

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2525

ANSWERED ON 13.03.2025

GROUNDWATER DEPLETION IN DROUGHT-PRONE AREAS

2525. SHRI PUSHPENDRA SAROJ

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

- (a) whether the Government is addressing groundwater depletion especially in drought-prone area/States;
- (b) if so, the details of investments made/being made in destination plants to address water scarcity; and
- (c) the way in which the Government ensure fair water distribution between States with ongoing river disputes?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) Water being a State subject, the responsibility of addressing the ground water related issues lies primarily with the concerned 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 improvement of ground water resources of the country, with special focus on drought prone and water stressed regions, 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 of the country. 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.
- ii. M/o Jal Shakti is implementing Atal Bhujal Yojana, which is a community led scheme for participatory ground water management focusing on demand side management of ground water. The Scheme is currently in operation in 80 districts in 7 States, which have been identified, among other factors, based on the degree of water stress being faced by them.
- iii. Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 has been prepared by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) for the entire country 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 to harness 185 BCM (Billion cubic meter).

- iv. Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (DA & FW), GoI, is implementing Per Drop More Crop 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. The scheme is of immense benefit to drought prone regions of the country with limited water available for irrigation purposes.
- 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, for the purpose of increasing water storage and boosting ground water recharge. As an outcome nearly 69,000 Amrit Sarovars have been constructed/rejuvenated in the country.
- vi. M/o Jal Shakti is promoting conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater and to reduce over-dependence on groundwater, surface water based Major and Medium irrigation projects have been taken up in the country under PMKSY-AIBP scheme in collaboration with States/UTs.

(b) Government of India in partnership with States, is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Har Ghar Jal, since August 2019, to make provision of potable tap water supply in adequate quantity to every rural household in the country. As per the operational guidelines of the JJM, in coastal areas, augmentation of water supply services can be done with energy efficient small desalination plants with high recovery ratio. However, it is for the states to devise suitable projects for setting up desalination plants as per their requirements and feasibility. As per the information available on the JJM dashboard, it is seen that from the beginning of the Scheme in 2019 to 2024-25 (up to the month of February) funds to the tune of Rs. 4.3 lakh cr were allocated by the central government and an amount of Rs. 3.73 lakh cr. has been spent towards providing safe drinking water to more than 12.1 cr rural households in the country, which includes addressing of water salinity and scarcity issues.

In addition to the above, Ministry of Earth Sciences, through its autonomous Institute, National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), has set up eight Low Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD) technology-based sea water desalination plants at eight islands of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Additionally, CSIR- Central Salt and Marine Chemical Research Institute (CSMCRI), Bhavnagar has commissioned 160 Reverse Osmosis (RO) based desalination plants in the different states of the country.

(c) For the adjudication of disputes related to the water of inter-State rivers and their river valleys, Parliament enacted the Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956 (the Act). When a request under the Act is received from a State Government regarding a water dispute over inter-State rivers, and the Central Government believes the dispute cannot be resolved through negotiations, it constitutes a River Water Disputes Tribunal for adjudication. Tribunals formed for the adjudication of such disputes under this Act ensure that the issues raised in the request made by the State(s) to the Central Government under Section 3 of the Act are adequately considered, heard, and addressed.
