

REVIEW OF GROUNDWATER ACTION PLAN

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The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) monitors groundwater levels throughout the country including Bengaluru and Kashmir, four times in every year. In Kashmir (covering 6 districts of the valley), analysis of ground water level data collected during post-monsoon (November) 2024 indicates that about 96.7% of monitored wells are having water levels at less than 10 mbgl (meters below ground level). Similarly, in Bengaluru (for both Bengaluru Urban and Rural Districts combined), the data indicates that approximately 96% of the monitored wells have water levels at less than 10 mbgl.

In order to facilitate the states in their endeavour towards proper regulation and management of ground water resources, this Ministry had drafted a Model 'Groundwater (Regulation and Control of Development and Management) Bill' providing a regulatory framework to curb indiscriminate extraction of ground water while also making provisions for rain water harvesting and artificial recharge. The Model Bill has been circulated to all States/UTs and so far 21 States/UTs have adopted it. Further, the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has been established under the Ministry, which is regulating the extraction of ground water for industrial and other commercial purposes in 19 states and UTs, in accordance with the provisions of its Guidelines dated 24.09.2020, which have pan India applicability. The Guidelines have stringent measures to regulate unlawful extraction which include imposition of heavy Environmental Compensation (EC) charges, penalties and even sealing of bore wells in certain cases.

This Ministry has been consistently following up with the state governments for prudent regulation and sustainable management of ground water resources through regular correspondence, seminars, state water ministers' and chief secretaries' level conferences and by taking up the issues through the National Interdepartmental Steering Committee (NISC) on ground water, headed by Secretary, D/o Water Resources. CGWA is also regularly corresponding and holding discussions with the states for setting up their own regulatory mechanisms and wherever established to make them more effective.

The M/o Jal Shakti is constantly monitoring and reviewing the ground water situation in the country through its organization like CGWB and CGWA and also is implementing targeted schemes and interventions for improvement. Under Ground Water Management & Regulation (GWM &R) scheme, CGWB regularly monitors ground water levels and quality throughout the country and also conducts annual ground water resource assessment, in coordination with the states. The reports are disseminated to all stakeholders and brought out in public domain so that early action can be initiated in vulnerable and priority areas. Additionally, the following measures are being taken to ensure ground water sustainability in the country:

- The Government is implementing Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in the country since 2019 which is a mission mode and time bound programme for harvesting the rainfall and taking up water conservation activities. Currently, JSA 2025 is being implemented in the country with special focus on over-exploited and critical districts. JSA is an umbrella campaign under which various ground water recharge and conservation related works are being taken up in convergence with various central and state schemes.
- Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 has been prepared by the CGWB for the entire country and shared with States/UTs providing a broad outline for construction of around 1.42 crore rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the country to harness 185 BCM (Billion cubic meter).
- The government of India is implementing Atal Bhujal Yojana in 80 water stressed districts of 7 states which has community led sustainable management of ground water resources and demand management as its core theme.
- Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (DA & FW), GoI, is implementing Per Drop More

Crop Scheme in the country, since 2015-16, which focuses on enhancing water use efficiency at farm level through Micro Irrigation and better on-farm water management practices to optimize the use of available water resources.

- Mission Amrit Sarovar was launched by the Government of India which aimed at developing and rejuvenating at least 75 water bodies in each district of the country. As an outcome nearly 69,000 Amrit Sarovars have been constructed/rejuvenated in the country.
- To further strengthen the momentum of Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: A Community-Driven Path to Water Sustainability in India has been launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister with a vision to make rain water harvesting a mass movement in the country. By promoting community ownership and responsibility, the initiative seeks to develop cost-effective, local solutions tailored to specific water challenges across different regions.

Water is a state subject and it is primarily the responsibility of the states to sustainably manage their ground water resources. Hence, most of the water sector schemes and plans are formulated, implemented and supervised by the state governments. Wherever, central contribution is involved by way of central sector and centrally sponsored schemes, the central government has established its own review and monitoring mechanism for effective implementation of such schemes. Also impact assessment is regularly done for all such schemes and independent 3rd party evaluation also is taken up from time to time which help in adopting course correction measures and improving the scheme design. Moreover, such measures also ensure effectiveness, transparency and accountability in handling of ground water issues.

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

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