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Expert moots decommissioning of Mullapperiyar dam

Radhakrishnan Kuttoor

Mullaperiyar dam should be decommissioned and no new dam should be constructed in Mullaperiyar in the larger interests protecting the life and property of the millions of families residing in the downstream of the old dam, said Dr Mathew Koshy Punnackadu, convener of the Ecological Committee attached to Church of South India.

According to Dr Koshy, the suggestions of the ousted chairman of the Mullaperiyar Agitation Council, Prof C.P. Roy, are very much relevant in this regard and a lot of people support his proposal.

Dr Koshy said Kerala should bring down the water level in Mullaperiyar dam to 100 metres and take measures to supply water to Tamil Nadu from it through some other means that include construction of a tunnel after decommissioning the old dam.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the water issue is a sensitive one and Kerala should take extra care to resolve the issue in an amicable manner, he said.

Prof Roy has also ruled out the practicability of a new dam in the Mullaperiyar and had suggested lowering of the dam water level to 100 metres, besides constructing a tunnel at 50 feet to draw water from the reservoir to Tamil Nadu, he said.

Safety aspect

Dr Koshy said Kerala should also consider the safety aspects of constructing a new dam in Mullaperiyar in the backdrop of the series of tremors of low and medium intensity experienced in the region over the past one year. How could we assure that a new dam would be safe in an area that has been witnessing series of seismic activity over the past few years?, he quipped.

Moreover, certain studies showed that dams also contributed to seismic activities in its vicinity, besides adversely affecting the forest eco system, he said.

Dr Koshy said the Government should take steps to decommission the Mullaperiyar dam with out any further delay with a view to ensure protection of the life and property of the nearly 35 lakh population residing in its downstream reaches. Both Kerala and Tamil Nadu should consider the issue in a broader perspective, he added.

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