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Inter-State River Water Disputes Framework in India: Key Provisions and Context

Renewed controversy over the Mekedatu balancing reservoir project and Cauvery water dispute has highlighted inter-state water governance in India.

It refers to the constitutional, statutory, and institutional mechanisms under Article 262 established to resolve inter-state river water disputes.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- **Mekedatu balancing reservoir project** proposed by **Karnataka** across the Cauvery river faces strong objections from downstream **Tamil Nadu**.
- **Entry 17** of the **State List** grants states jurisdiction over water supply, irrigation, canals, and drainage within their territories.
- **Entry 56** of the **Union List** empowers Parliament to regulate and develop inter-state rivers and river valleys in the public interest.
- **Article 262** empowers Parliament to enact laws for the adjudication of disputes relating to the waters of inter-state rivers.
- **Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act** was enacted by Parliament in **1956** to provide ad-hoc tribunals for water dispute resolution.
- **River Boards Act, 1956** was enacted to advise the Union Government on the integrated management and development of inter-state river valleys.

DID YOU KNOW..!?

Article 262(2) allows Parliament to exclude the jurisdiction of the **Supreme Court** or any other court over inter-state river water disputes.

Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) was constituted by the Union Government on **June 2, 1990**.

Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal issued its final award on **February 5, 2007**, allocating **419 TMC** water to Tamil Nadu.

Supreme Court modified the CWDT award on **February 16, 2018**, reducing Tamil Nadu's annual allocation to **404.25 TMC**.

Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and **Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC)** were constituted in **June 2018**.

Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 proposed establishing a single permanent tribunal and a **Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC)**.

REVISION FLASHCARD

Article 262 empowers Parliament to adjudicate inter-state river water disputes and bar Supreme Court jurisdiction.

Syllabus Relevance: Highly relevant for Group 1, Group 2, Group 2A, and Group 4 under Unit 5 (Indian Polity - Article 262, Inter-State Relations) and Unit 9 (TN Development Administration).

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