Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Programme

Why in news?

The government has decided to grant approval to Phase 2 and 3 of the DRIP (Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Programme).

Why is the project being expanded?

- The DRIP Phase 1 was doing a stellar job according to its mandate of providing dam safety since 2012.
- So, a third-party evaluation recommended the initiation of new phases.

What is the project cost?

- The government has decided to grant the approval to the DRIP at a project cost of Rs 10,211 crore.
- Of the total budget, Rs 7,000 crore will come from external assistance -the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.
- The balance will be borne by the concerned implementing agencies.

What is the significance of this decision?

- It is a step in the direction of water security, resilience against hazards and emergency action planning of the dam infrastructure around India.
- A perfect balance between structural resilience and economic resilience of dams has been envisioned through the DRIP project.
- Dam disasters are seen as matters of national shame; they not only lead to human tragedy, but also devastate the ecology.
- Thus, it is important that India becomes a leader in dam safety, which the DRIP Phases 1 and 2 will certainly be achieving in the coming times.

What is the need of a dam safety policy?

- In terms of the number of dams in the world, India ranks third, after China and the US, with 5,745 such projects.
- While 973 dams, or 18% of the total number, are 50-100-year old, 2,992 (56%) are aged 25-50.
- The age of these dams is what makes a robust Dam Safety Policy an absolute necessity.

How did DRIP originate?

- The event of the 1979 Machchhu dam disaster in Gujarat served as a wakeup call for dam safety and security in the country.
- The committee formed to investigate the disaster recommended clear guidelines for dam safety protocols along with a body to implement it.
- Thus, the DRIP was born and since then it has guarded the nation from impending disasters.
- Currently, 18 states are serviced by the DRIP's flagship project, the DHARMA (Dam Health And Rehabilitation Monitoring Application).

How will the new phases be implemented?

- The DRIP will be implemented over a period of 10 years in two phases.
- These phases will have each of six years, with two years overlapping from April 2021 to March 2031.
- The upcoming phases will bolster its operational mandate of dam safety like structural integrity, surveillance and maintenance, monitoring, etc.
- In spirit, the DRIP is the actualisation of the principles and guidelines laid down by the Dam Safety Bill, 2019.
- The new phases of the DRIP have a vibrant mix of **federalism** and **atmanirbharta** weaved into it.

Source: Financial Express

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