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Title: Need to control the flow of Sherbagaveli river towards west on the other side of State Border in Tamil Nadu.

*SHRI P. LINGAM (TENKASI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to raise a matter of urgent public importance relating to wasteful flow of Shenbagavalli River in the hilly border areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the Western Ghats caused by the wall collapse to a sluice gate that has been left unattended for the past 30 years. I would like to draw the attention of this august House towards the serious damage caused to an important water resource potential in my constituency Tenkasi and left unattended for more than 30 years affecting the irrigation and drinking water availability. In the Western Ghats, atop the hills in my constituency Shenbagavalli sluice gate, as a traditional barrage like structure with a wall, was situated in between both the States of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. That wall structure for that dam-like arrangement got broken 30 years ago. It has not been repaired as yet. More than 25,000 acres of land in my constituency were dependent on that for irrigation. That watershed arrangement augmented the ground water potential there. In the absence of regular storage due to the breaking of the wall, the water availability in that hilly terrain has been seriously hit.

Sir, I would like to point out that our National Water Management Policy aims at conserving water. But to the contrary, for the past 30 years, the Government has not taken any action to immediately attend to the need of that water resource point by way of constructing a side wall. This has resulted in the wasteful flow of water from Shenbagavalli River towards the west into the Arabian Sea. In all these years, the people of my constituency have been trying to draw the attention of the Government to have the wall rebuilt again as it is situated inside Kerala. Unfortunately the Kerala Government is not at all taking any action in this regard even when a huge amount of water during rains and flash floods wastefully flow away without extending the traditional benefits enjoyed by the people on this side of the border in Tamil Nadu. Enough funds must be allocated for this purpose and Kerala Government needs to take up this job in its own

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil

interest also. The painful fact is that it is only the Kerala Government that has put spokes in any positive progress to evolve a solution to this vexing problem. The Union Water Resources Ministry must come forward to ensure sharing of waters which is a national asset especially at a time when the water sharing is to be between two different States. The Union Government must take it up with the Government of Kerala to see that appropriate action is taken at the earliest. I urge upon the Centre to see that effective steps are taken to repair the Shenbagavalli sluice structure to extend the benefit to the poor people and agriculturists in the hilly terrains of my constituency. I would like to point out that I have already raised this matter in this House on an earlier occasion, but no action has been taken so far by any of the Governments, be the Centre or the Government of Kerala. We have not heard even a single word about this from both the Union Government and the Kerala Government. This kind of indifference leaving small matters will lead to discontent among the local population and may erupt as an inter-State river water dispute.

Hence I urge upon the Union Water Resource Ministry to make available funds needed to go in for reconstructing the damaged wall of that dilapidated watershed structure on the Shenbagavalli River and take up with the Government of Kerala to complete the work at their end to help solve the water problem in my constituency.