



Ken, Betwa river linking will hurt fishing economy in the region: Dr Anish Andheria, president of the Wildlife Conservation Trust

According to Dr Andheria, the diversion of surplus water from the Ken basin to the dry Betwa basin will have several repercussions.

59 SHARES



Written by Benita Chacko | Mumbai | Updated: November 19, 2017 12:55 pm



In its report tabled at yesterday's FAC meeting, the committee "agreed to recommend no change in the height of the dam" since "any reduction, would make the whole project technically unfeasible".

TOP NEWS



Railways to offer discounts on train tickets, flexi-fare to be revamped: Piyush Goyal



Assembly elections results 2017 LIVE Updates: BJP set to retain power in Gujarat, win Himachal Pradesh



Five reasons why BJP won in Gujarat; one is MODI, here are the other four

The linking of Ken and Betwa rivers in Madhya Pradesh will affect the fishing economy in the region, according to Dr Anish Andheria, president of the Wildlife Conservation Trust. Addressing the annual conference of the Indian National Association for the Club of Rome, he said: "The government's river-linking proposal is a no-go project. They are only considering the benefit it will have on agriculture, not realising the impact on the fishing economy. More than 30 per cent of the country gets its livelihood from it. This is applicable to all river-linking projects."

He was speaking on the topic, "Towards a Resource Resilient India — Security of Natural Resources for All: The Critical Need for Coherence in Policies and Actions."

According to Dr Andheria, the diversion of surplus water from the Ken basin to the dry Betwa basin will have several repercussions.

“There is no such thing as surplus water. It is important for fresh water to flow into the sea as it reduces salinity at the mouth of the river. Fishes are found abundantly in this region where the fresh water merges with brackish water. If the water is diverted to other rivers, there will be no fish there,” said the city-based conservationist.

He added that the government has not accounted for the large number of trees that will be lost in the project. “It will also increase power consumption as they will have to use electricity to pump water in the direction away from its natural flow,” he said.

Speaking in the backdrop of the conference, professor Kirit Parikh, a former member of the Planning Commission, said farmers should get incentives to save solar power.

“Farmers using solar power should be able to sell surplus solar power. That will make the use of solar power more energy efficient as they will want to save as much power as possible to sell the rest. This model was implemented in Dhundi village in Gujarat and was found to be highly successful,” said Parikh, who is currently the chairman of the Integrated Research for Action and Development, a research institute that focuses on energy, climate change and environment.

The Maharashtra government has started a solar project under which solar panels powering agricultural pumps are connected to feeders and the supply is at subsidised rates. However, Parikh believes this alone will not motivate farmers to save power.