

# WHY MODI'S FOCUS ON GROUNDWATER IS CRITICAL

## - EDITORIALS - HINDUSTAN TIMES

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

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On December 25, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Atal Bhujal scheme to strengthen the institutional framework for participatory groundwater management and bringing about behavioural changes at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management. For now, the scheme will be implemented in Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The PM has personally led the initiative to make water-management a key focus area in this term in office. In his first “Mann ki Baat” address after his re-election, he pitched for water conservation to be made into a mass movement.

The decision to focus on the groundwater crisis is a good one because its over-exploitation is contributing to — as stated by NITI Aayog — “the worst water crisis” in India’s history. Groundwater is one of the most important water sources in India accounting for 63% of all irrigation water and over 80% of the rural and urban domestic water supplies. And participatory groundwater management is a key way of tackling the crisis. In fact, villagers in Andhra Pradesh has already shown how aquifer management and sharing of borewells can ensure equitable distribution of water. It’s time to build on these positive experiences of community water management.

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