

26/10/2023

Ans-II (Environment).

i) Evaluate the performance of the Dam Safety Act in India. Identify the loopholes in the Act, if any and provide ways to overcome the challenges arising out of the loopholes: (250 words)

Parliament passed Dam Safety Act in 2021 to manage the safety of Dams & increase the surveillance of the construction of Dams.

Dam Safety Act:

- * Passed in 2021
- * Under the ministry of public works & construction.

- * Aims to increase the surveillance of the construction of Dams with the standard operating procedure.

- * It mandates to set up National Dam Safety Authority at the central level & State Authority at the regional level.

* It mandates all the State Authorities to record & report the construction activities.

* It gives authority to impose fines if any non-compliance of the construction of Dams.

* Prefers jail terms too for the non-compliance.

Performance =

* So far, the states which are prone to disasters have set up State Dam Safety Board.

* Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand are the states which having own State Boards of Dam Safety.

* In the recent times, devastation of Dams due to Natural Disasters show that many State boards are not implementing the act properly.

* Eg. Choutang Dam flooded by Teesta river due to GLOF.

* In Himachal, many dams are under threat of devastation due to the cloudburst.

Loopholes:

- * Not implemented the Act properly
- * Construction of Dam is not done under SOP.
- * Improper Surveillance
- * Many states don't have own State Dam Safety Boards.
- * Construction is not cohesive with Environment Impact Assessment.

Way Forward:

- * Proper Implementation
- * Good Surveillance & regular management of Dams
- * Construction should be coordinated with future risks to Environment.
- * State Boards should be set up immediately
- * Centre should rush up the implementation of these provisions.