

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 99

ANSWERED ON 03.02.2025

REVIVAL OF WATER BODIES

99. SHRI HARBHAJAN SINGH

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

- (a) whether the problem of underground water level has turned into a very serious problem in the country due to encroachment on water bodies and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the measures being taken to improve the underground water level along with the efforts made for the revival of said water bodies; and
- (c) other steps being taken, if any, for revival of water bodies and to improve groundwater situation in the country, especially in the State of Punjab?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) Groundwater is a replenishable resource that gets naturally recharged every year. The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and State Nodal/Ground Water Departments periodically assess the Dynamic Ground Water Resources of each State and Union Territory. This assessment evaluates recharge from rainfall as well as other sources, including tanks, ponds, and water conservation structures. Notably, recharge from these other sources which includes water bodies has increased significantly, rising from 156.08 BCM in 2020 to 175.68 BCM in 2024.

(b) & (c) Water being a State subject, it is for the State Government concerned, to take up revival of water bodies and measures to improve the underground water level. However, some of the measures taken by Government of India to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, are given below.

- i. Government of India is providing financial assistance to the identified schemes under Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies (RRR of WBs) component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)-Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP).
- ii. Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has completed the National Aquifer Mapping (NAQUIM) Project in the entire mappable area of about 25 Lakh sq. km including an area of 50369 Sq km of Punjab. The Aquifer maps and management plans have been prepared and shared with the respective State agencies for implementation. The management plans include various water conservation measures through demand side and supply side interventions.
- iii. CGWB has prepared a Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 in consultation with States/UTs which is a macro level plan indicating various structures for the different terrain conditions of the country including Punjab. The Master Plan envisages construction of about 1.42

crore Rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the country to harness 185 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) of monsoon rainfall. DPR has to be prepared by the concerned line department of the respective State Government at an implementable level like any other water supply project or city development project. Implementation has to be done through existing schemes of the respective State Government. The Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 circulated to all the States/UTs and is being implemented in one district in each state through convergence with state schemes.

- iv. Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA), a time-bound mission mode water conservation campaign, was launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) in the July - November 2019 period in 1,592 blocks out of 2,836 blocks of 256 water-stressed districts of the country. Ministry of Jal Shakti started the “Catch The Rain” (CTR) campaign in February 2020 and in 2021 took up the “Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain” (JSA: CTR) subsuming Catch the Rain campaign which covered rural and urban areas of all districts (all blocks and municipalities) of the country. JSA: CTR campaign has five focused interventions which inter-alia includes rainwater harvesting & water conservation including revival of water bodies. JSA: CTR has become an annual feature since 2021 and the 5th edition of JSA: CTR was launched on 09.03.2024 for implementation during the period 09.03.2024 to 30.11.2024 in rural and urban areas of all districts (all blocks and municipalities) of the country, including Punjab.
- v. The "Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari" initiative which is part of the JSA: CTR campaign was launched in Surat on 6th September 2024. This initiative emphasizes the importance of Jan Bhagidari in water conservation & embodies a pledge for united action from all stakeholders, including government bodies, industries, local authorities, philanthropists, resident welfare associations (RWAs) and individuals with the aim to have a special focus on the construction of artificial recharge structures/borewell recharge shafts among other activities to increase storage capacity & help to augment groundwater recharge. The primary aim of this initiative is to focus on constructing millions of low-cost, affordable solutions for groundwater recharge in mission mode, ensuring that no drop of rainwater goes to waste.
- vi. Mission Amrit Sarovar was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on April 24th 2022, to construct or rejuvenate 75 Amrit Sarovars in every rural district (except Delhi, Chandigarh and Lakshadweep) with a total of 50,000 sarovars across the country.
- vii. The Ministry of Rural Development undertakes water conservation and harvesting initiatives under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS). These initiatives include the construction of water conservation and harvesting structures to enhance groundwater levels, such as underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams, check dams and rooftop rainwater harvesting systems in government or Panchayat buildings, with a special focus on groundwater recharge, including drinking water sources. Additionally, the renovation of traditional water bodies—including desilting of irrigation tanks and other water sources—as well as the conservation of historical step wells (baolis), are also permissible activities under the scheme.
- viii. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has undertaken several initiatives for the sustainable management of water in urban areas through the implementation of national missions such as the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and AMRUT 2.0. Under AMRUT 2.0, the rejuvenation of water bodies and wells is one of the key components.
