

Sixteenth Lok Sabha

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Title: Need to bring legislation on dam safety only after consultation with the concerned states.

SHRI S.R. VIJAYA KUMAR (CHENNAI CENTRAL): Thank you hon. Speaker Madam. The proposed draft Dam Safety Bill contains clauses which violate the rights of Tamil Nadu especially with respect to the dams constructed and owned by the Government of Tamil Nadu in the neighbouring States. It would cause various problems in its maintenance and operation.

Tamil Nadu Assembly adopted a special Resolution demanding that the Centre keep the Dam Safety Bill in abeyance. The Resolution mentioned that the Bill contains clauses that violate the rights of Tamil Nadu with respect to the dams and would cause problems in the operation and maintenance of the dams which are owned by Tamil Nadu but built in other States. The Central Government must act to resolve the issues before it passes the Bill.

When the Centre had sought inputs from the States in 2016, our beloved Leader, Puratchi Thalaivi, Amma, raised some questions about the clause allowing the National Dams Safety Authority to inspect dams situated across intra-state rivers. The hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Shri Edappadi Palaniswami, had written to the hon. Prime Minister on 15th June, 2018 saying that the Bill was against the interests of the State.

Tamil owns dams in Mullaperiyar, Parambikulam, Thunakadavu and Peruvanipallam in Kerala. The two States have engaged in dispute over the Mullaperiyar Dam. When Tamil Nadu wanted to increase the storage of the Dam, Kerala opposed it citing safety threats. Eventually, a Supreme Court team inspected the Dam and confirmed in November 2014 that the Dam was safe.

The latest move by the Centre has made Tamil Nadu cautious about its authority and assets. Most dams in India are owned and operated by the State Governments. Maintenance

is mostly done by the State Public Works Departments except in bigger dams that are managed by autonomous bodies. The Government of Tamil Nadu has demanded consultation with States before finalising the Bill.

Therefore, I urge the Central Government to take up the legislation on Dam Safety only after consulting the States and after arriving at a consensus and till then, keep in abeyance the process of legislation on Dam Safety.

HON. SPEAKER:

Shri K. Ashok Kumar,

Shrimati V. Sathyabama and

Dr. J. Jayavardhan are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri S. R. Vijaya Kumar.