

Atal Bhujal Yojana(ATAL JAL)

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Manifest pedagogy: India including many parts of the world are faced with acute water scarcity. Indiscriminate and unscientific usage is depriving the basic need to majority of population in many parts of the country. There is enough resources which need to be managed properly. The provisions of the program could be asked at both prelims and mains.

In news: Honourable PM recently launched Atal Bhujal Yojana.

Placing it in syllabus: Water conservation

Static dimensions: Ground water level issues and water scarcity in India

Current dimensions: Atul Bhujal Yojana and its provisions & It's likely impact

Content: On the 95th **birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, PM launched Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL). Atal Jal Yojana or the guidelines related to the Jal Jeevan Mission, are big steps in proving the resolve to deliver water to every household in the country by 2024.

Ground water level issues and water scarcity in India:

- India accounts for **16 per cent of the world's population** and has just **4 percent of the global water resources**.
- According to the **Central Water Commission (CWC)**, the **estimated water resources potential** of the country is **1,999 billion cubic metres (BCM)**.
- Of this, the estimated **utilisable resources are 1,122 BCM per year** – 690 BCM per year surface water and 432 BCM per year replenishable groundwater.
- The **per capita availability** in the country **will decrease**

from 1,434 cubic metres in 2025 to 1,219 cubic metres in 2050 ((a water-stressed condition happens when per capita availability is less than 1,700 cubic metres and a water-scarcity condition when per capita availability falls below 1,000 cubic metres)).

- **Water scarcity is most acute in** the basins of the Cauvery, Pennar, Sabarmati and east-flowing rivers and west-flowing rivers of Kutch and Saurashtra including Luni.
- **India is currently ranked 120 among 122 countries in the water quality index.**
- **UNESCO World Water Development Report** states that India is the largest extractor of groundwater in the world.
- Fifty-four percent of India's groundwater wells have declined over the past seven years and **21 major cities are expected to run out of groundwater by 2020.**
- **India faces a dual challenge:** to regulate the growing demand for groundwater while replenishing its sources.
- **NITI Aayog Composite Water Management Index (CWMI) report** states that the majority of states have scored less than 50% in the source augmentation of groundwater resource index.

Water and Related Statistics report, 2019:

- The report is published by the CWC.
- The **annual replenishable groundwater resources** in India as of 2017 are **432 BCM**, out of which **393 BCM is the annual "extractable" groundwater availability.**
- **Fifteen states** account for about **90 per cent of the groundwater potential** in the country.
- **Uttar Pradesh accounts for 16.2 per cent, followed by Madhya Pradesh (8.4%), Maharashtra (7.3%),** Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Punjab and Gujarat.
- The current annual groundwater extraction is 249 BCM, the **largest user being the irrigation sector.**
- Hence there is a need for alternatives to water-

intensive crops such as paddy and sugarcane.

- **Compared to** the decadal average for **2009-18**, there has been a **decline in the groundwater level in 61% of wells** monitored by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB).
- Among the states monitored, the **highest depletion has been in Karnataka**, followed by Maharashtra , Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab.



The Central Groundwater Board (CGWB) has classified the country's assessment units (blocks, taluks, mandals etc..) into safe, semi-critical and over-exploited in terms of groundwater resources. The Jal Shakti Ministry recently said that **of the country's assessment units 14% are semi-critical, 5% are critical, and 17% are over-exploited (as of 2017).**

ATAL JAL and it's provisions:

Objective:

- To strengthen the institutional framework for participatory groundwater management and bring about behavioral changes at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management.
- **To be implemented in seven States, viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.**
- Implementation of the scheme is expected to **benefit nearly 8350 Gram Panchayats in 78 districts** in these States.
- ATAL JAL will **promote panchayat led ground water management** and behavioural change with primary focus on demand side management.
- It is to be implemented over a **period of 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25).**
- The concepts such as **'Water User Associations'** and **'Water Budgeting'** will be introduced.

- The Yojana can be **divided largely into two segments** – one is in institutional capacity and the other involves incentivising states.
- The former will include **efforts to** increase the capacity for sustainable groundwater management, **strengthening of water user associations** etc..
- The latter will **reward states** for improved data dissemination on groundwater, preparing water security plans, converging multiple schemes and so on.
- The total outlay is **Rs.6000 crore**, out of which **50% shall be in the form of World Bank loan**, and be repaid by the Central Government.
- The **remaining 50%** shall be **through Central Assistance** from regular budgetary support.
- The entire World Bank's loan component and Central Assistance shall be passed on to the States as **Grants**.
- If the scheme meets its objectives in water-stressed areas, it will be extended to other parts of the country.
- It is an **updated and modified version of** Groundwater Management and Regulation scheme which is in force since 2013.

Impact:

It envisages a **holistic approach for community-led Water Security Plans**. It helps in **arresting the rate of decline of groundwater levels** as well as over consumption of water.

It **encourages Gram Panchayats** to perform better in water management. It is a significant step in achieving the **government's target** of providing clean **drinking water facility to 15 crore households in the next five years**.

The **theme for World Water Day 2019** is '*Leaving no one behind*'. This is an adaptation of the central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. ATAL JAL helps in achieving **SDG 6** (to ensure availability and sustainable

management of water for all by 2030).