

New groundwater extraction guidelines

April 1, 2020

Why in news?

National Green Tribunal (NGT) has stayed the implementation of the revised guidelines notified in December, 2019 by the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA).

Guidelines:

1. It introduced the concept of **Water Conservation Fee (WCF)**. It is designed to **progressively increase from safe to over-exploited areas** and from low to high water consuming industries as well as with increasing quantum of ground water extraction.
2. Encouraging use of recycled and treated sewage water by industries.
3. Provision of action against polluting industries.
4. Mandatory requirement of digital flow meters, piezometers and digital water level recorders.
5. **Mandatory water audit by industries** abstracting groundwater 500 m³/day or more in safe and semi-critical and 200 m³/day or more in critical and over-exploited assessment units.
6. **Mandatory roof top rain water harvesting** except for specified industries.
7. Measures to be adopted to ensure prevention of groundwater contamination in premises of polluting industries/ projects.

Exemption from requirement of NOC has been given to –

- Agricultural users,
- Users employing non-energized means to extract water,
- Individual households (using less than 1 inch diameter

delivery pipe),

- Armed Forces Establishments during operational deployment or during mobilization in forward locations,
- Strategic and operational infrastructure projects for Armed Forces,
- Defense and Paramilitary Forces Establishments,
- Government water supply agencies
- Ground water extraction in India primarily for irrigation in agricultural activities, accounts for 90% of the annual groundwater extraction and remaining 10% of extraction is for drinking & domestic as well as industrial uses. India is the largest user of groundwater in the world.
- Out of the total of 6584 assessment units, **1034 have been categorized as 'Over-exploited'** 253 as '**Critical**', 681 as '**Semi-Critical**' and 4520 as '**Safe**'. The remaining 96 assessment units have been classified as '**Saline**' due to non-availability of fresh groundwater due to salinity problem.