Rajasthan seeks formation of Inter-State Basin Authority

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Rajasthan has sought establishment of an Inter-State Basin Authority with the powers to resolve disputes among different States on sharing of river waters. The desert State does not agree with a proposal to set up an integrated group of watershed agencies, which it says will not serve any meaningful purpose.

Home Minister Gulab Chand Kataria said at the 13th meeting of the Inter-State Council's Standing Committee in New Delhi last week that since several Boards were already functioning for management of inter-State basin waters, there would be no utility for the integrated group of watershed agencies.

The Boards include Bhakra-Beas Management Board for Indus basin, Upper Yamuna River Board for Yamuna river waters, Narmada Control Authority for Narmada river waters and the Madhya Pradesh-Rajasthan Chambal Inter-State Board for Chambal river waters.

Mr. Kataria said the practice being followed for distribution of water on the basis of catchment areas of rivers went against the interest of a State like Rajasthan because it had very little such areas. “Rajasthan should be exempted from the rules framed on the basis of catchment areas,” he said.

More allocation sought

While seeking allocation of more Central funds for expansion of forest areas to meet the national targets, Mr. Kataria sought a special status for Rajasthan in view of its "scattered environmental status” with the presence of the Aravalli hills range and the vast Thar desert. Rajasthan was geographically the biggest State in the country, he pointed out.