

## Proposed Jal Jeevan Mission

### Why in News?

Prime Minister of India announced the Jal Jeevan Mission in his 2019 Independence Day speech which plans to supply water to all households by 2024.

### How can the target of the basic quantity of water access to rural India be achieved?

- For many years, the central and state governments have been making efforts to increase access to safe and adequate drinking water.
- The provision of a basic quantity of drinking water in rural India has been achieved through hand pumps, dug wells, household water supply (HWS), etc.
- Thus, while states like Sikkim managed to achieve high levels of HWS, a relatively low percentage of rural Indian households have access to this.

### What are the challenges for the strategy to increase HWS access?

- No enough attention to sustaining or recharging groundwater, the primary source.
- Treating service delivery primarily as an engineering solution without adequate involvement of the users.
- Until now, the institutional landscape for water at both the Centre and state government has been fragmented,
- Several union ministries and state departments deal with different water management aspects, with overlapping roles and responsibilities.

### Was there any step taken?

- The creation of the Jal Shakti Mantralaya to integrate the management of India's water resources and supply of drinking water is a landmark step in diagnosing and addressing the problem.
- At a policy level, the stage has been set to deliver integrated water management solutions.

### What are the implementation challenges?

- In rural drinking water service delivery, there is **inadequate attention**

**given to taking measures to sustain the source of the water**, in most cases groundwater is a challenge.

- This proposed mission will make source sustainability measures mandatory prior to pumping and distributing water to households.
- Another issue with the traditional approach to service delivery was that the **provision of drinking water was viewed primarily as an engineering solution**, with schemes being planned and executed by the public health and engineering departments.
- However, water is an ideal sector for the applicability of the principle of subsidiarity, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.

### **What are some best practices to be integrated in the programme?**

- With adequate capacity building and training, water can be most efficiently managed at the lowest appropriate level.
- Adopting this principle, the Jal Jeevan Mission's first preference will be to have community-managed **single village ground water-based schemes**, wherever sufficient quantity and good quality of groundwater exists.
- Wherever adequate quantity of safe groundwater is not present, or where it may be technically not feasible to have single-village schemes, **surface water-based multi-village schemes** will be promoted.
- Further, in some remote regions, where it may not be techno-economically feasible to have household water supply schemes, **local innovations, such as solar-based schemes** will be encouraged.

### **How can the problem of household waste water be managed?**

- It is not commonly known that household waste water from HWS amounts to about 75% of the amount of water supplied.
- With the rural households to get HWS under the proposed mission, huge quantities of household waste water will be generated across the country, therefore making its effective management critical.
- There is a plan to include a mandatory provision under the mission for the effective channelling and treatment of household waste water, through appropriate and low cost drainage and treatment systems.
- Once appropriately treated, this waste water can be used for both recharge of groundwater as well as for irrigation purposes.

### **What is the conclusion?**

- An extensive information, education and communication will be needed to create a people's movement for water management.

- The ongoing Jal Shakti Abhiyan will help in creating awareness about the importance of integrating source sustainability and water reuse.
- This integrated approach to **decentralised, community managed, and sustainable water management** is the backbone of the government's plan to ensure that every household gets the benefits of water supply.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission will be a major step towards improving our people's ease of living and meeting their aspirations of a New India.

**Source: The Indian Express**

