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title: Need to take steps to stop construction of barrage and reservoir over Mahanadi river in the upper reach of Hirakund in Chhattisgarh.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB : As the House is aware and you are aware, Mahanadi is the lifeline of Odisha.

**12.40½ hours**

*At this stage, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge and some other*

*hon. Members left the House.*

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: Mahanadi contributes maximum irrigation in our State. Lives and livelihood of the farmers of fifteen districts i.e. Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Sundergarh, Bolangir, Sonapur, Boudh, Angul, Cuttack, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Puri, Nayagarh and Khurda are fully dependent on Mahanadi. In fact, River Mahanadi has a direct impact on more than 50 per cent of our population and indirectly through subsidiaries the Mahanadi System has an impact on around 65 per cent of the population of our State. From time immemorial, the people of Odisha have an emotional, cultural and organic relationship with the Holy Mahanadi river.

It was in 1948 when the foundation stone for the multipurpose dam project of Hirakud was laid. The history goes back to 1943 when Dr. Ambedkar was the Minister here and at that time he had conceived the construction of this multipurpose dam project of Hirakud. It was inaugurated in 1957 by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who termed it as a Temple of Modern India. It is the largest dam as it is called. But today we have a concern.

There was an agreement in 1983 between the then Madhya Pradesh Government and Odisha Government as to how the river water will be shared and if at all any new embankments or new reservoirs are to be constructed, new dams are to be constructed, then Odisha Government also would be taken into confidence and that construction would take place only after a bipartite agreement. In between we had never objected when seven pick-up weirs were constructed on the tributaries of Mahanadi and that had gone on within the last 20 years. But very recently, Ambaguda Diversion Project, Salka Diversion Project, Lachhanpur Diversion Project including Arpa-Bhaisajhar Barrage Project are under execution. Two new projects such as Paury-Mahanadi Intra State Link Project and Tandula Reservoir Augmentation Scheme on Mahanadi River which will be having a severe adverse impact on flow of water into Hirakud Reservoir are being proposed by the Government of Chhattisgarh. Already some work has been started.

The Government of Chhattisgarh is also contemplating construction of a reservoir-based dam on Kelo River adjacent to Odisha border. This is really unfortunate that in our federal system the interests of the people of Odisha have been completely neglected. We are shocked. That is why we want to raise it here. In spite being the nodal agency, the Central Water Commission has remained a silent spectator when they are expected to be neutral and should play a proactive role in safeguarding the interest of the farmers of the riparian State of Odisha.

I also hope, rather I demand that the Ministry of Environment and Forests also take up this issue keeping in view the interest of Odisha. On behalf of the people of Odisha, I would urge upon this Government through you for immediate intervention on this issue for instruction to the Central Government agencies to play their fair role proactively and safeguard the interest of the farmers of Odisha. Therefore, our demand is to immediately stop unilateral construction of such major projects over Mahanadi in the upper reach of Hirakund.

There is also a Calling Attention notice for your consideration. There are a lot of other things and we need a structured discussion in the House. Therefore, we have given a Call Attention notice for your consideration so that the Minister can interact with the Government of Chhattisgarh because the river Mahanadi flows across Chhattisgarh and Odisha and this is a very volatile issue today in our State. A large number of people, in fact, 65 per cent of our population are getting affected. Therefore, I demand that immediate step should be taken by the Union Government to stop construction of this barrage and reservoir in Chhattisgarh.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Kalikesh N. Singh Deo is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab.

PROF. SAUGATA ROY : Hon. Speaker Madam, we are not satisfied with the reply of the Minister on Gujarat. ...(*Interruptions*) He has been polite to the Gujarat Chief Minister who has not been able to prevent atrocities on Dalits...(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: The issue is already done. Now nothing will go on record. That issue is already discussed. Shri Venkaiah Naidu, do you want to say something?