

NITI Aayog's Report on Water Management

Why in news?

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NITI Aayog has released Composite Water Management Index

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What is the Index About?

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- The NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index ranks States on water management on the basis of nine parameters.

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- The report assesses States on restoration of surface and ground water, development of watersheds, participatory irrigation, sustainable farming and urban water supply and sanitation.

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- According to the report 600 million people face high-to-extreme water stress, 75 per cent of the households do not have drinking water.

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- 84 per cent do not have piped water access 70 per cent of India's water is contaminated.

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- The report stated that even when water is available, it is likely to be contaminated, resulting in nearly 2,00,000 deaths each year

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What are the concerns spotlighted by the report?

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- The report without going into the methodology on how States have been assessed, is just concerned about quick results in water management, as it is about the performance of States on ease of doing business.

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- Even as India relies increasingly on groundwater for its irrigation and

livelihood needs, with rivers running dry or being reduced to sewers.

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- It has recently come to light that uranium contamination is commonplace.
- With water levels dropping to 1,000 feet in dry regions of peninsular India in particular, fluoride contamination too is on the rise.
- Places Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra in the top five.
- Meanwhile, free electricity in developed states for agriculture has led to a precipitous decline in the water table, despite the State being endowed with surface water.
- Resource intensive farming practices, encouraged by faulty policies are prime reasons for depletion of water resources.

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What measures needs to be taken?

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- The Centre expects a new groundwater management regime as well as a technology partnership with Israel to make a difference.
- Water management needs hard political choices, such as pricing water use and weaning farmers away from paddy and sugarcane in dry, rainfed regions.
- Apart from this the report should expand the scope of its inquiry to look at socio-economic aspects.
- A socio-political consensus is also needed to restore rivers and watersheds, by checking over-development of eco-sensitive spots, sand mining and dumping of municipal and industrial waste.

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Source: Business Line

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