



National Water Awards

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Why in News

The **Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation of the Ministry of Jal Shakti**, is organising the **2nd National Water Awards** (NWAs) for the year 2019.

Key Points

- **National Water Awards:**
 - The awards are organised by the **Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
 - The NWAs were launched in **2007** for the first time along with the **Ground Water Augmentation Awards** and the winners in different categories are given a **citation, trophy and cash prize**.
 - These focus on the good work and efforts made by individuals and organisations across the country, and the government's vision for the path to **'Jal Samridh Bharat'**.
 - **Objectives:**
 - To **motivate** individuals/organisations who are doing commendable work in the field of **water resources conservation and management**.
 - To **create awareness** among the people about the importance of water and encourage them to adopt the best water usage practices.
 - **Opportunities Provided: Start-ups, leading organisations and people can engage, deliberate and strengthen existing partnerships** on issues concerning water conservation and management activities.

- **Need for Water Conservation and Management:**
 - Depletion of water resources due to **overuse and decline in water supplies due to climate change** is pushing India closer to the tipping point of water scarcity.
 - Apart from these, several government policies especially pertaining to agriculture resulted in **over-exploitation of water**. These factors make India a water-stressed economy. In this context there is a need for **water resource conservation and management**.

Initiatives by the Government

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act:**
 - The huge workforce employed under the MGNREGA has **enabled the government to introduce water conservation** as a project under the Act.
 - The government **aims to improve groundwater harvesting, build water conservation and storage mechanisms** through MGNREGA.
- **Jal Kranti Abhiyan:**
 - Under it, the government is making active efforts to **revolutionise villages and cities through block-level water conservation schemes**.
 - For example, the **Jal Gram Scheme** under the Jal Kranti Abhiyan is aimed at **developing two model villages** in water-starved areas to lead the other villages towards water conservation and preservation.
- **National Water Mission:**

It was launched with the objective of **conservation of water, minimising wastage and ensuring more equitable distribution** both across and within states through integrated water resources development and management.
- **NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index:**

With the objective of achieving effective utilization of water, **NITI Aayog** has developed the Composite Water Management Index.
- **Jal Shakti Ministry and Jal Jeevan Mission:**

The efforts like the **formation of Jal Shakti Ministry** (to tackle water issues holistically) and the goal to provide **piped water to all rural households by 2024**, under the Jal Jeevan mission, are steps in the right direction.
- **Atal Bhujal Yojana:**
 - It is a **central sector scheme worth Rs.6,000 crore** for sustainable management of groundwater with community participation.
 - It envisages people's participation through the formation of 'Water User Associations', water budgeting, preparation and implementation of Gram-panchayat-wise water security plans, etc.

- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan:**

It was launched in **July 2019** as a **campaign for water conservation and water security** in the country.

Way Forward

- People tend to neglect the importance of water conservation because in most places it is **free of cost or charged nominally**, so it is important for them to realise its importance and be aware of its degrading status.
- Initiatives like **National Water Awards, along with the other government initiatives** will help **to create that awareness** and motivate them to adopt the best water usage practices which will help India in becoming '**Jal Samridh Bharat**'.

Source: PIB