



Cattle Island: Hirakud Reservoir

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Why in News

The **Odisha Forest and Environment Department** is starting **ecotourism packages** for tourists to islands inside the **Hirakud reservoir**.

Cattle island, one of three islands in the Hirakud reservoir, has been selected as a sightseeing destination.

Key Points

- **Cattle Island:**
 - It is located in one of the **extreme points of Hirakud Reservoir**. It is **completely inhabited by wild animals**, and without any trace of humans.
 - It is near Kumarbandh village of **Belpahar-Banharpali range** which is about 90 km from **Sambalpur, Odisha**.
 - The island is a submerged hill, and before the construction of Hirakud Dam it was a developed village.
 - During the resettlement period, **villagers left some of their cattle behind**; when the dam construction was over, the cattle settled on the hilltop.
 - As the area started to submerge following the dam's construction, the cattle moved up to **Bhujapahad**, an elevated place in Jharsuguda district. Subsequently named '**Cattle island**'.

- **Hirakud Dam:**

- **Establishment:**

- It is a multipurpose scheme conceived by **Er. M. Visveswaraya in 1937**, after recurrence of devastating floods in Mahanadi river.
 - Its first hydro power was commissioned in 1956.
 - It is the longest dam of India.

- **Location:**

The dam is built across **river Mahanadi** at about 15 km upstream of Sambalpur town of Odisha.

- The **Mahanadi River system** is the third largest of peninsular India after Godavari and Krishna, and the largest river of Odisha state.
 - It rises from a place near **Sihawa in Bastar hills** in the state of **Chhattisgarh** to the **south of Amarkantak**.
 - The catchment area of the river extends to **Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Maharashtra**.

- **Objectives:**

- **Irrigation:** The project provides 1,55,635 hectares of Kharif and 1,08,385 ha of Rabi irrigation in the districts of **Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bolangir and Subarnapur**.

The water released through the power house irrigates further 4,36,000 ha of regions in Mahanadi Delta.

- **Power Generation:** The installed capacity for power generation is 347.5 MW through its two power houses at Burla, at the right bank and Chiplima, at 22 km downstream of the dam.
 - **Flood Control:** The project provides flood protection to Mahanadi basin including 9500 sq. km of delta area in districts of Cuttack and Puri.

- **Wildlife Sanctuary:**

The **Debrigarh wildlife sanctuary** is located near Hirakud dam. It is bounded on the east and north by the huge Hirakud reservoir.

It is one of the select few sanctuaries in the state supporting both terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity.

Source: TH