

Kaveri River



Kaveri river flows in South Karnataka and then to Tamil Nadu.

The Kaveri River (Kannada: ಕಾವೇರಿ, Tamil: காவேரி), also spelled Cauvery in English, is one of the major rivers of India, which is considered sacred by Hindus.

The origin of the river is traditionally placed at Talakaveri, Kodagu district in the Western Ghats in the state of Karnataka, flows generally south and east through Karnataka and Tamil

Nadu and across the southern Deccan plateau through the southeastern lowlands, emptying

into the Bay of Bengal through two principal mouths.

The Kaveri River basin is estimated to be 27,700 square miles (72,000 km²) with many tributaries including the Shimsha, the Hemavati River, the Arkavathy River, Honnuhole River, Lakshmana Tirtha River, Kabini River, Bhavani River, the Lokapavani River, the Noyyal River and the Amaravati River. Rising in southwestern Karnataka state, it flows

southeast some 475 mi (765 km) to enter the Bay of Bengal. East of the city of Mysore it forms the island of Shivanasamudra, on either side of which are the scenic Shivanasamudra

Falls that descend about 320 ft (100 m)



[1] **The river is the source** for an extensive irrigation system and for hydroelectric power.

[2] **The river has supported irrigated agriculture** for centuries and served as the lifeblood of the ancient kingdoms and modern cities of South India. After the river leaves the Kodagu hills and flows onto the Deccan plateau, it forms two

islands, Srirangapatna and Shivanasamudra. At Sivasamudra Island the river drops 320 ft (98

m), forming the famous Shivanasamudra Falls known separately as Gagana Chukki and Bhara Chukki. Asia's first hydroelectric plant (built in 1902) was on the left falls and supplied power to the city of Bangalore.

In its course through Karnataka, the channel is interrupted by twelve "anicut" (dams) for the purpose of irrigation. From the anicut at Madadkatte, an artificial channel is diverted at a distance of 72 miles (116 km), irrigating an area of 10,000 acres (40 km²), and ultimately bringing its water supply to the town of Mandya.

Near Srirangapatna, there is an aqueduct, the Bangara Doddi Nala, which was constructed in the 17th century by the Wodeyar maharaja of Mysore, Ranadhira Kantirava, in memory of his favorite consort. It is said to be the only aqueduct where the water from a river, dammed upstream, is carried by the aqueduct over the very same river few miles downstream[citation needed]

This aqueduct also served as a motorable bridge until 1964. In addition to providing many ancient and modern canals with water from the river for irrigation purposes, the Kaveri also serves as the main drinking water source for many towns and villages. The cities of Bangalore,

[3] **Mandya and Mysore** depend almost entirely on the Kaveri for their drinking

water supply. In fact, the river is called Jeevanadhi which, in Kannada, means a river supporting life.

Kaveri river at Thiruchirapalli

The river enters Tamil Nadu through Dharmapuri district leading to the flat plains where it

meanders. It drops into the Hogenakkal Falls just before it arrives in the town of Hogenakkal

in Tamil Nadu. The three minor tributaries , Palar, Chennar and Thoppar enter into the Kaveri

on her course, above Stanley Reservoir in Mettur, where the dam has been constructed. The

Mettur Dam joins the Sita and Pala mountains beyond that valley through which the Kaveri

flows, up to the Grand Anicut. The dam in Mettur impounds water not only for the improvement of irrigation but also to ensure the regular and sufficient supply of water to the

important Hydro-Electric generating station at Mettur. The river further runs through the length Erode district where river Bhavani, which running through the breadth of the district,

merges with it. The confluence of the rivers Cauvery, Bhavani and Akash Ganga (imaginary)

is at the exact place of Bhavani Kooduthurai or Tiriveni Sangamam, Northern a part of Erode City.

While passing through Erode, two more tributaries merge. Noyyal and Amaravathi join it in

Karur district before it reaches Tiruchirapalli district. Here the river becomes wide, with a

sandy bed, and flows in an easterly direction until it splits into two at upper Anicut about 14

kilometres west of Thiruchirappalli City. The northern branch of the river is called the Coleroon or Kollidam while the southern branch retains the name Kaveri and then goes directly eastwards into Thanjavur District. These two rivers join again and form the Srirangam island which is a part of city of Tiruchirappalli.

The Chola king Karikalan has been immortalised as he constructed the bank for the Kaveri all

the way from Puhar (Kaveripoompattinam) to Srirangam. It was built as far back as 1,600 years ago or even more. On both sides of the river are found walls spreading to a distance of

1,080 feet (330 m). The Kallanai dam constructed by him on the border between

Tiruchirappalli and Thanjavur is a superb work of engineering, which was made with earth

and stone and has stood the vagaries of nature for hundreds of years.

In 19th century, it was renovated on a bigger scale. The name of the historical dam has since

been changed to —Grand Anicutll and stands as the head of a great irrigation system in the

Thanjavur district. From this point, the Coleroon or Kollidam River runs north-east and

discharges itself into the sea at Devakottai, a little south of Parangipettai. From river

Coleroon, Manniar and Uppanai branch off at lower Anicut and irrigates a portion of

Mayiladuthurai taluk and Sirkazhi taluk in Nagapatnam District. After Grand Anicut, the

Kaveri divides into numerous branches and covers the whole of the delta with a vast network

of irrigation channels in Nagapatnam and Tiruvarur districts and gets lost in the wide

expanse

of paddy fields. The mighty Kaveri river here is reduced to an insignificant channel and enters the Bay of Bengal at the historical place of Poompohar about 13 km north of Tharangampadi.

Usage

Stanley Reservoir formed by Mettur Dam

The primary uses of Kaveri are providing water for irrigation, water for household consumption and the generation of electricity.

An estimate at the time of the first Five Year Plan puts the total flow of the Kaveri at 12 million acre-feet(15 km³), of which 60% was used for irrigation.

[4] **The Torekadanahalli** pumpstation sends 540 Mld (million liters per day) of water from

Kaveri 100 km to Bangalore.

[5]**The water for the Kaveri is primarily supplied by monsoon rains.** Dams, such as the Krishna

Raja Sagara Dam and Mettur Dam, and those on its tributaries such as Banasura Sagar Dam

project on a Kabini River tributary, store water from monsoon periods and release the water

during the dry months. Even so, during the months of February–May, water levels are often

quite low, and in some channels and distributaries riverbeds may become dry.[citation needed]

[6] **Flow generally begins to increase in June or July**[citation needed]

However, in some years when

rains are light, the low river level can lead to agricultural distress in areas dependent upon the

Kaveri for irrigation.[citation needed]

The hydroelectric plant built on the left Sivanasamudra Falls on the Kaveri in 1902 was the

first hydroelectric plant in Karnataka.[1]

The Krishna Raja Sagara Dam has a capacity of 49 tmc ft.

[7] **Mettur Dam** which creates Stanley Reservoir has a capacity of 93.4 tmc ft.(thousand million cubic ft)

In August 2003, inflow into reservoirs in Karnataka was at a 29 year low, with a 58% shortfall.

[8] **Water stored in Krishna Raja Sagara** amounted to only 4.6 tmc ft.

A dry section of Kollidam during a drought at Tiruchirapalli

Water is addressed in the Constitution of India.

[9] **The government** has set up tribunals for water disputes.

The Kaveri Water Disputes Tribunal was set up in June 1990.

[10] **Kaveri water**

sharing has been a major issue of contention between the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu,

Kerala and the union territory of Puducherry. A central government agency has been formed

to look into this issue. According to a study conducted by the central government in 1972, the

utilisation of water from Kaveri in Tamil Nadu was 489 tmc and Karnataka's utilization was 277

tmc. With the growth in the population, Karnataka wishes to increase its utilization to 465 tmc.

The Kaveri Tribunal, in its interim award of June 1991, ordered that Karnataka should release

205 tmc of water to Tamil Nadu during one "water year" - from June to May. It also stipulated a monthly quota for flow.

[11] **The Tribunal** which had been investigating the issue for 16 years finally came out with the

verdict on 5 February 2007 of 419 tmc for Tamil Nadu, 270 tmc for Karnataka, 50 tmc for

Kerala and 7 tmc for Puducherry, which both the governments of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu

have contested [citation needed]

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[12] **Significance in Hinduism**

Devotees throwing coins at Talakaveri

Talakaveri is a pilgrimage site set amidst Bramahagiri Hills in Kodagu. Thousands of pilgrims flock to the three temples at the source of the river, especially on the specified day

known as Tula sankramana when the river water has been said to gush out like a fountain at a

predetermined time.

There are several legends about how the river Kaveri came into being. Chapters 11-14 of

the

Shanda purana (also known as the Kaveri purana) relate many of them. According to the most

well known version, when the great ocean was churned by the devas and the asuras in order

to obtain amrita, the elixir of life, Lord Vishnu created Mohini, a non-pareil of infinite charm

and appeal, to distract the asuras and restore the elixir to the devas. Goddess lakshmi also sent

along Lopamudre, an incarnation of Parvathi, to assist Mohini. After the elixir was

successfully restored to the devas Mohini retired to Brahmagiri and turned into a rocky cave.

Lopamudre was brought up by Brahma as his daughter.

After some time Kavera, a sage of renown, came to the Brahmagiri to meditate. Kavera was

lonely and prayed to Lord Brahma that he might bless him with a child. Brahma was pleased

by his devotion and gave him lopamudre for a daughter. Lopamudre was renamed Kaveri after the sage.

Kaveri was very keen that her father should have every happiness and prosperity in life and a

blessed land full of good and happy people. So she went to the Brahmagiri too and prayed to

Lord Brahma that she might turn into a river and flow through the country, pouring her

blessings on the people and turning the land green and fertile. She also prayed that her waters

might be so holy that all those who took a dip in it might be absolved of all their sins.

Brahma

granted her both the boons readily and Kaveri was really happy.

But something else was to happen to her first. Sage agastya happened to see Kaveri when she

was deep in meditation on the Brahmagiri. He fell in love with her and asked her to marry him. Although her heart was set on turning into a river of blessings, Kaveri could not refuse

agastya. But she made him promise that if ever she left her alone too long she would have the

right to forsake him and go her way. Agastya promised and kept his word faithfully for some

time. But one day he got busy in a theological discussion with his disciples and lost track of

time. Kaveri waited patiently for a while but after some hours had passed she jumped into agastya's special holy tank and flowed from it like a river. As soon as the disciples of agastya

saw what had happened they tried to stop her from flowing away. But Kaveri promptly went

underground and appeared again at Bhaganda Kshetra and flowed on toward Valambari and

finally into the Bay of Bengal. And it has been worshipped as a sacred river – throughout its

course – ever since.

There is yet another interesting belief according to which the river Ganges also joins Kaveri

underground once a year, during the Tulamasa, in order to wash herself free of the pollution

caused by the crowds of sinners who bathe in her waters all the year round. Kaveri is considered to be as sacred as the Ganges throughout its course, with the same power to wash

off all one's sins. But Bhagamandala, where the three rivers meet, is considered to be the most sacred spot of all. There are temples all along its banks visited by thousands of pilgrims.

Kaveri is joined by several rivers, the most important ones being Kakkabe, Kadanur, Kummahole, Hemavathi, Lakshmanatirtha, Shimsha etc., it flows into the Bay of Bengal in Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu.

During the month of Tula (Tamil month Ippasi), devotees take holy dip (tula snanam) in the

Kavery in the pilgrim centers in its banks across the two states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu,

most prominent of them being Bhagamandala in Karnataka and Mayavaram in Tamilnadu -

which is home to famous Thula Kattam bathing ghat in the river banks. The cult of the river

Goddess began in Kodagu and was centered in Bhaganda Kshetra(Bhagamandala).

The three major river islands at Kaveri have a strong Vaishnava heritage, with sculptures of

Lord Vishnu in a reclining posture on the legendary seven-headed serpent (Sesha) as his celestial bed (Sheshashayana). These three temples are known as Adi Ranga, Madya Ranga,

and Anthya Ranga.

On the banks of the Kaveri is the ancient temple town of Talakad where the holy festival Panchalinga Darshana is held every 12 years and devotees bathe in the Kaveri River.

[13]**The cauvery banks and the cauvery delta** in particular is home to numerous saivite and

vaishnavite temples. This region is home to a very significant number of Paadal Petra Sthalangal of Thevaram and vaishnavite Divya Desams

[14]Prominent towns / religious sites in the Kaveri banks

- Srirangapatna
- Talakad
- Tirumakudal Narasipur
- Bhavani - Thirunana
- Kodumudi
- Musiri
- Kulithalai
- Tiruchirappalli
- Srirangam
- Thiruvaiyaru
- Thirukattupalli
- Swamimalai
- Kumbakonam
- Mayavaram
- Poompuhar

[15]Veneration as a goddess

The legend of Kaveri has its origins in Puranas. Kaveri is linked with three puranic icons[14]

i.e. Agasthya, King Kavera and Lopamudra, the earthly, feminine manifestation of Kaveri herself. It is held that Lopamudra was granted the form of a river, by Brahma, in answer to tapas performed by all the three, including herself.

Both saint Agasthya and king Kavera were independently performing tapas with salvation (Moksha) as the goal. Pleased by their tapas, Brahma appears before them only to deny both

immediate Moksha. Instead, Brahma rules to Kavera that he shall beget a daughter who will

lead him to Moksha; to Agasthya, Brahma says, he shall give him a divine wife; Agasthya is

to live with her and enrich the world before eventually attaining Moksha. In the meantime it

was said that Vishnumaya, the divine daughter of Brahma—the impeccable feminine creation

of the creator, expressing to Brahma her wish to serve the world. Being pleased, Brahma

ordain her to be, in due time, Lopamudra, the daughter of Kavera, then the wife of Agasthya,

and eventually the sacred of the sacred, the river Kaveri.

In a slightly different version, Kaveri is regarded as the outpour of sage Agasthya's

Kamandala; it is said the Lord Ganesh, assuming the form of a crow, upset Agasthya's

Kamandala to release the Kaveri.

After assuming the form river, Kaveri performed another tapas to become the sacred of rivers, more sacred than even the Ganges. Her tapas was answered and Lord Vishnu appears

before her. On hearing her wish, Lord Vishnu says "Ganges is sacred because she originates

from my feet; but you are infinitely more sacred to her as I adorn you as my garland". Upon

this blessing, it is said that even Ganges is said to come underground, once a year, to Kaveri

to cleanse herself. To this day, Vaishnavites regard Kaveri, the river that holds Srirangam in

her bosom, as the most sacred of rivers. Vaishnavites lovingly regard Kaveri as the mother

of Ranganayaki, the divine consort of Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam in Tiruchirappalli.