

IMPLEMENTATION OF ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA

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Government of India is implementing Atal Bhujal Yojana, a Central Sector Scheme, in 8203 water stressed Gram Panchayats (**GPs**) of 229 administrative blocks/talukas in 80 districts of 7 States viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh for a period of 6 years from 01.04.2020 with an aim to arrest decline in ground water level through a participatory approach led by community for sustainable groundwater management.

Major outcomes achieved/progress made so far under the scheme in the implementation areas are given below:

- i. Public disclosure of groundwater data has been made across all 8,203 Atal Jal GPs through physical as well as electronic means.
- ii. Community-led Water Budgets (**WBs**) and Water Security Plans (**WSPs**) have been prepared by all GPs and updated annually.
- iii. 1,27,647 GP-level trainings conducted, alongside 94 state-level, 580 district-level, and 1,283 block-level capacity-building trainings.
- iv. GP-level groundwater monitoring enhanced with Digital Water Level Recorders, water flow meters, rain gauges, water quality testing kits, and construction of piezometers.
- v. Around 81,000 supply-side structures constructed/renovated for water conservation and groundwater recharge.
- vi. Around 9 lakh hectares brought under efficient water-use practices (drip/sprinkler irrigation, mulching, crop diversification, etc.).

As a result, 1603 GPs in 83 Blocks have shown improvement in ground water level.

Community participation is fundamental to the implementation of Atal Bhujal Yojana. Community participation has been ensured through regular meetings/ discussions, various modes of IEC, awareness programmes and materials developed in vernacular languages. NGOs are engaged by the participating states as District Implementation Partners to facilitate handholding of the communities at each step. Moreover, social inclusion is adopted through mandatory 33% (minimum) women's participation in active decision making roles.

The Government has engaged Quality Council of India (**QCI**) as the Third Party Government Verification Agency for Overall Impact Assessment Study of Atal Bhujal Yojana. Incentive amounts under the Yojana are released to the States only after verification of the claims by QCI through field visits and data validation. Through several rounds of verification QCI has found that community awareness about ground water issues has improved in Atal Jal areas and people are showing interest in participating in ground water conservation activities and also are taking up efficient irrigation practices.

The following steps have been taken to ensure transparency, community ownership and efficient utilisation of funds under the Atal Bhujal Yojana:

- i. Various instruments installed in/supplied to the GPs are being actively used by the community members to regularly generate ground water related data which are in turn used by them in preparation of WBs and WSPs;
- ii. Moreover, one Community Resource Person is actively working in every GP on voluntary basis for better coordination, imparting knowledge and handling water related data beyond scheme period as well;
- iii. All the water related data generated using instruments/equipment provided under Atal Bhujal Yojana

and the WSPs for each GP are hosted on the Atal Jal Portal and Mobile App for ensuring transparency;

- iv. Utilization of funds under the scheme is approved by the State Level Steering Committee, chaired by the Chief Secretary, based on the requirement of supply and demand side interventions in the Atal Jal areas;
- v. Various activities being taken up the States under the incentives component of the Scheme are verified by the Third Party Government Verification Agency viz. QCI;
- vi. Officers of the NPMU take regular meetings with the officers of the SPMUs and also conduct frequent field visits to monitor the progress of the Scheme to ensure efficient utilisation of funds;
- vii. Meetings of the National Level Steering Committee (NLSC), which is an inter-ministerial forum, are held biannually for effective implementation and monitoring of activities under the Atal Bhujal Yojana;
- viii. The Controller General of Accounts, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, Government of India conducts regular audit of the State Program Management Units of the participating States biannually and audit of the National Program Management Unit annually.

This information was provided by THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

MAM/SMP

(Lok Sabha US Q876)

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