

## Deficit rainfall in Karnataka

### What is the issue?

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Deficit rainfall in the Cauvery catchment areas is likely to cause drought in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

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### What is the status quo of water deficiency in Karnataka?

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- The areas encompassing the Cauvery catchment, is currently witnessing the worst monsoon in the country.

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- Earlier this week, four major reservoirs in the Karnataka side of the Cauvery basin had a storage of just 43.18 tmc.

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- This is barely 40% of total capacity, and is even lesser than the 51 tmc recorded last year (a drought year).

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- Karnataka has already stated that water will not be released for Kharif crop sowing, this year.

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- Instead, preference has been given to drinking water needs, estimated to be 30 tmc till the next monsoon.

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### What is the reason for this water deficit?

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- **Monsoon:** Off-shore troughs or depressions (areas of low pressure) in the southern Arabian Sea or the southern Bay of Bengal allow for accumulation of south- west monsoon clouds in south India.

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- The depressions were off the coast of Maharashtra and Gujarat, and rain-bearing monsoon too migrated there.
- **Anthropogenic:** Large-scale deforestation in the Western Ghats, continued sand mining.
- The inability to revive tributaries have led to declining health of the catchment area and river capacity.
- **Cropping pattern:** water-intensive crops such as sugarcane and paddy, which dominate the agrarian landscape.
- The proliferation of bore wells, which have had an impact on surface runoff.

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## **What is the status of water sharing with Tamilnadu?**

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- Supreme Court which is hearing appeals by Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala challenging the 2007 Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal award.
- The share of Cauvery had been determined as 270 tmc to Karnataka and 419 tmc to Tamil Nadu, among others.
- In June and July, Karnataka was to release 44 tmc to abide by the award.
- Only 7 tmc has been released so far, conflict over water-sharing is bound to rise again.
- With lower water release from Karnataka, the main samba crop in Tamil Nadu will be under threat.

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**Source: The Hindu**

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