



New Water Policy Committee

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Why in News

The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** recently constituted a committee to draft a new **National Water Policy** (NWP).

Key Highlights

- **Composition:** The committee will be chaired by **Mihir Shah** (former Planning Commission member and a water expert) and comprises of **10 principal members**.
National Bureau of Water Use Efficiency is proposed to be **set up in order to enhance water usage efficiency**, especially in domestic and industrial sectors.
- **Underlying Need:**
Updation: To update the **National Water Policy, 2012** and recommend **key changes in water governance structure and regulatory framework**.
NWP was formulated to **govern the planning and development of water resources and their optimum utilisation**. The **first NWP** was adopted in **September 1987**. It was **reviewed and updated in 2002** and **later in 2012**.

Key Features of National Water Policy, 2012

- **Integrated Water Resources Management:** It laid down the concept of an Integrated Water Resources Management approach that took the river basin/sub-basin as a unit for planning, development, and management of water resources.
Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.

- **Minimum Water Flow:** To **maintain the minimum flow** of a portion of a river **to meet ecological needs.**
 - In 2018, such an approach led the government to require minimum water levels to be maintained in the **Ganga** throughout the year by refraining from hoarding water beyond a point.
 - Emphasis was also made to make a minimum quantity of potable water available to citizens for maintaining **essential health and hygiene.**
- **Inter-basin Transfers:** To meet basic human needs and achieve equity and social justice, inter-basin transfers of water need to be considered on the basis of the merits of each case after evaluating the environmental, economic and social impacts of such transfers.
- Other reasons such as **decreasing spring sets in Himalayas, budgeting and restructuring of water subsidies, irrigation, etc.** demanded the prioritization of water usage.

Source: TH