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Inter-State Relations (GS Paper: GS-II)

Inter-State River Water Dispute(Cauvery Water Management)

Current Issue:

The Supreme Court has sought Karnataka's response to Tamil Nadu's plea alleging a 20,000 million cubic feet shortfall in Cauvery water. Karnataka cited a severe drought and said it had made its best efforts to fulfil its obligations as an upper-riparian state.

The dispute highlights the continuing challenge of balancing drinking-water and agricultural needs of an upper-riparian State with the legally determined water-sharing obligations towards a lower riparian State.

Important Points for UPSC, APSC

1. Cauvery River

- Origin: Talakaveri, Karnataka
- Flows through Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, with the basin also extending into Kerala and Puducherry.
- Ultimately drains into the Bay of Bengal
- Important for agriculture, especially in the Cauvery delta of Tamil Nadu.

2. Constitutional provisions

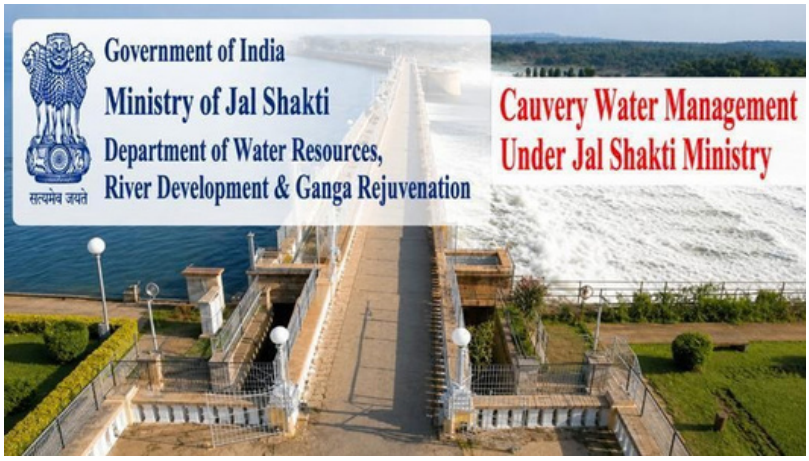
- Article 262: Parliament may provide for adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers.
- Article 262(2): Parliament can exclude the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and other courts in such disputes.
- Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956: Provides for tribunals for adjudication of such disputes.

3. Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)

- Constituted in 1990.
- Final award was given in 2007.
- Supreme Court modified the allocation in its 2018 judgment.
- The judgment increased Karnataka's share by 14.75 TMC and reduced Tamil Nadu's corresponding share.

4. Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)

- Established following the Supreme Court's 2018 judgment.
- Responsible for implementing the water-sharing arrangements.
- Works with the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC).



Why important for UPSC/APSC?

- Federalism: Conflict between State interests and constitutional mechanisms.
- Cooperative federalism: Need for States to comply with institutional mechanisms.
- Water security: Increasing variability in rainfall can intensify disputes.
- Climate change: Changing monsoon patterns and droughts can increase water stress.
- Agriculture: Cauvery water is crucial for irrigation in southern India.
- River-basin management: Water should ideally be managed at the basin level, rather than purely according to political boundaries.

Prelims Questions

Q1. With reference to inter-State river-water disputes in India, consider the following statements:

1. Article 262 deals with adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers.

2. Parliament can provide for exclusion of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in such disputes. 3.

The Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 provides for adjudication through water-dispute tribunals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: D

Mains Question

Q. Inter-State river-water disputes pose a challenge to cooperative federalism in India. Discuss with reference to the Cauvery water dispute. (150 words)