

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

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 94

ANSWERED ON 03.02.2025

CONSERVATION OF GROUNDWATER

94. SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA

Will the Minister of **Jal Shakti** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government plans to set up a central coordination agency with members from various Ministries and Departments in order to streamline efforts for conservation of groundwater;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government intends to work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare in order to provide impetus to projects directed at groundwater conservation under MGNREGA;
- (d) whether Government plans to extend the Atal Bhujal Yojana to all States facing groundwater scarcity; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) & (b) A National Interdepartmental Steering Committee (NISC) has been working since 2012 under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, for smooth management ground water related issues in the country. Subsequently, realizing the importance of co-ordinated and streamlined approach in dealing with water sector issues, the NISC was reconstituted in 2024 with enhanced scope by adding representations at the level of secretary from M/o Housing & Urban Affairs, D/o Land Resources, M/o Environment, Forest & Climate Change etc. and expanding the Terms of Reference to include Holistic management of overall water resources including groundwater in the country; To wean away farmers from water intensive crops especially in areas with severe groundwater shortage; Monitoring and remedying water and ground water pollution in the country etc. Thus, NISC serves as a common platform for these various central and state agencies involved in the water management sector for proper exchange of views, capacity building and enhancing the ease of operations.

(c) As stated above, the Ministry of Jal Shakti, is already working in tandem with various other ministries and departments, including the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD - which is responsible for implementation of MGNREGS). The Ministry is actively co-ordinating with MoA through knowledge and information sharing in implementing Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) Scheme in the

country, 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.

Further, under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (Mahatma Gandhi NREGA), public works relating to Natural Resource Management (NRM) is a significant component under which construction of water conservation and water harvesting structures is a major thrust area. MGNREGS is an umbrella scheme under which various ground water recharge and conservation related works are implemented on a vast scale. Under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA), an annual campaign run by Ministry of Jal Shakti, convergence with MGNREGS for taking up rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge activities in mission mode is an important focus area.

(d) & (e) Atal Bhujal Yojana is a pilot programme focussing on demand side management of ground water by way of community participation and behaviour change. The Scheme was launched in 7 states in 2020 and is in impact assessment stage.
