



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Pennaiyar River Water Dispute

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Context:

The **Supreme Court of India** has instructed the **Union government** to submit a report prepared by a committee mediating the **water-sharing dispute** between **Tamil Nadu** and **Karnataka** regarding the **Pennaiyar River**. The report is expected to address ongoing tensions over the utilization of the river's water, with a deadline of **two weeks** for submission.

Background of the Dispute:

- **Tamil Nadu's Argument:** Tamil Nadu has asserted that **Karnataka** has no right to use the waters of the **Pennaiyar River** in a manner that harms Tamil Nadu's interests. Tamil Nadu insists that the river's water, as an **Inter-State River**, is a **national asset** and cannot be claimed exclusively by any one state.
- **Karnataka's Actions:** Tamil Nadu opposed Karnataka's **construction of check dams and diversion structures** on the Pennaiyar River, arguing that such actions negatively affect the flow of water into Tamil Nadu.
- **The 1892 Agreement:** Tamil Nadu has cited the **1892 agreement** as valid and binding, asserting that it covers the main river and its **tributaries**. This agreement outlines how the water of the Pennaiyar River and its associated streams should be shared between the two states.
- **Markandeya River:** Tamil Nadu has also contested that the **Markandeya River**, a major tributary of the Pennaiyar, is part of the 1892 agreement, covering the water-sharing rights of both states for this tributary.

Key Developments:

- The **Supreme Court** has ordered that the Union government submit the findings of the **committee** negotiating the dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka within **two weeks**.
- **Tamil Nadu's Concerns:** Tamil Nadu has been seeking the court's intervention since **2018** to stop Karnataka's construction projects on the river, asserting that they threaten the water supply to its residents.

About Pennaiyar River:

- **Other Names:** Also known as **Dakshina Pinakini** (Kannada), **Thenpennai**, and **Ponnaiyar** (Tamil).
- **Origin:** The river originates from the **Eastern slope of the Nandidurg Mountain** in **Karnataka**.
- **Course:** It flows through Karnataka and enters Tamil Nadu, ultimately draining into the **Bay of Bengal**.
- **Basin Distribution:** About **77%** of the river's drainage basin lies in Tamil Nadu.
- **Length:** The **Pennaiyar River** is **497 km** long, making it the second-longest river in Tamil Nadu after the **Kaveri River**.
- **Tributaries:** Some of its main tributaries include the **Markandeyanadhi**, **Kambainallur**, and **Pambar** rivers.
- **Important Cities:** Major cities along the river include **Bangalore**, **Hosur**, **Tiruvannamalai**, and **Cuddalore**.

Inter-State River Water Dispute (IRWD):

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- The **Inter-State Water Disputes Act (IRWD Act)** was enacted under **Article 262** of the **Indian Constitution** to resolve disputes between states over the use and distribution of water from interstate rivers or river valleys.
- **Key Provisions:**
- The Union government plays a central role in resolving water disputes under this Act.
- A **tribunal** must be set up within **one year** of a dispute request, with a ruling typically delivered within **three years**, extendable to **five years** in exceptional cases.
- **Finality of the Award:** The tribunal's decision is binding, akin to a **Supreme Court decree**, but clarifications can be sought within **three months** if not implemented.
- States can still appeal to the **Supreme Court** under **Article 136**, and private individuals can seek relief under **Article 21** for violations of rights.
- **2002 Amendment:** The amendment to the IRWD Act in 2002 sped up the process by mandating a time-bound resolution.