

Cabinet approves proposal for enactment of Dam Safety Bill, 2018

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The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for introduction of Dam Safety Bill, 2018 in the Parliament.

Benefits:

It will help all the States and Union Territories of India to adopt uniform dam safety procedures which shall ensure safety of dams and safeguard benefits from such dams. This shall also help in safeguarding human life, livestock and property.

The draft Bill has been finalised after wide consultation with leading Indian experts and international experts.

Details:

- The Bill provides for proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all specified dams in the country to ensure their safe functioning.
- The Bill provides for constitution of a National Committee on Dam Safety which shall evolve dam safety policies and recommend necessary regulations as may be required for the purpose.
- The Bill provides for establishment of National Dam Safety Authority as a regulatory body which shall discharge functions to implement the policy, guidelines and standards for dam safety in the country.
- The Bill provides for constitution of a State Committee on Dam Safety by State Government.

National Dam Safety Authority

- It shall maintain liaison with the State Dam Safety Organisations and the owners of dams for standardisation of dam safety related data and practices;
- It shall provide the technical and managerial assistance to the States and State Dam Safety Organisations;
- It shall maintain a national level data-base of all dams in the country and the records of major dam failures;
- It shall examine the cause of any major dam failure;
- It shall publish and update the standard guidelines and check-lists for the routine inspection and detailed investigations of dams and appurtenances;
- It shall accord recognition or accreditations to the organisations that can be entrusted with the works of investigation, design or construction of new dams;
- It will also look into unresolved points of issue between the State Dam Safety Organisation of two states, or between the State Dam Safety Organisation of a State and the owner of a dam

in that State, for proper solution;

- Further, in certain cases, such as dams of one State falling under the territory of another State, the National Authority shall also perform the role of State Dam Safety Organization thereby eliminating potential causes for inter-state conflicts.

State Committee on Dam Safety

It will ensure proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all specified dams in that State and ensure their safe functioning. It further provides that every State shall establish a "State Dam Safety Organisation", which will be manned by officers from the field dam safety preferably from the areas of dam-designs, hydro-mechanical engineering, hydrology, geo-technical investigation, instrumentation and dam-rehabilitation.

Background:

There are over 5200 large dams in India and about 450 are under construction. Plus there are thousands of medium and small dams. Due to lack of legal and institutional architecture for dam safety in India, dam safety is an issue of concern. Unsafe dams are a hazard and dam break may cause disasters, leading to huge loss of life and property.

The Dam Safety Bill, 2018 address all issues concerning dam safety including regular inspection of dams, Emergency Action Plan, comprehensive dam safety review, adequate repair and maintenance funds for dam safety, Instrumentation and Safety Manuals. It lays onus of dam safety on the dam owner and provides for penal provisions for commission and omission of certain acts.

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