

ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA (ATAL JAL)

A Central Sector Scheme to improve ground water management through community participation

(Ministry of Jal Shakti)

March 30, 2022

Water crisis is worrisome for us not only as a family and a citizen but also as a country as it affects development too. We have to prepare New India to deal with every situation arising out of water crisis.

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi¹**

BACKGROUND²

Ground water contributes to nearly 65% of total irrigated area of the country and nearly 85% of the rural drinking water supply. The limited ground water resources in the country are under threat due to the increasing demands of growing population, urbanization and industrialization. Intensive and unregulated ground water pumping in many areas has caused rapid and widespread decline in ground water levels as well as reduction in the sustainability of ground water abstraction structures. The problem of reduction in ground water availability is further compounded by deteriorating ground water quality in some parts of the country. The increasing stress on ground water due to over-exploitation, contamination and associated environmental impacts threaten to endanger the food security of the nation, unless necessary preventive / remedial measures are taken on priority.



¹ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1597573>

² <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196080%20>

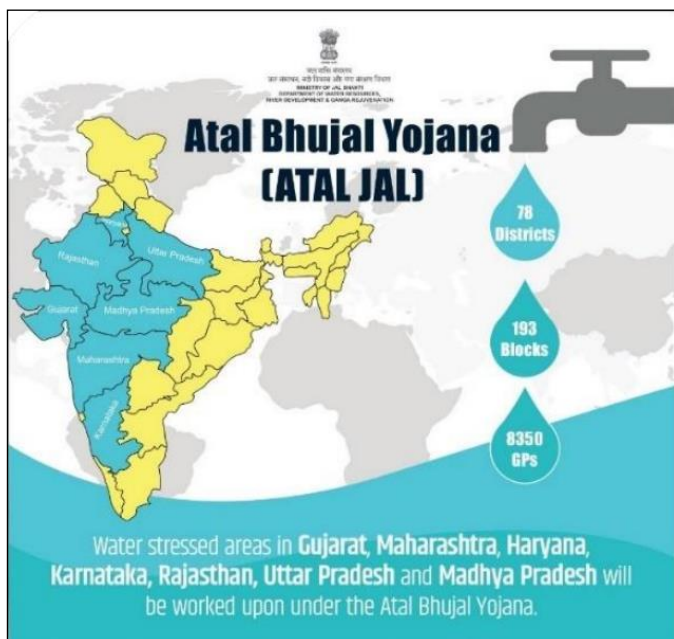
ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA (ATAL JAL)

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 24, 2019, gave its approval for the implementation of the Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL), a Central Sector Scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 6000 Crore to be implemented over a period of 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25).³

On the Birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee (25th December, 2019), Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL) in an event held in New Delhi.⁴



The scheme aims to improve ground water management through community participation in identified priority areas in seven States, viz. **Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh**. Implementation of the scheme is expected to benefit nearly **8350 Gram Panchayats in 78 districts** in these states. ATAL JAL will promote panchayat-led ground water management and behavioural change with primary focus on demand side management.



The scheme envisages active participation of the communities in the participating states in various activities such as formation/strengthening of Water User Associations, monitoring and disseminating ground water data, water budgeting, preparation of Gram-Panchayat wise water security plans & their implementation through convergence of ongoing schemes and IEC activities related to sustainable ground water management. Participation of women has been ensured by mandating 20% presence of women in the committees.

Out of the total outlay of Rs. 6000 crore, 50% shall be in the form of World Bank loan, and be repaid by the Central Government. The remaining 50% shall be through Central Assistance

³ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196080%20>

⁴ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196116>

from regular budgetary support. The entire World Bank's loan component and Central Assistance shall be passed on to the States as Grants.

ATAL JAL: Components

A. Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building Component - for strengthening institutional arrangements for sustainable ground water management in the states including improving monitoring networks, capacity building, strengthening of Water User Associations, etc.

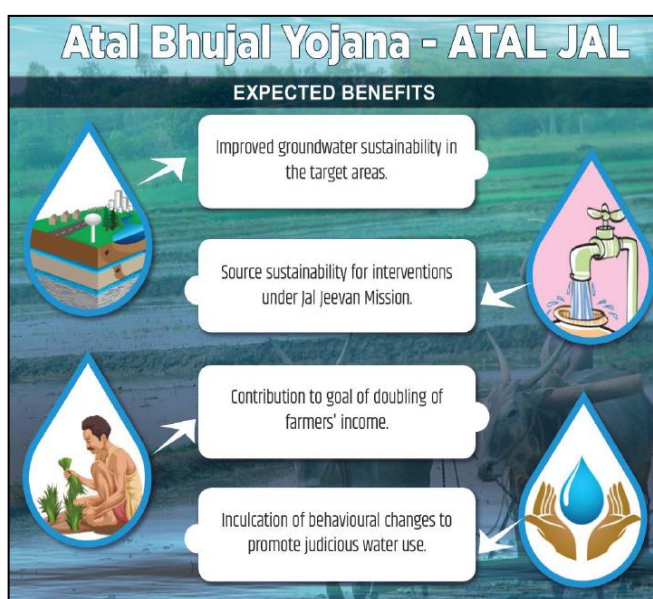
B. Incentive Component - for incentivising the States for achievements in improved groundwater management practices namely, data dissemination, preparation of water security plans, implementation of management interventions through convergence of ongoing schemes, adopting demand side management practices etc.

ATAL JAL: Outcomes

- i. Institutional strengthening for improving ground water monitoring networks and capacity building of stakeholders at different levels which will enhance ground water data storage, exchange, analysis and dissemination.
- ii. Improved and realistic water budgeting based on an improved database and preparation of community-led Water Security Plans at Panchayat level.
- iii. Implementation of Water Security Plans through convergence of various ongoing/new schemes of the Government of India and State Governments to facilitate judicious and effective utilization of funds for sustainable ground water management.
- iv. Efficient use of available ground water resources with emphasis on demand side measures such as micro-irrigation, crop diversification, electricity feeder separation etc.

ATAL JAL: Benefits⁵

- i. Source sustainability for Jal Jeevan Mission in the project area with active participation of local communities.
- ii. Will contribute towards the goal of doubling the farmers' income.
- iii. Will promote participatory ground water management.
- iv. Improved water use efficiency on a mass scale and improved cropping pattern.
- v. Promotion of efficient and equitable use of ground water resources and behavioural



⁵<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196080%20>

change at the community level.

Four-pronged Strategy for Scheme Implementation⁶

1. Decision support tools for ground water management: An MIS is developed to operationalise and standardise program implementation across the participating states. The MIS will be used for the preparation of Water Security Plans (WSPs), water budgeting, monitoring of ground water levels and quality, and reporting on the progress in implementation of WSPs. It will provide access to information for beneficiary communities to plan and implement interventions.

2. Strengthen community based institutions to foster management: The incentives provided under ATAL JAL will trigger initiatives to strengthen enabling institutions and build the required information base for **bottom-up, participatory planning** and implementation of appropriate interventions in ground water management and use. This represents a step change in the ‘business-as-usual’ approach and will set the correct course to accomplish sustainable ground water management at a larger scale.

3. Improve water use efficiency and enhance ground water recharge: The Program supports volumetric metering and real-time data systems, as well as raising awareness about the importance of good ground water governance. It also supports on-ground actions that are based on community ownership and judicious management of water resources.

4. Fiscal Decentralisation: The program not only focuses on building state institutions but also supports the general move of the Government of India towards fiscal decentralisation. In ATAL JAL, funds are to flow from the central government to the states and from there onwards to the appropriate implementing levels (districts, blocks, GPs, and beneficiaries).⁷

BENEFICIARIES⁸

The recipients of **ATAL JAL** are the economies, occupations, and social orders that depend upon ground water assets for flourishing and wellbeing. The arrest in decline of ground water levels is likely to improve water regimes required for agriculture, domestic, and industrial purposes, thereby generating societal benefit. In particular, it will have positive impacts on

- Women, small marginal farmers, and agricultural labourers
- Central and state government agencies responsible for ground water management
- Population affected by floods and droughts, particularly poor people living in the rural areas
- Environment and Agriculture ministries; research and educational institutions; NGOs; civil society organizations; students and researchers; and the private sector.

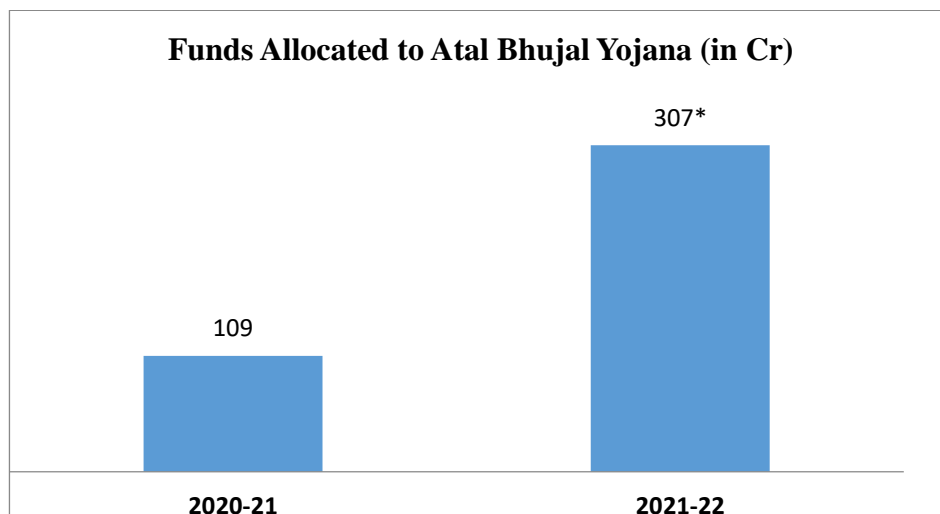
⁶ <https://ataljal.mowr.gov.in/About/About#accordion-body-5>

⁷ [About ATAL JAL \(mowr.gov.in\)](https://ataljal.mowr.gov.in/About/About#accordion-body-5)

⁸ Ibid

BUDGET ALLOCATION⁹

The budget allocations for the seven States for FY 2020-21 was Rs. 109 Crore and for FY 2021-22 (as on 22.07.2021) was Rs. 307 Crore, as depicted below:



* As on 22.07.2021

Reference Links:

- <https://ataljal.mowr.gov.in/Dashboard/Dashboard#>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1809232>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1739090>
- <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196080%20>
- <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196116>
- <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/doc/eb/allsbbe.pdf>
- [vol1.pdf \(indiabudget.gov.in\)](#)
- [Atal Bhujal Yojana | Department of Water Resources, RD & GR | GoI \(jalshakti-dowr.gov.in\)](#)

Twitter Links:

- <https://twitter.com/narendramodi/status/1209814491900317696>
- <https://twitter.com/AtalJal/status/1506548439668391942?s=20&t=qaDzvpwMJ3oyVW9cHPVVBA>
- <https://twitter.com/narendramodi/status/1209814491900317696?s=20&t=XQ8IzfqTpCfFmpNdHLhBLA>
- <https://twitter.com/gssjodhpur/status/1209521248553725952>
- https://twitter.com/narendramodi/status/1209814491900317696?s=20&t=Qmxw4zj_w079Kgs6thBx3A

Video Links:

- [PM Modi's Address | Launch of Atal Bhujal Yojana.](#)
- [RSTV Vishesh – 25 December 2019 : Atal Bhujal Yojna | अटल भूजल योजना](#)
- [क्या है अटल भूजल योजना?](#)

AG/HP/RC/KG/TT

⁹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1739090>