**DEPARTMENT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

**THE HINDU**

**MANAGING THE CAUVERY DISPUTE (SOCIAL ISSUE)**

# ABOUT: Water Sharing Dispute of River Cauvery.

**SYNOPSIS:** The **sharing of waters** of the Cauvery River has been the source of a serious conflict between the two Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.The 802 kilometres Kaveri River has 44,000 km2 basin area in Tamil Nadu and 32,000 km2 basin area in Karnataka.

Decades of negotiations between the parties bore no fruit. Even the governments at the Centre have failed to resolve this interstate issue. Finally, the Supreme Court has intervened by directing the Centre to constitute a Cauvery Management board to solve the matter.

**KEY POINTS**

**Establishment of Cauvery Management Board**

* Supreme Court has directed the Centre to constitute a Cauvery Management Board within four weeks.
* The water sharing dispute will now be handled in a scientific and responsible manner by a legally constituted technical body.
* It will consist of irrigation engineers and agronomists, independent members as well as representatives of the basis states.
* The body is free to formulate the manner in which water should be shared in a season of distress.

**Difficulties in Implementation**

* This is not the first attempt to create an institutional mechanism. In 2013, the Centre notified the formation of a ‘Supervisory Committee’ consisting of the Secretary, Union Water Resources Ministry, as chairman, and the Chief Secretaries of the basin States as members.
* That the latest decision of the Supervisory Committee, which directed the release of 3,000 cusecs of water for 10 days to Tamil Nadu, did not find favor with either State shows the difficulties involved in managing inter-State disputes even through an institutional mechanism.
* The Supreme Court, too, has intervened to double the quantum of water to be released.

**Solutions**

* Apart from permanent mechanisms, technical panels and seasonal adjudication, a spirit of accommodation is required among the basin States.
* There is a need for a clearer appreciation of the fact that the entire water yield in the Cauvery basin is not enough to provide for the requirements of both States.
* It is time for Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to take a hard look at their agricultural economies: the area under cultivation, the number of crops per year and the water-intensive nature of the crops.