

Chapter - 3 **Interstate Aspects**

3.1 General

The Godavari (Polavaram) – Krishna (Vijayawada) link canal is one of the components of the Mahanadi – Godavari – Krishna – Pennar – Cauvery – Vaigai link system for inter-basin transfer of water in Peninsular India. All the major river basins involved in the interlinking are interstate in nature. The inter-basin water transfer links are, therefore, to be governed by interstate agreements. The States involved in this major interlinking are Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu and the Union Territory of Pondicherry. In respect of Godavari and Krishna river basins, the question of sharing of waters between the basin-states has already been adjudicated by the respective water dispute tribunals. In respect of Cauvery basin, the water sharing is currently under adjudication by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal.

In so far as the Polavaram – Vijayawada link is concerned, the proposal is to transfer surplus waters of Godavari to Krishna. Even earlier to NWDA's studies, such a proposal had been mooted by Andhra Pradesh for transfer of 2265 Mm³ (80 TMC) of Godavari waters to Krishna. An agreement had also been reached between the party States for sharing of this quantum of water which was endorsed by the Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal (GWDT) in its award given in the year 1979.

The present NWDA's proposal is to transfer an additional quantity of 1236 Mm³ to Krishna through the same Polavaram – Vijayawada link canal over and above the 2265 Mm³ of water transfer proposed by Andhra Pradesh.

The details of the award of GWDT and the effect of water transfer from Godavari to Krishna on the Krishna basin States are briefly presented in this Chapter.

3.2 States Traversed by the Godavari River

The river Godavari is an interstate river. Its catchment area spreads over five States viz., Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa while the main river flows through only three States i.e., Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

The total length of Godavari is 1465 km. Originating in Maharashtra, it flows for about 694 km in that State and forms the border between Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh for about 16 km. After flowing for about 281 km in Andhra Pradesh, it again forms the boundary between Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh for about 48 km. It also forms the boundary between Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh for about 24 km. Finally it flows for about 402 km in Andhra Pradesh before it joins the Bay of Bengal. The State-wise catchment area of the basin is given in **Table 2.1**.

3.3 Interstate Agreements on Sharing of Godavari Waters and the GWDT Award

The competitive claims of the riparian states for the utilisation of the waters of the Godavari basin have given rise to disputes between them for sharing of the waters. Eventually in April 1969, the Central Government constituted the Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal and referred various disputes for adjudication. While the disputes were before the Tribunal, the party States themselves, after negotiations entered into agreements from time to time on the utilisation of the waters of the Godavari and its tributaries. The Tribunal incorporated these agreements in their final adjudication and ordered that the agreements should be observed and carried out by all concerned.

As per the award of the Tribunal, waters available in different sub-basins from the catchments intercepted by major/medium projects proposed on various tributaries by the States have been generally allocated among the respective States. In addition, for minor irrigation schemes, industrial and domestic uses, etc., certain specific quantities have been allowed to be utilised by various States. The remaining yield from the free catchment available in different sub-basins, as will be flowing into the river Godavari, is left for utilisation by Andhra Pradesh.

3.4 The Polavaram Project and the Transfer of Water from Godavari to Krishna

The Polavaram project was originally proposed by Government of Andhra Pradesh as an entirely State project for extending irrigation facilities to the upland areas in East Godavari, Visakhapatnam, West Godavari and Krishna districts and for other benefits like making water available for industrial purposes at Visakhapatnam and generation of hydropower.

The States of Maharashtra and Karnataka had been agitating for the utilisation of more water of the Krishna river on account of diversion of Godavari water into the Krishna. On 4th August 1978, an agreement was entered into between the States of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh stipulating the diversion of 2265 Mm³ (80 TMC), at 75% dependability, of Godavari waters from Polavaram Project into Krishna river above Prakasam Barrage at Vijayawada, thereby displacing the discharges from Nagarjunasagar project for Krishna delta, and thus enabling the use of the above quantity for projects upstream of Nagarjunasagar. The States also agreed that the quantity of 2265 Mm³ (80 TMC) thus made available will be shared in the proportion of Andhra Pradesh 1274 Mm³ (45 TMC); Karnataka and Maharashtra together 991 Mm³ (35 TMC).

Dispute arose between the party States regarding the FRL/MWL of Polavaram Project, which will submerge areas in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. This dispute has also been resolved by the Tribunal. It was directed by the Tribunal that the Polavaram Project should be cleared by the Central Water Commission as expeditiously as possible for FRL/MWL of 45.72 m (150 ft.). It was further directed that the CWC should also decide the matter of design and operation schedule for the project keeping in view the agreements between the States in this regard as far as practicable.

3.5 Interstate Aspects under the Proposed Link Project

The Godavari (Polavaram) – Krishna (Vijayawada) link is one of the several link proposals under the Peninsular Rivers Development component of the National Perspective Plan for large scale transfer of water from the surplus to the deficit river basins. It may not be possible to cover these large scale transfers under the present interstate agreements of the GWDT award. After a consensus is reached by the States concerned on the various link proposals, a separate agreement for sharing the surplus waters may have to be entered into by the States involved. The studies of NWDA and the provisions stipulated in the award of GWDT are not to be mixed up as the two have entirely different objectives and different locus standi.

In this context, it is pertinent to note that while the Polavaram Project as proposed by Andhra Pradesh envisages the diversion of only 2265 Mm³ (80 TMC) from Godavari to Krishna, the hydrological studies carried out by NWDA indicate the possibility of diverting a further quantity of 1236 Mm³ of water from Godavari to Krishna through the Polavaram – Vijayawada link canal. The agreement of 4th August 1978 between Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka which has also been endorsed by the GWDT, stipulates that if the diversion at 75% dependability exceeds 2265 Mm³ (80 TMC) due to diversion of Godavari waters from the proposed Polavaram Project into Krishna river, further diminishing the releases from Nagarjunasagar Project, such excess quantity should also be shared in the same proportion as agreed to (refer section 3.4 above).

It is also pertinent to note that the issue of sharing of additional waters that may become available to Krishna from other river basins, particularly Godavari has also been gone into by the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal. After careful consideration of the issue, the Tribunal has directed that in the event of augmentation of the Krishna waters by the diversion of the waters of any other river, no co-basin State of Krishna shall be debarred from claiming that it is entitled to greater share in the Krishna Waters on account of such augmentation when the award of the Tribunal comes up for review after 31st May 2000.