



Mains Practice Question

Q. Water governance strategies in India need to deploy strategies of demand management, conservation and regulation. Comment. (250 words)

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Approach:

- Highlight the fact of the water crisis in India mention some reasons for the same.
- Highlight the changes in governance strategies that ensure demand management, conservation and regulation.

Introduction

- According to the Composite Water Management Index report of NITI Aayog in 2018, 21 major cities are racing to reach zero groundwater levels by 2020, affecting access for 100 million people.

Body

Issues with water governance strategies:

- Several policies to farmers for providing free electricity and financial support for water extraction through tube wells and borewells have resulted in the exploitation of water.
- Poor water storage: During the monsoon, the desilting operations of the water bodies, dams, etc are not done at the time affecting the water storage capacity of India.
- Poor legislation on groundwater extraction, political reasons for not valuing water, etc.

Steps for demand management, conservation and regulation

- India needs to reconsider the institutional processes for the dissemination of knowledge about water resource management.
- There is a certain amount of danger inherent in the casual manner in which knowledge about water resources is legitimised and consumed, particularly in these days of 'viral' information.
- There is a need to recognise the crisis is not as much of scarcity as of delivery.
- The challenge is to ensure adequate access to quality water, more so in urban areas where inequities over space and time are acute.
- With the country's rapid urbanisation, demand cannot be met by groundwater reserves alone. For instance, according to the Delhi Jal Board estimates, groundwater meets just 10% of Delhi's drinking water needs. The rest is met by surface water sources, most of it transported from outside Delhi.
- The urban needs, which underpin much reporting on 'water crises', need to be met by robust long-term planning and preparation for droughts and other contingencies.
- Cities need to stop the destruction of local water bodies and local tree cover, treat its sewage properly, harvest rainwater, and stop straightening and concretizing the rivers and encroaching on their floodplain

Conclusion

- Thus, water-based technologies should have higher support and visibility in the new structure. At the same time, public information and participation in related research and dissemination also need to be ensured.

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