

## AIR Spotlight - Jal Jeevan Mission

AIR Spotlight is an insightful programme featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the topic of discussion is the Jal Jeevan Mission.

### Participants:

- Yugal Kishore Joshi, Director, Jal Jeevan Mission.
- Ruchika Chitravanshi, Journalist.

### Context:

On 15th August 2019, Pradhan Mantri Shri Narendra Modi announced the Jal Jeevan Mission to bring tap water connections to every rural household of the country by 2024. The total cost of this mission is estimated to be around Rs. 3.6 lakh crores; out of this the share of the centre is around Rs. 2.08 lakh crores. This is a massive project providing taps to all the households in the country. Because of Covid, there is some impact on the progress of this project but it is still progressing quite fast.

### Jal Jeevan Mission:

- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.
- The program will also implement source sustainability measures as mandatory elements, such as recharge and reuse through greywater management, water conservation, and rainwater harvesting.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission will be based on a community approach to water and will include extensive Information, Education, and Communication as a key component of the mission. JJM looks to create a Jan Andolan for water, thereby making it everyone's priority.
- The vision of the mission is that every rural household has a drinking water supply in adequate quantity, of prescribed quality on a regular and long-term basis at affordable service delivery charges leading to improvement in living standards of rural communities.

Read more on the [Jal Jeevan Mission](#) in the linked article.

### Achievements of the mission so far:

- The Jal Jeevan Mission was introduced with the objective of improving the quality of life and well being of the people. There were many disruptions due to the lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic but the mission has been going well with speed, scale and single-minded focus.
- It has been less than two years since the mission was introduced, but in this short time, more than 4 crore households have been provided with tap water connections. If we compare the current situation with 15th August 2019, there were roughly 19.12 crore households and out of that only 3.23 crores were getting tap water supply which is less than 17% of the total households. But, today around 7.87 crores of households out of approximately 41.2 crore households, are getting tap water.
- Not only the households but the schools, Anganwadis, and public toilets are also getting water and as of now more than 67 percent of schools have tap water connections, more than 60.9 percent of the anganwadis, and more than 68.8 percent primary health care centres (PHCs) and gram panchayats have tap water supply.

- The focus is also on the Japanese encephalitis affected areas, and quality affected habitations as well and the mission is doing great in these areas as well.

#### **How does the mechanism work?**

- Jal Jeevan Mission adopts an end-to-end approach which implies that not only taking care of water resources is important but taking care of water conservation, augmentation of existing water resources, and then providing tap water supply is also very important.
- If more tap water is provided to the household then naturally the amount of greywater or used water will be more. So, Jal Jeevan Mission has made greywater treatment and its reuse in forestry, agriculture, horticulture, or in the local industries one of the essential components of the mission.
- Therefore, all three aspects: the source of water and its sustainability, the operation maintenance and providing tap water supply to each and every household, and the third component that is the treatment of the greywater or used water, are taken care of under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- There is a Water Quality Management Information System as well which is a dedicated one-stop information portal that provides information about the quality of water. Jal Jeevan Mission emphasizes that each local village should be able to test the quality of water not only at the source but also at the delivery points.
- For that purpose, the National Jal Jeevan Mission with the help of states is giving training to at least five women in one village, implying out of the 6 lakh villages, 30 lakh women will be trained. So far, 6 lakh women have been trained and they are assigned the task of testing the tap water quality which they get at their village level.
- Focus is now being given to getting the 2023 water quality labs in the country accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL). All these labs are now open to the public at a very nominal cost. Now, the public can go there and test the tap water quality supplied to them.

#### **Challenges involved:**

- Bigger states have bigger challenges. In cases where the water sources are not available close to villages, a multi-village scheme is adopted, like in Rajasthan. Also, in the Ganga belt, water quality issues are present in the form of impurity (arsenic, sulfur, etc.) contamination and hence, providing water to households in these areas does take time.
- But, the states have taken this mission very seriously and they are doing their best to provide water to each household.

#### **Will all the households be covered by 2024?**

- In the visit to every state, it has been observed that departments associated with Jal Jeevan Mission are working very actively and efficiently.
- They are very confident that they will be able to provide water to households and will be able to remove the misery suffered by people on account of water unavailability, especially by the girls and women.

#### **Monitoring of Water Supply and Consumption:**

- In Jal Jeevan Mission, the functionality is defined as the long-term supply of the water and its adequate quantity that is 55 liters per capita per day.

- Once the infrastructure in the village is set, then normally through capacity building, through Information, Education and Communication (IEC), through the participation of the people, this will be managed.
- The entire operation and maintenance of the tap water supply is given to the Pani Samiti or Village Water and Sanitation Committee.
- JJM is not just about creating water infrastructure but also aims at building capacities of different stakeholders especially local communities, responsible and responsive leadership to own, manage, operate and maintain in-village water supply systems.
- To monitor the rural drinking water supply systems in villages, the Ministry of Jal Shakti has decided to take the digital route to use sensor-based IoT devices to effectively monitor the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in more than six lakh villages.
- The [Internet of Things \(IoT\)](#) based remote monitoring provides near real-time information without any manual intervention by using sensors. This would not only allow effective monitoring and management on-ground, but also enable real-time visibility to State water supply/PHED officials, and citizens.

#### **Jal Shakti Abhiyan:**

- The groundwater exploitation has been too big to ignore which is why the government launched the Jal Shakti Abhiyan in 2019. The main focus of Jal Shakti Abhiyan is on water conservation, groundwater recharge, and the augmentation of water bodies.
- Initially, it was taken in 256 districts which were water-distressed districts in the country and this program was very successful.
- In 2021, this has been extended to all the districts of the country and it is being done in a true Jan Andolan mode.

#### **Way Forward:**

- Community involvement is required be it at the water conservation level, or greywater treatment, or at the operation and maintenance level. Because the main focus of the Jal Jeevan Mission is the community, hence, without community involvement it is not possible to successfully achieve the target.
- Earlier, all the programs were basically engineering-based programs so, most of the stress was on creating engineering water infrastructure. But this time, the emphasis is on service delivery not on infrastructure creation. Service delivery has its own challenges such as supplying adequate water, maintaining the sources, etc. Hence, all these aspects should be taken care of.
- The empowerment of capacity building of the local village communities is very important.
- With the involvement of not only Ph.D. engineers but also the local people, the challenges will be met.

Read more Gist of AIR Spotlight [here](#).