

Factor Bachawat Allocation into Fresh Guidelines

By Gautam Pingle , Published: 03rd November 2014 06:07 AM

Three government orders have governed the scheduling of water releases from the Srisailam, Nagarjunasagar and Pothireddipadu projects.

- GO. Ms No. 69 dated 15/6/1996 prescribes 'Operational Rules' for release of water from Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar. It sets a minimum drawdown level (MDDL) for Srisailam at 834 feet intended for the right bank power house (Rayalaseema). It permits the left bank pumped storage (Telangana) (when commissioned) use of 388 cusecs per day during July-October (a total of 11,000 cusecs) to be used in peak periods and pumped back in non-peak hours. But when the full reservoir level (FRL) is 885 feet or more, this volume (388 cusecs per day) need not be pumped back.
- GO Ms No. 107 dated 2/8/92004 cites GO Ms No. 69 and allows increase in MDDL at Srisailam to 854 feet, saying, however, that the releases at this level and even below can be made on government orders from time to time.
- GO Ms No. 233 dated 19/2/2005 makes no reference to GO 107 of 2004 but to another GO 170 of 2005 regarding Pothireddipadu project and altered the wording of its objective from "to assure irrigation facilities" to "to ensure irrigation facilities". The difference between 'assure' and 'ensure' presumably came from the heated discussions at an all party meeting on this subject. It also said "Operational Rules for Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar project prescribed in GO Ms 69 are also applicable to Pothireddipadu regulator. Further, while releasing water for irrigation requirements from Pothireddipadu regulator, it will be ensured that allocations to Krishna delta and NSP will be made according to the guidelines issues in GO 69."

Conclusions

- GO 69 of 1996 continues to govern releases of water from Srisailam and NSP according to GO 233 of 2005 and despite GO 107 of 2004. The implication is that the MDDL level prescribed in GO 69 (834 ft) operated from 2005 at least.
- Even GO 107, despite prescribing 854 ft MDDL, reserved the right of government (which it had anyway) to allow drawdown even below this level at its discretion.

Implications

- Do these GOs have any force for the Telangana government? If so, can the government, using GO 107, lower the MDDL as and when required?

- Do these GOs make any sense in the changed circumstances since December 2005 when the left bank power house came into full operation with a capacity of 990 MW at a huge cost in foreign loans?

- In recent years, Srisaillam hydro units of both sides have not generated any power but maintained high FRLs to facilitate flow to Rayalaseema canals. An academic study based on water levels showed that “This data clearly shows that Srisaillam HPS could have used 120, 82, 176 and 200 tmc water additionally in 2007, 2006, 2005 and 2004 respectively. This peaking power generation of 900 million units per year on average is worth of ` 4.8 billion in a year.” (Optimization of Power Generation from Srisaillam Hydroelectric Power (HPS) station by N. Sasidhar <http://www.scribd.com/doc/58789365/Srisaillam-HPS>)

- In October 2009, while maintaining high FRL for Rayalaseema rabi crop, the project received a massive inflow of 665 tmcft. Vast areas, including Kurnool and Alampur towns and Mahabubnagar, were inundated by the Srisaillam backwaters. A Srisaillam dam break would have threatened NSP and, consequently, the entire Krishna delta including Vijayawada and Guntur to wns. This experience has cooled the ardour of irrigation engineers and politicians trying to help Rayalaseema without taking the high risk of dam failure.

- Unfortunately, the AP Reorganisation Act does not confer any powers on the river boards to mediate between the successor states as such. The only reference is an oblique one to the undivided AP and other states as in Clause 8 (b) “the regulation of supply of power generated to the authority in charge of the distribution of power having regard to any agreement entered into or arrangement made covering the government of the existing state of Andhra Pradesh and any other state or Union Territory.”

- **Thus, finally, the only (and sensible) conclusion is that the Bachawat allocation of water to Rayalaseema, Telangana and coastal Andhra Pradesh need to be factored into the Srisaillam. NSP, Pothireddipadu and Prakasam Barrage operations, and agreed operational guidelines need to be framed and followed. Till then the disputes will continue. It is now up to the Krishna River Management Board to do the job with the cooperation of both sucessor governments.**

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