

World Bank nod for Rs. 6,000 cr. groundwater recharge plan

The aim is to improve water management through community participation.

To address concerns about depleting groundwater reserves in India, the government has joined hands with the World Bank to execute a Rs. 6,000-crore scheme called the Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY).

The scheme is to be implemented over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23, according to a statement from the Union water Ministry. It is yet to be cleared by the Cabinet.

The Atal Bhujal Yojana “aims to improve ground water management in priority areas in the country through community participation,” the statement said.

Priority areas

The priority areas identified under the scheme fall in Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, which represent about 25% of the total number of over-exploited, critical and semi-critical blocks in terms of ground water in India.

India’s groundwater resources have been overexploited, as experts have been warning for some time now.

According to a sample assessment in 2011, groundwater in 19 of India’s 71 districts — about 26% — were critical or exploited, meaning that nearly as much or more water was being pulled out than their reservoirs’ natural recharge ability. In another assessment in 2013, they included groundwater blocks in districts that had gone saline, and this percentage was up to 31%.

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