

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1735**  
ANSWERED ON 29.07.2021

**WATER SCARCITY**

1735. SHRI S. JAGATHRAKSHAKAN

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is true that water scarcity has increased in the country in recent years; and
- (b) if so, the steps taken/being taken by the Government to check the rapid rise in urban and rural demands for freshwater?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI & FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES

(SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL)

- (a) The average annual water availability of any region or country is largely dependent upon hydro-meteorological and geological factors, however, water availability per person is dependent on population of a country. The per capita water availability in the country is reducing due to increase in population. Also due to high temporal and spatial variation of precipitation, the water availability of many regions of the country is much below the national average and may result in water stress / scarce conditions.
- (b) Water being a State subject, steps for augmentation, conservation and efficient management of water resources are primarily undertaken by the respective State Governments. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, Central Government provides technical and financial assistance to them through various schemes and programmes.

In order to check groundwater exploitation and create awareness among the citizens of the country, National Water Mission (NWM) has taken up campaigns like 'Sahi Fasal' Campaign, to nudge farmers in the water stressed areas to grow crops which are not water intensive, but use water very efficiently and 'Catch the Rain' Campaign with a tagline "Catch the Rain – when it falls, where it falls", to nudge all stakeholders to create Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) suitable to the climatic conditions and sub-soil strata to catch the rains with the peoples' active participation. Under Sahi Fasal, series of meetings with farmers have been organized in Amritsar, Aurangabad (Maharashtra) and Kurukshetra and also with technical experts in New Delhi.

NWM has also been conducting awareness generation activities like 'Water Talk', a monthly lecture series, to deliberate on various issues concerning the water sector, including the issue of ground water exploitation, by inviting leading water experts to present inspiring and informative perspectives on current water issues in the country.

Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare is implementing Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana - Per Drop More Crop (PMKSY-PDMC) which focuses on water use efficiency at farm level through precision/micro irrigation (Drip and Sprinkler Irrigation System) for promotion of better on-farm water management practices to optimize the use of available water resources. This component also supports micro level water storage or water conservation/management activities to supplement Micro Irrigation.

Ministry of Railways is taking steps for conservation of water by minimizing the use of fresh water by conducting regular water audit at major consumption centres and promoting use of treated water from water recycling plant for other allied purpose (non potable uses). Rain Water Harvesting Systems (RWHS) are also being installed in Railways and have been made mandatory in all buildings with area more than 200 sq. m. Through sustained effort, during last three years from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2021, Ministry of Railways has completed 471 water audits at various major water consumption centers across all zonal Railways, commissioned 33 water recycling plants and installed 2035 number of RWHS. Efforts are taken for providing water meters at major supply and end-use points to avoid wastage. Inspections and audits are carried out at regular interval by different level of officers to check wastage of water.

Furthermore, the Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC) in its report for 2021-26, has earmarked 60 per cent for national priorities like drinking water supply and rainwater harvesting and sanitation, out of the total grants earmarked for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI). For fifty Million-Plus cities, two-thirds of allocation of funds under Challenge Fund of Rs. 38,196 crore is meant for meeting service level benchmarks on drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting, water recycling, solid waste management and sanitation.

The FFC report also emphasizes on sustainable and efficient water use and has suggested three ways to reduce and rationalise water use in agriculture: (i) by replacing free or subsidised power supply for agriculture with direct benefit transfers (DBT), (ii) encouraging use of new technologies such as drip, sprinkler, sensor-based irrigation to get more crop per drop, and (iii) by conserving and rainwater harvesting to increase the availability of surface as well as of groundwater. FFC has recommended incentive-based grants to States that maintain and augment groundwater stock and maintain a check on any fall in the water table.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has formulated standards which could be utilized to improve the ground water table and optimize the utilization of available resources viz. IS 15792:2008 Artificial recharge to ground water guidelines, IS 15896:2011/ISO 21413:2005 Manual methods for measurement of ground water level in a well, IS 15797:2008 Roof top rainwater harvesting – Guidelines and IS 14654:1999 Minimizing evaporation losses from reservoirs – Guidelines.

Some steps taken by the Central Government to control ground water depletion and promote rain water harvesting/conservation are available at the URL:

[http://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps\\_to\\_control\\_water\\_depletion\\_Feb2021.pdf](http://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps_to_control_water_depletion_Feb2021.pdf)