

8th National Level Steering Committee meeting of Atal Bhujal Yojana held at New Delhi

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The eighth meeting of the National Level Steering Committee (NLSC) for implementation of Atal Bhujal Yojana was held at New Delhi under the chairpersonship of Ms. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (**DoWR, RD & GR**), Ministry of Jal Shakti. Senior officers from the participating States, Members of NLSC, representatives from various Ministries / Departments, officers of the World Bank and NPMU attended the meeting.



In her remarks, the Secretary of the Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (**DoWR, RD & GR**) highlighted the Atal Bhujal Yojana as a unique and pioneering initiative that has successfully engaged local communities and enhanced awareness around groundwater management. She emphasized that climate change and its adverse impact on the water cycle are already evident, making it

imperative to mainstream the Atal Bhujal Yojana across the country. She stressed the need to empower communities to actively take on the challenge of sustainable groundwater management.

The Secretary, DoWR RD & GR encouraged the participating states to scale up successful pilots and initiatives implemented under the Scheme. She also advocated for making water budgeting mandatory across all Gram Panchayats to foster greater community participation in conserving groundwater and ensuring its efficient use. Recognizing that stakeholders involved in the Scheme have acquired substantial knowledge, she underlined the importance of packaging and transferring this knowledge to derive benefits in other schemes as well. Similarly, the skills developed by trained personnel under the Scheme should be effectively utilized to maximize outcomes. Finally, she urged participating states to formulate comprehensive plans for the operation and maintenance of the equipment and infrastructure established under the Scheme, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact.



Sh Subodh Yadav, the Additional Secretary (Admin, IC&GW) and National Project Coordinator of Atal Bhujal Yojana highlighted that the scheme has entered its sixth year of implementation. Emphasizing the need to demonstrate measurable impact for potential scale-up, a pilot case study from Ismailpur Gram Panchayat, Sadaura Block, Yamunanagar District, Haryana was presented. The case focused on high-frequency water level data analysis and its application in planning. The innovative practices / projects taken up by the participating States under the Scheme were also presented. Further, an Impact Assessment conducted by the Quality Council of India, a third-party government verification agency, was shared. The assessment highlighted positive outcomes of the scheme such as increased community awareness, greater women's participation, inclusivity, enhanced local knowledge, behavioral shifts towards water-efficient practices and cropping patterns, and broader socio-economic benefits.

Thereafter, the World Bank team delivered a presentation on the implementation support provided during the World Bank Review Mission. The presentation highlighted the positive outcomes of the Scheme as well as the areas to be improved upon. Participating States were also encouraged to fully utilize the available funds to maximize its impact.



The NLSC meeting was followed by presentations by the participating States in which they showcased the scheme's local impacts, offering valuable insights for cross-learning and replication.

The Committee reviewed the overall progress of the scheme and advised the States to utilize the learnings from the scheme and replicate the same in the other parts of the States to strengthen groundwater management efforts.

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