

GROUNDWATER OVER EXPLOITATION

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

The Dynamic Ground Water Resources of the country are being periodically assessed jointly by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and State Governments. Analysis of data of 2020 groundwater assessment with previous assessments suggest improved groundwater situation in certain parts of the country.

However, groundwater is a dynamic resource. Therefore, Central Government and State Governments have taken a number of important measures for conservation, management of ground water and effective implementation of rain water harvesting in the country despite improved trend of groundwater situations in certain areas and Water being a State subject, which can be seen at URL : http://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps_to_control_water_depletion_Feb2021.pdf. Some of the important initiatives in this regard are also given at Annexure.

Further, a number of States have done notable work in the field of water conservation/harvesting such as 'Mukhyamantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan' in Rajasthan, 'Jalyukt Shibir' in Maharashtra, 'Sujalam Sufalam Abhiyan' in Gujarat, 'Mission Kakatiya' in Telangana, Neeru Chettu' in Andhra Pradesh, Jal Jeevan Hariyali in Bihar, 'Jal Hi Jeevan' in Haryana, and Kudimaramath scheme in Tamil Nadu.

Ground water level in various parts of the Country is fluctuating because of continuous withdrawal necessitated by increased demand of fresh water for various uses including irrigation, vagaries of rainfall, increased population, food security, industrialization & urbanization etc.

Further, as per groundwater assessment 2020 conducted jointly by Central Ground Water Board and State Governments, total annual groundwater extraction for all uses in the country is around 245 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) which includes 218 BCM for agriculture use.

This Department has issued guidelines on 24 Sep 2020 with pan-India applicability for regulation and control of ground water extraction in the country. Water being a State subject, the guidelines advocate for a participatory approach for sustainable ground water management in agriculture sector including working towards crop rotation, diversification & other initiatives to reduce over-dependence on groundwater.

Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal) is being implemented in certain water stressed areas of the country, which includes activities like preparation of water security plan at Gram Panchayat level in participatory mode by involving communities to use available groundwater and surface water in an efficient manner.

Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA & FW) is implementing Per Drop More Crop component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) which is operational from 2015-16. The PMKSY - Per Drop More Crop mainly focuses on water use efficiency at farm level through micro irrigation (drip and sprinkler irrigation system) to reduce the extraction of groundwater.

This Information was given by the Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Shri Bishweswar Tudu in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

Important initiatives on management of groundwater resources

Government of India launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in 2019, a time bound campaign with a mission mode approach intended to improve water availability including ground water conditions in the water stressed blocks of 256 districts in India. In this regard, teams of officers from Central Government along-with technical officers from Ministry of Jal Shakti were deputed to visit water stressed districts and to work in close collaboration with district level officials to undertake suitable interventions.

In addition, Ministry of Jal Shakti has taken up the “Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain” (JSA:CTR) with the theme “Catch the Rain - Where it Falls When it Falls” to cover all the blocks of all districts (rural as well as urban areas) across the country during 22nd March 2021 to 30th November 2021. The campaign was launched by the Hon’ble Prime Minister on 22 March 2021.

Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, RD & GR (DoWR, RD & GR) is implementing Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal), a Rs.6,000 crore Central Sector Scheme, for sustainable management of ground water resources with community participation. Atal Jal is being implemented in 81 water stressed districts and 8,774 Gram Panchayats of seven States viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), in consultation with States/UTs, has prepared ‘Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater - 2020’. The Master Plan – 2020 is a macro level plan indicating various structures for the different terrain conditions of the country. The Master Plan - 2020 envisages construction of about 1.42 crore rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the country to harness 185 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM).

National Aquifer Mapping and Management program (NAQUIM) is being implemented by CGWB as part of Ground Water Management and Regulation (GWM & R) Scheme, a Central Sector scheme. NAQUIM envisages mapping of aquifers (water bearing formations), their characterization and development of Aquifer Management Plans to facilitate sustainable management of groundwater resources in the country. NAQUIM outputs are shared with States/UTs for suitable interventions.

Government of India generally supports artificial groundwater recharge/water harvesting works in the country through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and Prime Minister Krishi Sinchayee Yojana - Watershed Development component (PMKSY-WDC), ‘Surface Minor Irrigation (SMI) and Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of Water Bodies schemes’ a component of PMKSY.

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ANNEXURE

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