

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1193

ANSWERED ON 10.03.2025

DECLINING GROUNDWATER LEVELS

1193. DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps being taken to address the critical decline in groundwater levels, and whether these measures have been effective in recharging groundwater, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the policies being considered to regulate groundwater usage and prevent over-extraction;
- (c) the actions being taken to ensure that states comply with groundwater conservation guidelines, and details of penalties in place for non-compliance; and
- (d) the initiatives being planned to promote community participation in groundwater recharge efforts, and the manner in which their impact being monitored and evaluated?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) Water being a State subject, sustainable development and management of groundwater resources is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Central Government facilitates the efforts of the State Governments by way of technical and financial assistance through its various schemes and projects. In this direction, the important steps taken by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and other central ministries for arresting the decline and sustainable development of ground water resources in the country are given below:-

- i. 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 2024 is being implemented in the country with special focus on 151 water stressed 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. As per JSA dashboard, in the past 4 years construction of more than 1.07 Cr water conservation structures have been completed in the country.
- ii. Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has completed the National Aquifer Mapping (NAQUIM) Project covering approximately 25 lakh square kms. of mappable area across the country. Further, District-wise aquifer maps and management plans have been prepared and shared with the respective State/District authorities for taking up suitable interventions.

- iii. Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 has been prepared by the CGWB 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 with estimated cost to harness about 185 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) of water.
- iv. Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (DA & FW), GoI, is implementing Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) 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. From 2015-16 till December 2024, an area of 94.36 lakh has been covered under micro irrigation in the country through PDMC scheme.
- v. 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.
- vi. Additionally, Government of India has placed a major thrust on construction of water conservation and rainwater harvesting in states, through its schemes like MGNREGS and PMKSY-WDC.

(b) The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has been constituted under the Ministry of Jal Shakti under Section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for the purpose of regulation and control of ground water development and management in the country. Abstraction cum use of Groundwater is regulated by CGWA by way of issuing NOCs as per the provisions of its Guidelines dated 24.09.2020 which have pan India applicability. Further, 17 States/UTs have put in place their own regulatory mechanism for regulating ground water abstraction cum usage in their respective jurisdiction.

(c) As mentioned earlier, Water is a state subject under the Constitutional scheme of things and therefore states have full autonomy in regulating and managing the use of ground water within their domain. Role of the Central Government is largely advisory in nature. However, in order to facilitate the states in their endeavor towards proper regulation 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. Moreover, CGWA is hand-holding the states in drafting their own ground water regulation guidelines. With regard to compliance enforcement measures for ground water extraction, it is to state that as per CGWA's Guidelines dated 24.09.2020, Environmental Compensation(EC) charges are being levied for extraction of ground water without a valid NOC (for

non-exempted cases) and penalties are being imposed for non compliance of Guideline conditions like non-maintenance/production of extraction data, submission of false information etc.

(d) The central government has taken several important steps to ensure large scale community and participation for turning ground water management into a truly peoples' movement. The notable among them are:

- i. The government of India is implementing Atal Bhujal Yojana in parts of 7 states which has community led sustainable management of ground water resources and demand management as its core theme. Under the Yojana Gram Panchayat level Water Budgeting and preparation of Water Security Plans (WSPs) is being done with active community involvement.
- ii. Central Ground Water Board organizes various Public Interaction Programs (PIP), Mass Awareness Programs (MAP), Tier II and Tier –III programmes on local ground water issues, including educating the public about importance of ground water recharge and promoting sustainable practices for ground water management.
- iii. The Government is implementing Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in the country since 2019 with active community involvement. Jal Shakti Kendras (JSKs) have been set up under the Abhiyan in various districts of the country for interacting with local community and dissemination of water related knowledge.
- iv. 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 on September 6, 2024, in Surat, Gujarat whose main objective is to ensure that every drop of water is conserved through collective efforts, following a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach.
- v. Under JJM, with a view to involve community at large and to spread awareness regarding water quality, five persons, preferably women, are identified and trained from every village for testing the water samples through Field Test Kits (FTKs). Thus far, more than 24 lakh women have been trained across the country.

Impact of all these participatory ground water management measures is reflected in increasing number of rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures being constructed in the country, additional areas being brought under efficient water use practices and overall improvement in ground water recharge which has increased from 433 Billion Cubic Meters(BCM) to 446.90 BCM between 2017 to 2024 for the country as a whole.
