

EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER SUPPLY UNDER JJM

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In consonance with 73rd Amendment of Constitution of India and to instill the sense of ownership among villagers, village level planning and community participation in all decisions pertaining to water supply systems have been envisaged under JJM through Panchayati Raj Institutions. Accordingly, Gram Panchayat or its sub-committee/ user group i.e. Village Water & Sanitation Committee (VWSC) or Pani Samiti has been empowered to plan, implement, manage, operate and maintain in-village water supply system.

Moreover, under JJM, after making provision of tap connections to all rural households in a village, the Department implementing the scheme provides completion certificate to Gram Panchayat and marks the village as 'Har Ghar Jal' village on JJM-IMIS. Subsequently, Gram Panchayats in its Gram Sabha meeting after reading out aloud the work completion report, formally passes resolution certifying itself as 'Har Ghar Jal' village. The copy of certificate provided by implementing department, resolution passed by Gram Sabha, and a small video capturing the Gram Sabha is reflected on JJM Dashboard and village is marked certified in JJM-IMIS. As reported by States, out of around 2.74 lakh villages reported as 'Har Ghar Jal', around 1.81 lakh villages have been certified by the respective Gram Sabhas.

Under JJM, NGOs/ Community Based Organizations (CBOs)/ Self Help Groups (SHGs)/ Voluntary Organizations (VOs), etc. are also being empaneled as Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs) to handhold and train VWSCs/ Pani Samitis in planning, mobilizing and engaging communities, disseminating information and encouraging women participation for ensuring long-term maintenance of the water supply infrastructure.

To bring in 'sense of ownership and pride' among rural communities, provision has been made for community contribution to the extent of 5% of the in-village infrastructure cost in case of North-Eastern States and difficult/ hilly areas, forested, water-stressed and villages with more than 50% SCs/ STs population, and 10% in remaining villages.

While preparing VAPs, dovetailing of resources available at village level under various programmes like Finance Commission tied grant for water & sanitation to RLBS/ PRIs, JJM, SBM(G), MGNREGS, MP/ MLA - Local Area Development Funds, District Mineral Development Fund (DMDF), CSR Fund, community contributions, etc. is of paramount importance. In long-term, it is expected that village community will dovetail and utilize all available resources for long-term water security of the village.

Further, for enabling the local village community to play their role shouldering the responsibility of operation and maintenance, Nal Jal Mitra Programme (NJMP) has been launched in collaboration with Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to equip them with a comprehensive set of skills & develop "Nal Jal Mitras", so that they can function as scheme operators and are able to carry out minor repairs and maintenance, including preventive maintenance, of the piped water supply scheme(s) in their village as skilled masons, plumbers, fitters, electricians, motor mechanics, pump operators, etc.

For long term operational sustainability of rural water supply works, States have been advised to put in place a comprehensive O&M policy including features such as, handing over of schemes to Panchayats/ Pani Samitis, user charges, sufficient financing specially to cover expenses on account of energy bills, skilling, and deployment of local persons for O&M and water quality surveillance activities, should be put in place by States/ UTs.

The information was provided by THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI SHRI V. SOMANNA in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

AMK

(Rajya Sabha USQ 1852)

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