

Objectives of the Hirakud Dam Project

The Hirakud Dam Project is a multipurpose Major project built across river Mahanadi at about 15.0 Km. upstream of Sambalpur town in the state of Orissa (i.e latitude 21°32'00"N, longitude 83°52'30"E) . This happens to be the first post independence major multipurpose river valley project in India.

In 1945, it was decided, under the Chairmanship of Dr.B.R. Ambedkar, that the potentialities of river Mahanadi should be fruitfully and expeditiously investigated for multipurpose use. Central Water-ways Irrigation and Navigation Commission took up the work. The foundation stone of Hirakud Dam was laid by Sir Howthorne Lewis, the then Governor of Orissa, on 15th March 1946. The project was formally inaugurated by the first Prime Minister of independent India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 13th January 1957. Power generation along with water supply for irrigation started progressively from 1956 and full potential was achieved by 1966.

Hirakud Dam is a composite structure of earth, concrete and masonry. The Main Dam, having overall length of 4.8 Km., spans between hills Lamdungri on left and Chandidungri on the right. The Dam is flanked by 21.0 Km. long earthen dykes both on left and right sides to close the low saddles beyond the abutment hills. It has the distinction of being the longest dam in Asia, 25.80 Km. long with Dam and Dykes taken together. It has also the rare distinction of forming the biggest artificial lake in Asia with a reservoir spread of 743.0 Kms.at full reservoir level. Hirakud Dam intercepts 83,400 Sq.Km. (32,200 sq.miles) of Mahanadi catchment .The reservoir has a live storage of 4,823 M.Cum (present) with gross storage of 5,896 M.Cum (present) .

Hirakud Dam project provides 1, 59,106 Ha. of Kharif and 1,08,385 Ha. of Rabi irrigation in the districts of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bolangir and Subarnapur. The water released through power house irrigates further 2,51,000 Ha. of C.C.A in Mahanadi delta. Besides this the project provides flood protection to 9500 Sq.Km. of delta area in undivided districts of Cuttack and Puri. The completed cost of the project was Rs. 100.02 crores. in 1957.

