

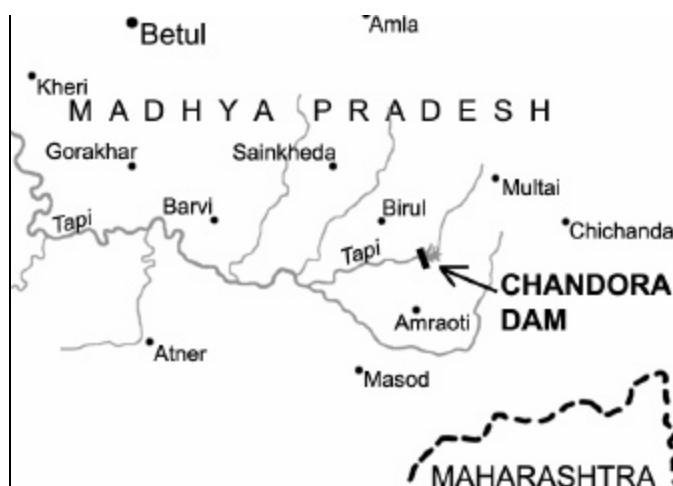
## Chandora Dam Breach in Madhya Pradesh

A high alert has been sounded in 100 villages and six villages vacated as the officials took emergency steps on August 8, 2007 to empty the Chandora reservoir on the Tapi river in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh after a huge 100-metre long crack was developed in the earthen dam. All villages on river banks had been alerted and all 8 gates of the 21-year-old dam at Chandora village, 70 Km from Betul had been to release water. Water was also being released through the canals adding the water level of the river downstream was also rising alarmingly. Irrigation officials had been ringing emergency siren since August 7 afternoon after detecting the breach in a portion of the 2043 m long dam.

Water level of the reservoir was full at 684 m and it was getting more water due to heavy rains in catchment area, Executive Engineer R C Rathore said. Thus the dam would have released about 18.2 Million Cubic Meters of water from the dam only, the water coming to the dam would be additional. It is not clear in how much time this quantity of water was released. District Collector and other senior officials reached the dam site today to supervise rescue operation. Chandora village was also vacated. The dam in Multai tahsil was constructed at a cost of Rs 16 crore with World Bank assistance in 1982 (completed in 1986) to facilitate irrigation in 3600 ha and it had breached 15 years ago. Meanwhile, at Bhopal, Samajwadi Party MLA Dr Sunilam told reporters that about 2,000 villages were facing threat following the breach. He urged the state government to take emergency steps to minimise the damage and provide timely help to the affected people.

### Salient Feature of Chandora Dam

Year of Completion	1986
Latitude	21-42 N
Longitude	78-12 E
Catchment Area (sq km)	71.23
Submergence (ha)	391.9
Gross Capacity (Th cum)	18200
Live Capacity (Th cum)	16480
Spillway Capacity (cum/sec)	681
Type of dam	Earth/ Gravity/ Masonry Dam
Ht of dam (m)	17.26
Length of Dam (m)	2043
Purpose	Irrigation
River	Tapti
Dist	Betul



This is one of the 168 dams of Madhya Pradesh that are listed as distressed dams, meaning they are unsafe dams. This dam had breached in 1992, it seems and was under rehabilitation in 1999. The World Bank is even currently funding a large **MADHYA PRADESH WATER RESTRUCTURING PROJECT**.

The breach in the 21 year dam raises many questions:

1. How come a dam that is just 21 year old, has already breached in sixth year of its existence and again now?
2. If the World Bank funded it, than what has the WB got to say about it?
3. If the dam was listed as distressed dam by the MP govt, than why was it allowed to fill to the full capacity, that too when the monsoon is just about halfway through?
4. the inflow into a dam that has a catchment of only 71 sq km, could be monitored, and should have been monitored when the dam has been described as distressed, and water should have been released in advance. Why was this not done?
5. Who was responsible for monitoring and taking decisions about the dam? What action will be taken against him?
6. If the dam was part of the World Bank funded Dam Safety project, than what safety measures were taken during that project and why was it still called distressed dam? Why did the dam still breach?
7. What lessons would MP govt and the WB learn from this for the rest of the distressed and other dams of MP?
8. What has the Central Water Commission (responsible for Dam safety issues across the country) been doing about such distressed dams? Who is responsible for the lapses in CWC?

Sources:

1. UNI 080807,
2. National Registry of Large Dams 2002 (Central Water Commssion, Govt of India)
3. Submission to the World Commission on Dams
4. Website of the Water Resources Dept, Govt of Madhya Pradesh: [www.mp.nic.in/wrd](http://www.mp.nic.in/wrd)
5. "Jawant Sagar Dam Collapse: A wake up call" by Himanshu Thakkar, July Aug 2007 issue of "Dams, Rivers & People"