



Global Water Crisis: UNICEF

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Why in News

According to a new report released by the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, **one in five children** worldwide reside in areas of **high or extremely high water vulnerability**.

The Report was released ahead of **World Water Day (22nd March)**.

Key Points

- **About the Report :**
 - The new report is **part of UNICEF's 'Water security for all'** initiative that identifies areas where physical water scarcity risks overlap with poor water service levels.
 - The **initiative aims to mobilise resources, partnerships, innovation and global response to identified hot spots.**
 - UNICEF identified **37 hot-spot countries** where children faced especially distressing circumstances in terms of absolute numbers, where global resources, support and urgent action had to be mobilised.
 - Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sudan, Tanzania and Yemen were especially vulnerable.
- **Findings:**
 - **Children in more than 80 countries** live in areas with high or extremely high water vulnerability.
 - **Eastern and Southern Africa** has the **highest proportion** of children living in such areas, with more than half of children – **58%** – facing difficulty accessing sufficient water every day.
 - It is followed by **West and Central Africa (31%), South Asia (25%),** and the **Middle East (23%).**
 - **More than 155 million children in South Asia** lived in areas with high or even extremely high water vulnerability.

- **Water Crisis in India:**
 - India has **4% of the world's freshwater** which has to cater to **17% of the world's population**.
 - As per **NITI Aayog report** released in June 2018, India is facing the worst-ever water crisis in history. Approximately 600 million people or roughly around **45% of the population in India is facing high to severe water stress**.
 - The report says that nearly **40% of the population will have absolutely no access to drinking water by 2030 and 6% of India's GDP will be lost by 2050 due to the water crisis**.
- **Causes of Water Crisis in India:**
 - The Central Groundwater Board's estimates show that the **groundwater table in most parts of the country has been declining every year** because of over-exploitation.
 - If the groundwater continues to decline unabated, meeting the country's agricultural and drinking water requirements will become a big challenge.
 - 85% of rural water supply, 45% of urban water supply and over 64% of irrigation now rely on groundwater.
 - Due to **accumulation of sediments in the water storage area of major and medium irrigation dams** that are currently in use, the **total storage capacity has fallen significantly**.

This is clearly underlined in the **report 'Compendium of Silting of Reservoirs in India'**, released by the Central Water Commission in 2020.
 - **Climate change** is causing major changes in rainfall levels.

- **Measures Taken by the Central Government:**

- **“Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain” Campaign:**

- The campaign will be implemented during the period 22nd March, 2021 to 30th November, 2021 - the **pre-monsoon and monsoon period** in the country.

- The campaign is **intended to nudge the State and all stakeholders** to create **Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS)** suitable to the climatic conditions and subsoil strata to ensure storage of rainwater.

Rains falling in the four/five months of monsoon are the only source of water for most parts of the country.

- **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):**

- In the Budget 2021-22, **Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)** has been announced under the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all statutory towns in accordance with **Sustainable Development Goal- 6.**

- It complements the **Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural)** which envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.

- **Ministry of Jal Shakti:**

- The Government of India **established the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019** to consolidate interrelated functions pertaining to water management.
- The Ministry **launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan** – a campaign for water conservation and water security.

- **Measures Taken by State Governments:**

- Uttar Pradesh – Jakhni Village (water village), Bundelkhand
- Punjab – Pani Bachao Paise Kamao
- Madhya Pradesh – Kapil Dhara Yojana
- Gujarat – Sujalam Sufalam Yojana
- Telangana – Mission Kakatiya Program
- Maharashtra – Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyan
- Andhra Pradesh – Neeru Chettu Programme
- Rajasthan – Mukhya Mantri Jal Swalambhan Abhiyan (MJSA)

World Water Day

- **About:**

- It is observed annually across the globe on **22nd March**, with the purpose of highlighting the importance of water, and raising awareness about the water crisis that the world faces.
- According to the **United Nations (UN)** website, the main focus of the day is to support the achievement of **sustainable development goals (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.**

- **History:**
 - The resolution to observe World Water Day was first adopted by the UN General Assembly on **22nd December 1992**.
 - After which **22nd March** was declared as **World Water Day** and is being celebrated around the world since **1993**.
- **Theme of World Water Day 2021:**

“Valuing Water” - To highlight the value of water in our daily lives.
- A new **World Water Development Report** is released each year on or near World Water Day, to provide decision-makers with tools to formulate and implement sustainable water policies. This report is coordinated by UNESCO’s World Water Development Programme (WWAP) on behalf of UN-Water.

UNICEF

- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is a **special program of the United Nations (UN)** devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children.
- UNICEF was **created in 1946 as the International Children’s Emergency Fund (ICEF)** by the UN relief Rehabilitation Administration to help children affected by World War II.
- UNICEF **became a permanent part of the United Nations in 1953**.
The name was shortened to the United Nations Children’s Fund but it is still referred to as UNICEF.
- UNICEF is **guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989**.
It strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.
- **Awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1965** for “promotion of brotherhood among the nations”.
- **Headquarters:** New York City.
It works in over 190 countries and territories with 7 regional offices.

Source: DTE