

## AIR Spotlight: India Water Impact Summit

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program 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.

This article is about the discussion on **the India Water Impact Summit**.

### Participants:

1. A B Pandya, Former Chairman, Central Water Commission
2. Sanjay Jha, Journalist

**Context:** Seventh edition of the India Water Impact Summit.

### Introduction:

- River restoration has become very crucial in the present scenario, as it is realized that the hydrology, chemistry, and biology of the rivers in India have been altered.
- These alterations have unintended consequences on the surrounding regions of the river.
- The Seventh Edition of the India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) is being organized with the theme of “Restoration and Conservation of Small Rivers in Large Basin”.

**For more information on IWIS, read here:** [PIB Summary & Analysis for UPSC IAS Exam for 15th Dec 2022](#)

### Significance of the Summit:

- This summit will help in deliberating and debating various issues that are encountered while dealing with river conservation.
- It will help in discussing and debating the interventions required, plans for conservation, implementation of these plans, etc.
- The financial aspect and people's participation can also be discussed during the summit.
- It will provide a platform for all the stakeholders to assemble and collaborate on the issue of river restoration.
- The summit will lay special emphasis on select aspects of mapping and convergence of the 5Ps - People, Policy, Plan, Programme, and Project.
- It will help in finding scientific solutions to the problems of the present and future associated with [water conservation](#).
- It focuses on establishing community participation and the way the community will accept and adopt the plans formulated across the country.

- Deliberations about issues of water and river are equivalent to discussing the future of human beings and the crisis they will face due to climate change.
- India is playing a leadership role in tackling the issue of [climate change](#) and summits like this can further bolster their efforts.
- The summit will see the participation of various financial and technological institutions, which can bring new opportunities for India.
- International participation during the summit can prove to be beneficial for India as it can display solutions for river restoration and conservation from across the globe. It should be remembered that India is an agro-climatically diverse country involving climates ranging from Alpine to Desert.
- India is a water-stressed country and summits like this can help in finding solutions to its water problems.
- The outcome of the summit can serve as a toolkit for state and district administrations for restoring the river ecosystem.

### **Importance of rivers and associated challenges:**

- Almost one-third of India's population is dependent on rivers for their livelihood and survival.
- India has a rich tradition of viewing and respecting rivers as mothers. But it is important to realize that it is the responsibility of each individual to maintain and care for the river, rather than overexploiting the valuable resource.
- Rivers are also significant for the economy of the country as various activities like agriculture are dependent on them.
- India is a country of several small rivers. However, these rivers are facing the risk of extinction in large basins.
- Smaller rivers show lesser resilience due to their small catchment area, thereby increasing their vulnerability to climate change.
- To address these concerns, the public can play a pivotal role:
  - The common man is an important aspect in the conservation of small rivers, as these people interact the most with these rivers. For instance, the Hindon river in Delhi is highly degraded due to less support from the community.
  - Local bodies which are largely community-based organizations can also be entrusted with the work of maintaining the input and output of effluents in the river.
  - It is important to understand that river resources should be sustainably used and the natural flow of the river should be maintained.

### **Climate Change and its impact on rivers:**

- Climate change increases the flow variability of rivers.
- The water quality also has an inverse relationship with the availability of flow.
- Climate change also has repercussions on existing plans and policies.

### Initiatives taken by the Government for sustainable river and water management:

- Namami Gange Programme is an ambitious plan of the government of India that is working on several aspects of the River Gange and its tributaries.
- There is a scheme called [Atal Bhujal Yojana](#) that maintains the water quality of groundwater.
- Another significant programme is [Jal Jeevan Mission](#), for ensuring a quality water delivery system.
- To provide efficient and optimum use of water in agriculture, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana was launched by the Government of India.
- There is also a new concept of Arth Ganga that primarily focuses on establishing People-River Connect through the bridge economy.

For information on National Mission on Clean Ganga, read here: [National Mission for Clean Ganga](#)

### Way Ahead:

- People should proactively participate at all levels to restore and sustainably conserve the rivers of India.
  - Various bodies on the lines of District Ganga Committees can become important institutions for coordinating multiple activities that can help in the rejuvenation of rivers.
  - Technological models should be adopted, leveraging financial resources for various schemes of both public and private players.
  - Water security comes from ensuring different aspects of water management like quality, quantity and timeliness of availability of water in bulk along with a resilient infrastructure. All these aspects should be holistically addressed.
-