would not be fruitful as there had been no participation from complainant State i.e. State of Odisha in both the meetings. Accordingly, the Ministry concluded that the dispute cannot be resolved by negotiation and it has been decided to constitute a Tribunal for adjudication of the dispute. Draft Cabinet Note in this regard has been prepared.

The mechanism for settlement of water disputes is already available in the form of ISRWD Act, 1956. The ISRWD Act, 1956 has been last amended in 2002 whereby adjudication of the water disputes by tribunals has been made time bound after consultation with all State Governments. Further, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation adopted a revised National Water Policy (NWP) in 2012. As per Clause 12.2 of the Policy, a permanent Water Disputes Tribunal at the Centre should be established to resolve the disputes expeditiously in an equitable manner. In this regard, the Inter-State River Water Dispute (Amendment) Bill, 2017 has been introduced in Lok Sabha on March 14, 2017 to amend the existing ISRWD Act, 1956. The Bill has further been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources by the Speaker vide order dated March 14, 2017 for examination. In this regard, three meetings of the Standing Committee have been held on June 16, 2017, June 30, 2017 and July 10, 2017.

This information was given by Union Minister of State for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

Samir/jk

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