

Faulty dam management worsened the 2018 Kerala floods, says IISc study

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Thiruvananthapuram: A study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru has found that the fault in managing the water levels in the dams aggravated the 2018 floods in Kerala. The study was carried out based on the directives of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The study points out that there were no rain warnings or warnings about the amount of water reaching the dams. This affected the functioning of the dams. Though it has been stipulated that the Idukki dam should be used for flood control, the dam is only used for power generation.

During the peak of the floods from August 14 to 18, the flood cushion (between the full storage capacity and maximum water level) was not utilised in the Idukki dam. If the flood cushion of 110.42 million cubic water was utilised, the release of water in the first phase could have been avoided. The flood cushion was not utilised even at full capacity in the Idamalayar dam.

During the floods, water was not released to the powerhouse due to the obstructions in the tunnels of the Lower Periyar Dam. Also, power was not generated at the Idamalayar powerhouse from August 16 to 18, 2018.

The study was led by P P Majumdar, Aisha Sharma, and R Gowri of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Water Research department at the IISc. Earlier, an amicus curiae appointed by the High Court had also found that the management of the dams during the floods was not effective.

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