

Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri C.R. Patil inaugurates Two-Day National Workshop on “Policy Framework for Operation & Maintenance of Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes” in New Delhi

Shri C.R. Patil Underscores the Centrality of Sustainable O&M in Rural Water Security

Jal Jeevan Mission organises the two day National Workshop focuses on Long-Term Sustainability, Digital Monitoring Tools, and Community Ownership

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Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri C R Patil inaugurates two-day National Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on the Policy Framework for Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes today in New Delhi. Organised by the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, the workshop is being held on 10-11 July, 2025 and marks a pivotal moment in the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) as it transitions from infrastructure creation to sustained service delivery.



In his inaugural address, Union Minister Shri C.R. Patil emphasized the urgent need for robust O&M systems as the Mission enters a new phase. He said that this is the first time a mission of such magnitude has been taken up anywhere in the world and reiterated how JJM has made a holistic impact on rural life – improving health, boosting the economy, reducing inequalities, and saving time and money while reducing disease burden.

He concluded by emphasising that the true measure of success lies in whether these taps continue to deliver clean water to every household, every single day, in the years to come. For that, sustainable O&M is non-negotiable. He underlined the importance of granting accountability along with rights, and called for targeted interventions, especially during challenging periods such as the monsoons. He said “We all have to work in tandem to realise the goal of Har Ghar Jal as envisioned by the Hon’ble Prime Minister to ensure that no one is left behind. We must act together now to make our nation water secure.”



Day 1 of the national workshop witnessed the esteemed presence of Hon’ble Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C.R. Patil; Secretary, DDWS, Shri Ashok K. K. Meena; Additional Secretary & Mission Director, DDWS, Shri Kamal Kishore Soan along with senior officials from DDWS. It also brought together Additional Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, Secretaries of Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) and Department of Panchayati Raj (DoPR), Mission Directors (Jal Jeevan Mission), Engineers-in-Chief – Rural Water Supply, Chief Engineers, Commissioners, Joint Secretaries and District Magistrates/ Collectors/Chief Executive Officers - Zila Parishad (CEO-ZP) as participants from the States and UTs.

Setting the context for the two-day national workshop, Shri Ashok K.K. Meena, Secretary, DDWS, highlighted India’s historic progress under JJM, with over 15.66 Crore rural households now having access to tap water, representing over 81% national coverage. He stressed that the real challenge now lies in ensuring reliable and safe water supply for the future. “The next phase of JJM is about shifting from infrastructure creation to sustainable service delivery. Operation and Maintenance is no longer a back-end activity, it is the core of water security in villages,” he noted. He also mentioned that the JAM trinity can be leveraged for effective O&M, especially mobile technology, which can be used effectively to streamline various processes, and to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability.



Shri Kamal Kishore Soan, AS&MD, NJJM, in his welcome speech, reaffirmed the need for a comprehensive policy framework that enables robust, community-led, and technology-supported O&M practices. “This workshop is a platform to listen, co-create, and collectively shape the next phase of the Mission. The aim is to strengthen policies, institutional mechanisms, and service delivery models for long-term sustainability,” he said.



The inaugural session was followed by thematic roundtable discussions that formed the core of Day 1. Representatives from States and UTs participated in seven focused group discussions covering:

- Institutional frameworks for coordinated planning and service delivery
- Rural water utilities and professional management
- Asset handover and lifecycle management
- Innovative financing models
- WASH economy and skilling
- Water quality surveillance and trust-building
- Legal and regulatory support for rural water services

Each group shared insights and field experiences, contributing practical ideas and innovative models. An open house session enabled cross-learning and reflection, allowing participants to share both challenges and replicable solutions.



The workshop reaffirmed the Mission's four pillars: People's Participation (*Jan Bhagidari*), Stakeholder Collaboration, Political Will, and Optimal Resource Use. JJM continues to catalyze a shift toward local ownership and community stewardship of rural water services.

Day 1 of the workshop also saw the release of the 1st edition of *Niwas Vartika*, the quarterly newsletter of SPM NIWAS.

The deliberations of Day 1 lay the foundation for Day 2, which will focus on technological interventions – leveraging AI, GIS, space technology, and digital platforms to drive O&M of rural water governance.

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