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Mr. Prabhu Chawla,
Editorial Director of
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CSI Synod Ecological Panel Convenor Airs Diverge

By Express News Service | 30th December 2011 01:48 AM

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM For the first time since the outbreak of the current bout of the Mullaperiyar dam row, a key office-bearer of the CSI Synod Ecological committee has come out against the construction of a new dam, while insisting that the existing dam should be decommissioned.

Airing a divergent view, Prof Mathew Koshy Punnackadu, convenor of the Synod Ecological committee and Nilackal Trust Ecological committee, said ways to provide waters from Mullaperiyar to Tamil Nadu have to be sought without constructing a new dam and bringing down the water level in a phased manner, starting at the level of 120 feet.

Any dam will have to be decommissioned in due course of time, because there is likelihood of the forest ecosystem surrounding the reservoir being badly affected through water intrusion, not to mention the building up of methane gas due to settling of wastes and silt in a dam, he said.

"Water is a highly sensitive issue in Tamil Nadu and the politics of that state draws sustenance from it to a great extent. Entering into a feud with the neighbouring state does not bode well for Kerala on many counts but at the same time the state has an unquestionable right to ensure the safety of lakhs of people in its territory," he said.

Whether new dams in a given area will withstand tremors over a period of time is also a topic for debate, he said.

"No one can guarantee whether a new dam built on whatever technology could withstand high tremors, and the the pressure exerted by the waters in a reservoir is also an important factor," he said.

"What is ideal for Kerala for maintaining cordial relations with Tamil Nadu is to evolve steps to ensure guaranteed supply of water from Mullaperiyar to that state through practical and environmental-friendly ways and also allaying the fears of the people here," he said.

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