

Jal Jeevan Samvad

May | Volume 6 | Issue 05 | Year 2025



Har Ghar Jal
Jal Jeevan Mission

Building Partnership
Changing Lives

Promoting Community-Led
Water Supply Management



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Prime Minister on Jal Jeevan Mission



Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

*You will also be inspired by knowing that recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees from being cut and thousands of litres of water is saved. Just think, when mountaineers can bring back waste under such difficult conditions, we too should definitely contribute to recycling by separating paper in our homes or offices. **When every citizen of the country thinks what better one could do for the country, only then can we bring about a big change, together.***

- Text from PM's Mann Ki Baat, May 2025

Minister of Jal Shakti on Jal Jeevan Mission



C R Patil
Minister of Jal Shakti

हम माननीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी सर के नेतृत्व में, केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों के समन्वय से जल संसाधनों के कुशल दोहन, सतत विकास और **हर घर जल** के संकल्प को साकार करने हेतु निरंतर प्रतिबद्ध हैं।

माननीय केंद्रीय जल शक्ति मंत्री, मई 22, 2025 को
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री श्री सुखविंदर सिंह सुक्खू जी के साथ सौजन्य भेंट के दौरान



Foreword



Since its launch in 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission has grown from a centrally designed programme into a vibrant, community-driven movement. Today, over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, over 5 lakh Village Water & Sanitation Committees and a number of Self-Help Groups form an integrated network of local custodians, directly serving more than 15.63 crore rural households. This transformation reaffirms our conviction that true water security must be rooted in village-level stewardship.

At the core of this evolution lies a relentless commitment to citizen-centric service delivery. Through *Jan Bhagidari*, Panchayats are now empowered to lead the Operation & Maintenance of rural piped water schemes, engaging local technicians, scheduling preventive upkeep, and enforcing transparent user-charge systems that ensure repairs are done before failures occur. This participatory approach not only safeguards the quality of infrastructure but also empowers communities to shape every aspect of their water services.

Quality underpins every element of JJM's work. Over 24.8 lakh women have been trained in field-testing protocols, turning Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance into a community-led public health initiative. At the same time, States/ UTs are institutionalising best practices – codifying GIS-based source mapping, embedding IoT-enabled flow sensors to detect leaks in minutes, and integrating grievance-redressal apps with state call-centres to guarantee safe, reliable supply from source to tap.

Ensuring long-term sustainability requires both technical excellence and innovative financing. We are forging sustainable funding mechanisms, partnering more closely with MGNREGS to finance groundwater recharge works, converging with health and nutrition programmes to multiply impact, and piloting new models of community-managed endowments to support future upkeep.

As JJM enters its next phase, we will continue to document and disseminate village-level innovations so that the learnings can be replicated across States/UTs for positive outcomes. We aim to develop a cadre of 'Nal Jal Mitras' to support Gram Panchayats, and ensure independence in handling O&M of their schemes.

Together, we are redesigning institutional structures and elevating governance to secure India's water future. By centering communities, upholding infrastructure quality, and embedding sustainable finance, we are ensuring that every rural household not only gains access to water today, but remains its own manager for generations to come.

Ashok K. K. Meena

Secretary,

Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation





Note from the desk of

Additional Secretary & Mission Director...



This May, Jal Jeevan Mission has penetrated deeper into the District Administration. The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation convened a series of review meetings with District Collectors/ District Magistrates/ Deputy Commissioners from various State/ UTs. These discussions went beyond routine progress reports of the Mission and schemes, serving as a platform to assess regional successes, confront emerging challenges, and sharpen strategies to strengthen system resilience, financial sustainability, and place local ownership at the core of every piped-supply scheme.

In parallel, senior district officials can now login and access the DWSM portal for ongoing scheme reviews. This direct access will deliver real-time insights into implementation status, highlight areas of delay, and support rigorous data validation and reconciliation. The need to saturate schemes under PM-JANMAN and DA-JGUA, and to strengthen water sources through a mix of traditional recharge methods and modern techniques were also the focal point of the discussions. Above all, it was reaffirmed that empowering village communities to manage and sustain their own water systems is fundamental to lasting water security. Special focus was directed towards the most vulnerable – the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) households. Ground-truthing exercises, stringent data checks, and continuous monitoring will be essential to guarantee that no home is left without service.

These national efforts unfold against a backdrop of mounting global water stress, intensified by climate change. Water security lies at the nexus of several Sustainable Development Goals – health, gender equity, livelihood and climate resilience. By securing safe, reliable water for every rural family, Jal Jeevan Mission becomes a conduit for holistic rural transformation, delivering impact that goes far beyond the tap.

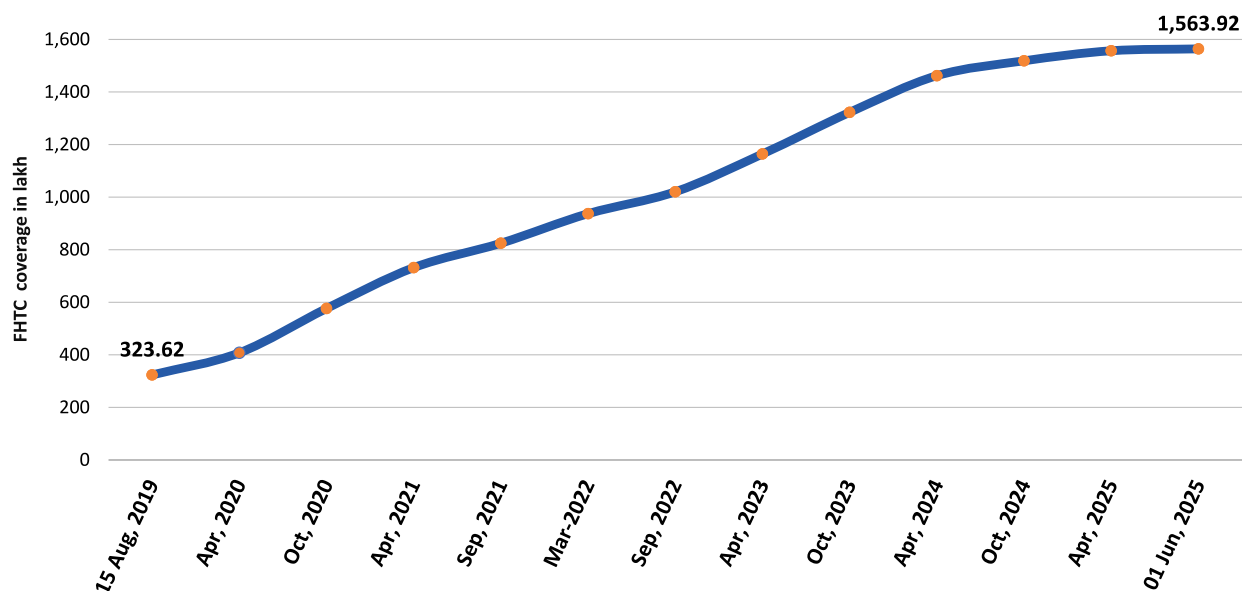
On the ground, our progress in many parts is both tangible and inspiring. In Nagaland's hilly terrain, gravity-fed systems now serve entire communities. In Tripura's Dhalai district, a community-managed iron-removal plant is delivering clean water where it was once scarce. In Odisha, women's Self-Help Groups have taken the lead on water safety, conducting regular tests that prevent health risks and build trust in tap water. In Madhya Pradesh's Dulhara village, a women-dominated Village Water & Sanitation Committee mapped the network, oversaw construction, and appointed a local woman pump-operator, who now manages daily supply and collects user fees to fund upkeep. What stands out above all is the spirit of empowerment these initiatives promote.

Looking ahead, our vision is clear: to shift from delivering infrastructure to enabling people-powered governance. In the coming months, we will expand successful programmes, strengthen capacity building for Gram Panchayats, and institutionalise peer-learning networks that connect innovators across regions.

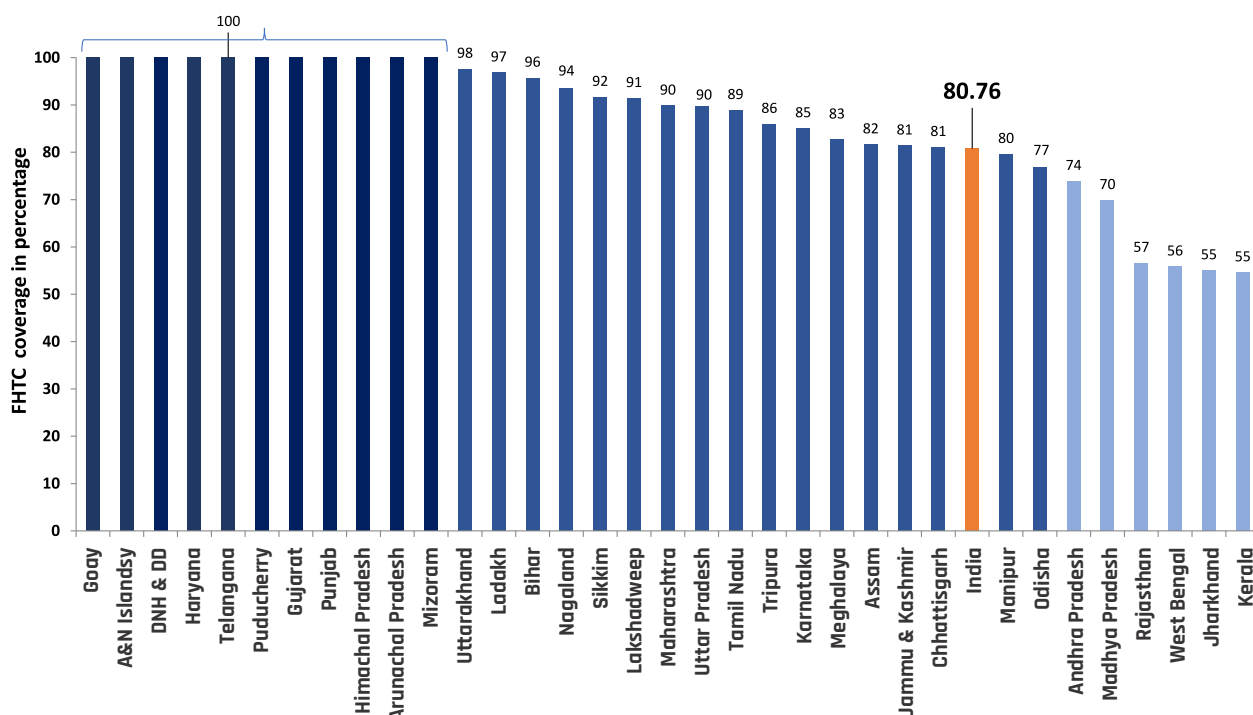
Jal Jeevan Mission stands at the threshold of a new era, symbolising collective determination and local stewardship. As policymakers and practitioners unite in purpose, it is the communities themselves who will define our success. We invite you to explore the pages that follow, learn from these remarkable stories, and join us in paving a water-secure future for rural India.

Kamal Kishore Soan
Additional Secretary & Mission Director (NJJM)
Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation

Progressive coverage - Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) (as on 31.05.2025)



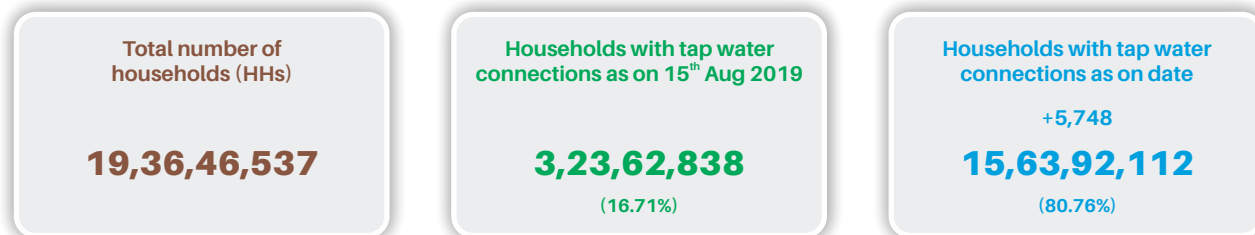
Comparative FHTC coverage status of States/ UTs (as on 31.05.2025)



As on 31st May, 2025

Source: JJM-IMIS

India | Status of tap water supply in rural homes



Households provided with tap water connection since launch of the Mission

12,40,29,274 (76.90%)

Har Ghar Jal [100% HHs with tap water connections]

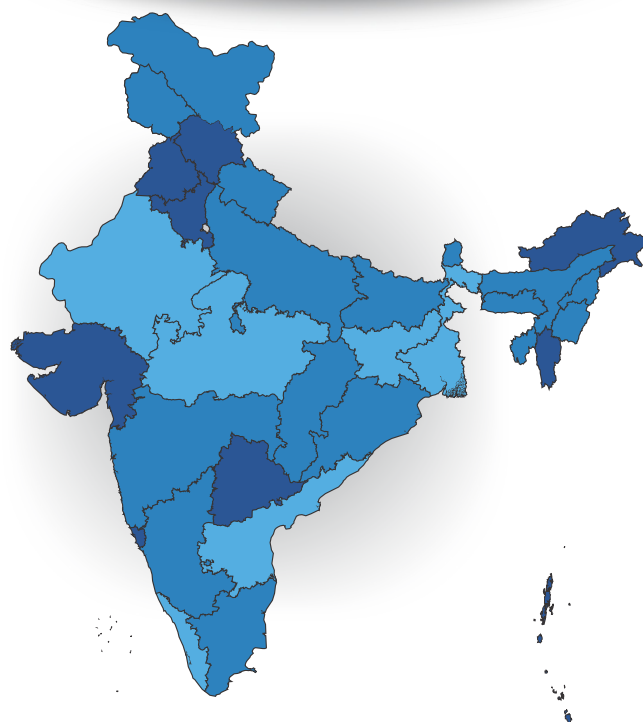
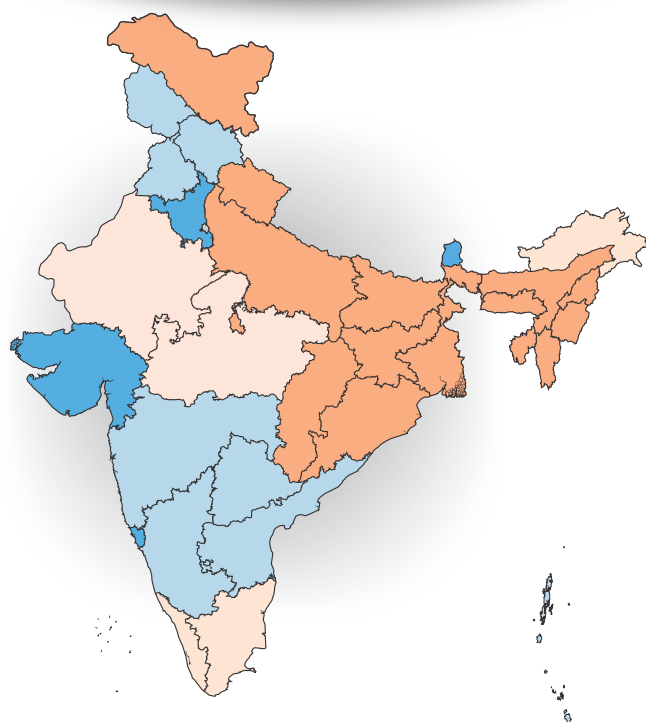
100% FHTC States/ UTs

Goa, A & N Islands, Puducherry, D&NH and D&D, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat



As on 15th August, 2019

As on 31st May, 2025



0 to <10%

10% to <25%

25% to <50%

50% to <75%

75% to <100%

100%

From Consumers to Custodians: Communities Leading the Way in Water Service Management

- Lopamudra Panda, NPMU-NJJM

In the rural heartland of India, a transformative journey is quietly gaining momentum. Households that once waited for tankers or walked miles for a pot of water are now managing their own piped water supply systems. The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), with its people-first approach, has empowered communities not just to receive, but to manage, monitor, and sustain water services, marking a shift from passive beneficiaries to active custodians.

The Pulse of Participatory Planning

At the core of this shift lies participatory planning. In thousands of villages, Gram Panchayats and their subcommittees, such as Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs)/ Pani Samities, had taken charge, conducted baseline surveys, mapped water resources, and supported in preparation of Village Action Plans (VAP). The process is no

longer top-down. It is collaborative, inclusive, and driven by local voices.

Take the example of village Dulhara, situated in Umariya District of Madhya Pradesh¹. Here, a women-led VWSC meticulously planned the PWS system layout, ensured each household was mapped, and even engaged local masons and plumbers to create a sense of ownership. In Dulhara the VWSC has engaged a local woman, Reshmi as a pump operator who has successfully doing her work ensuring timely water supply to houses. Today, the committee not only oversees daily operations but also collects user charges to fund maintenance — a critical step towards financial sustainability.

In Mizoram's Serchhip district, traditional village councils and VWSCs work together to plan and implement water schemes, ensuring that indigenous knowledge is harmonized with modern service delivery models.

Community-Driven Water Solutions in Razeza and Zapami villages of Nagaland is an example of true spirit of community engagement for water security.² Nagaland, is home to many indigenous communities who worships natural water resources and who relies on them. Due to modernization, and use of modern means these water bodies are getting



Figure 1: Reshmi operating her work | Source: MP Jal Nigam

¹ Jal Jeevan Mission Samvad Febraury 2021 Issue V

² Jal Jeevan Samvad May 2024, Issue-44 English





Figure 2: Water sources cleaning by community | Source: PHED Chhattisgarh

contaminated. The women led the water conservation as being the primary managers of water they know the importance of water. The village led by women developed and implemented a comprehensive water conservation plan, that also covers water testing, educating community above infrastructure creation. As a result, a Water Conservation Reservoir was built that is now providing a consistent supply of water for domestic, farming and other use.

Similarly in Chhattisgarh, Sarpanch Mr. Khemlal Deshlahre and VWSC members Mrs. Lata Thakur, Mrs. Anita Mandavi, and Mrs. Rakeshwari Yadav from village Temri in Durg district took a proactive stance to raise awareness about environmental concerns. They focused on crucial issues like water conservation and proper disposal of solid and liquid waste, which had been contaminating the village's water sources.

Under the Sarpanch's leadership, the team has implemented '3-layer recharge pits' to preserve groundwater, replenishing levels and supporting water sustainability through effective greywater management. Additionally, 12 soak

pits were installed village-wide to prevent water wastage, reduce mud formation, and maintain a clean environment. Furthermore, over 600 trees were planted, underscoring their crucial role in water conservation efforts.

Water Quality: Women as Watchguards

Under JJM providing water through household taps is not the only moto, but ensuring quality and safety, is another important pillar of commu-

nity-led Water Service Management. Over 24.80 village women are trained on testing water quality using Field Test Kits (FTKs). They are doing water quality surveillance with utmost responsibility. In the current year more than 5.86 lakhs water samples were tested by these trained women troops.

Many states have used the Self-Help Groups (SHG) of National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) to carry out the responsibility of ensuring water quality. In Odisha, SHG women have been trained to regularly test water quality using FTKs. Their timely interventions have prevented health outbreaks and built trust in public water sources. The Rural Water Supply & Sanitation (RWS&S) department has a cadre of 11 thousand skilled women to carry out bacteriological testing twice and chemical testing once in a year. This initiative under Jal Jeevan Mission has truly inspired the scores of women folk to come forward and play a vital role in drinking water sector.³

In many States, SHGs, Anganwadi workers (AWW) and ASHAs are part of water quality surveillance teams. They collect samples, record results,



Figure 3: Water quality testing using FTK | Source: RWSS Odisha

³ Press Release: Press Information Bureau

and educate communities on safe water handling practices — creating a strong link between clean water and health.

Community Ownership for Operation & Maintenance of PWS

Community-led Operation and Maintenance (O&M) models are emerging as the cornerstone of sustainable service delivery. Across several states, rural communities are leveraging local skills and decentralized governance to carry out routine maintenance, prevent system breakdowns, and ensure water availability even in lean seasons.

In Punjab villages like Bhatla, Takhni, Tana, Naulakha women proved to be the change managers. Apart from ensuring piped water access to all village households, they made concerted efforts to protect the water sources to ensure their long-term sustainability. The collective organised intensive ward-wise awareness campaigns encouraging behaviour change for judicious use of water. The VWSC members laid down the rules and regulations for the community. The time for bill payment was fixed. Now, when the time comes, people willingly come

forward to pay the dues. Funds collected from the villagers are used for operation & maintenance of the PWS schemes.

In the tribal villages of Dhamtari district, Chhattisgarh, trained barefoot technicians, often youth from the same village handle minor repairs, test water quality, and manage pump operations. The result? Reduced downtime, faster response, and an empowered generation of water stewards.

When Women Lead, Water Follows

Women's leadership is at the heart of Jal Jeevan Mission's success, transforming rural water governance through grassroots participation. With at least 50% mandatory representation of women in VWSCs, their voices are shaping critical decisions on planning, implementation, and operation of village water supply systems. SHGs, deeply rooted in the social fabric of rural communities, are playing an instrumental role in spreading awareness, mobilising action, and even managing operations and maintenance of water supply schemes. This active participation not only ensures that solutions are inclusive and commu-

nity-owned but also empowers women as stewards of change.

One of the most powerful symbols of this leadership is the widespread training of rural women to test water quality using Field Test Kits (FTKs). By ensuring that drinking water is safe and free from contaminants, these women are directly safeguarding the health and well-being of their communities. Their involvement brings accountability, vigilance, and a sense of shared responsibility to the mission. When women lead—from the VWSC meetings to the water testing tables—water security becomes a lived, sustained reality. Their participation ensures not just water access, but dignity, trust, and long-term impact.

The Future is Local

As Jal Jeevan Mission moves towards saturation and sustainability, the message is clear — durable change comes from within. By investing in people, building capacities, and nurturing a culture of ownership, we are not just delivering water; we are building water-secure, self-reliant villages.

When communities lead, systems last for long. When women lead, generations thrive.



Figure 4: Women testing water quality using FTK | Source: UNICEF, Madhya Pradesh



From the hills of Umket: Pani to Pragati

- Dr R Ramesh, Associate Professor, CRI, NIRDPR-Hyderabad & Lopamudra Panda, NPMU-NJJM

Nestled in the serene hills of Ri-Bhoi district in Meghalaya, Umket is a small village with around 210 households and a population of nearly 1,000 people. Like many rural villages in the Northeast, residents traditionally relied on distant brooks and rooftop rainwater harvesting to meet their daily water needs. Collecting water was a time-consuming chore, especially for women and girls, who often had to walk long distances several times a day.

“

“Every morning, my daughter and I would climb down the slopes with empty buckets, often more than twice a day. It was exhausting, and sometimes we missed school and work just to ensure there was enough water for cooking and drinking.”

recalls Meribala Lyngdoh, a resident of Umket.

”

The arrival of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) changed that narrative dramatically!

As part of the initiative, a slow sand filter structure was constructed at an elevated location in the village. This gravity-based design eliminated the need for costly pumping infrastructure, ensuring a sustainable and cost-effective water supply model. A local



Figure 5: A new CSC under construction with water supply facility | Source: NIRDPR

spring was tapped, water was treated through the filter and piped to every household—functional household tap connections became a reality in Umket.

Today, families have access to water for drinking and cooking. The transfor-

mation has drastically reduced the burden on women and girls, freeing up time for rest, income-generating activities, and greater participation in community life. The joy is evident in the smiles of women who speak of their newfound “leisure time”—a luxury they had never imagined.

“

“The water has brought peace not only to our homes but also to schools, children are cleaner, illnesses have gone down, and we are able to live with more dignity and less stress. Children now learn the importance of hygiene in school and practice it at home. Our students are not only studying better, but they’re also staying healthier. It’s a full-circle impact, water has transformed education too.”

”



Figure 6: A WASH combo facility - FHTC & IHHL | Source: NIRDPR

Yet, Umket has not forgotten the value of water. Even with improved access, traditional water-conservation habits remain deeply rooted. Households continue to maintain rooftop rainwater harvesting systems and large plastic storage tanks to store rainwater. These habits are testament to their enduring culture of conservation. The community's reverence for water is reflected in every household's practice, including using wastewater for gardens and ensuring no tap is left running.

The impact of JJM in Umket extends well beyond convenience, it has ushered in sanitation, health, and dignity. With regular and adequate

water supply, families now feeling convenient to use their Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs) as they no longer have to fetch water from distance. Open defecation, once an unfortunate necessity during dry spells, has completely stopped. A newly constructed Community Sanitary Complex (CSC) under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), equipped with piped water and handwashing stations, further strengthens the village's sanitation ecosystem. Driving this transformation is the enthusiastic Junior Engineer from the PHE Department,

Umsning Division. A regular presence in the village, he worked closely with the Village Water & Sanitation Committee (VWSC), trained local workers, and monitored the construction and commissioning of the scheme.

His pride is evident as he explains the design of the slow sand filter, the integration of traditional practices with modern systems, and the delight of uninterrupted water supply. He also highlights how community ownership has been key to sustaining the system. The villagers, trained in operation and maintenance, manage minor repairs and routine monitoring through the VWSC.

Indeed, every household in Umket has a story to tell, story of lives improved, dignity restored, and hope renewed. The Har Ghar Jal-programme has brought more than just water to their homes; it has delivered a promise of well-being to a quiet village in the hills of Meghalaya.

Umket's story is more than just infrastructure, it is powerful evidence--how a national programme, driven by local hands and hearts, can bring personal transformation, one tap at a time!

“

“I've seen how one infrastructure intervention can rebuild the spirit of a community. When people come together, respect tradition, and adopt innovation, that's when change becomes sustainable.”

Says JE, Umsning Division

”



Figure 7: Local Roof water harvesting practice | Source: NIRDPR

From the Ground Up

How Community-Led Water Management Drives Jal Jeevan Mission's Success

Meena Kumari, Field Coordinator and Rama Krishna, District Coordinator, NTR, Andhra Pradesh, Evidence Action

When communities unite with a shared purpose, transformation becomes inevitable. In Andhra Pradesh's NTR District, two villages—S Amravaram and K Tadepalli demonstrate how grassroots ownership and community-led action can turn a public health intervention into a sustainable movement. Under the guidance of National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM) and with support from the Andhra Pradesh Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWS&S) Department, Evidence Action, as a technical partner, has installed In-Line Chlorination (ILC) devices in both villages to ensure access to safe drinking water. The success of this initiative is truly determined by the active participation and ownership of community members before, during, and after installation. These stories from Andhra Pradesh highlight that community ownership is the backbone of safe water access.

Empowered Women, Transforming Communities from Within

In K Tadepalli village, a transformative shift is taking place, where clean drinking water is not just provided but embraced as a shared responsibility. The village is among the first in the district to adopt the ILC device for water chlorination, ensuring safe drinking water for its residents. While the installation marked a key milestone, it was the unwavering commitment of the women from the



Figure 8: Shanti SHG members inspecting the ILC device, showcasing community-led operation and maintenance | Source: Evidence Action

Shanti Self-Help Group (SHG) that truly brought the initiative to life.

The members of Shanti SHG were inspired by the awareness sessions on the health benefits of chlorinated water. They voluntarily stepped forward, showing interest in learning how to operate, maintain, and maximize the benefits of the ILC device.

Smt. Meena Kumari, Field Coordinator from Evidence Action, provided hands-on training to the Shanti SHG members on ILC device. These women oversee the day-to-day functioning of the ILC device, report issues with GP, and also take on tasks such as monthly cleaning of the tank area and operating the pump when needed. Their leadership has fostered a culture of collective responsibility and vigilance.

They actively spread awareness among community members, advocating the health benefits of using safe water and building a sense of trust and cooperation within the village. Their efforts exemplify how empowered women lead the way in sustaining public health and fostering resilient communities.

“

“Our Self-Help Group is committed to not only the welfare of its members but also to the betterment of the entire community. United in purpose, we stand together to support and uplift those around us,”

says Smt. Annamma,
President, Shanti SHG.

”



Figure 9: A member of Shanti SHG demonstrating the operation of the ILC device | Source: Evidence Action

Local Governance Driving Grassroots Change

S Amravaram village, located in Kanchikacherla *Mandal* of NTR District, Andhra Pradesh, is a shining example of grassroots ownership and collective responsibility in managing water infrastructure and O&M. Villagers, having lived through the hardship of fetching water from kilometers away and witnessing the devastating health effects of dirty water, were quick to step forward and ready to take the responsibility voluntarily.

Empowering Communities Through Grassroots Leadership

The Gram Sarpanch, along with Panchayat members, mobilized the community to raise awareness about the benefits of safe drinking water and rallied them to take charge of the operation and maintenance of the ILC device. Villagers stepped up voluntarily, driven by their firsthand experiences of water scarcity and poor health conditions.

The impact of community ownership is tangible. The community now

“

“Our community always takes prompt action to repair any damage related to water infrastructure on its own, without waiting for or relying on external support,”

says Smt. Deva Kumari, Community member of Village S Amravaram

”

receives up to 50,000 litres of clean water twice a day. Cases of waterborne diseases like diarrhea, typhoid, and cholera have significantly reduced. Beyond infrastructure, it's the deep-rooted sense of accountability and collaboration that sets S Amravaram apart. Villagers promptly report any issues, remain engaged in discussions, and participate actively in water governance. In return, the Panchayat ensures transparency and continuous communication with the community. Shri Rama Krishna, District Coordinator, Evidence Action, helped the community members with ILC device functionality. Such initiatives encourage active community participation and cultivate a sense of ownership within the villages.

Increased awareness has fostered community-led initiatives on hygiene and sanitation, further strengthening public health outcomes. S Amravaram proves that when people take ownership, progress is not just possible—it's inevitable.

Building Resilient Water Systems Through Local Action

Both Tadepalli and S Amravaram remind us that when communities take the lead with awareness and ownership, water systems don't just function, they thrive. These villages are not only meeting their water needs but building resilient systems driven by local action, empowered women, and accountable leadership.

Under Jal Jeevan Mission, these stories shine as beacons of community-led operation and maintenance, where clean water becomes not just a right, but a shared responsibility—and a source of pride for the community. This progress showcases the remarkable impact of Jal Jeevan Mission in driving community-led change and active participation.

Copy edited by Lopamudra Panda



Figure 10: A mother and her child enjoying clean, safe drinking water in S Amravaram village, NTR district
Source: Evidence Action

Community-Led Water Supply Management: A Sustainable Model from Rural Tripura

- Rituparno Chanda and Ankush Bhattacharjee, Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood

In the remote villages of Ashapura Roaja Para and West Halahali in Tripura's Dhalai district, a remarkable transformation has taken place through community-led water service management. Once plagued by dangerous levels of iron contamination in their groundwater—reaching up to 12 ppm against the permissible limit of 1 ppm—these communities now have access to safe drinking water through a model that places them at the centre of water governance and decision-making.

The Challenge of Iron Contamination

Tripura is among the states hit hardest by iron contamination, with four out of eight districts affected. Dhalai, an aspirational district, faces the worst contamination due to hydrogeological reasons. The iron concentration in groundwater ranges from 0.27 to 3.24 ppm in shallow aquifers and from 0.06 to 12.00 ppm in deeper aquifers—significantly exceeding the prescribed desirable limit of 0.3 ppm and maximum permissible limit of 1 ppm.

This abnormally high iron content has been responsible for water-borne diseases like hemochromatosis, stomach problems, and nausea among the local population.

A Community-Centric Approach to Water Purification

To address this critical issue, the Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood (CML),

an associate organization of Tata Trusts, in collaboration with the Public Works Department (DWS) and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), initiated a pilot project in January 2023. The initiative introduced a '**community owned and operated drinking water purification system' (COPS)** to ensure that 361 households across two villages could access water free of iron contamination.

Technological Innovation with Community at the Core

The project implemented two Iron Removal Plants (IRPs):

- 💧 A 2500 GPH (Gallon Per Hour) capacity IRP in Ashapura Roaja Para, costing ₹10,63,918
- 💧 A 5000 GPH capacity IRP in West Halahali, priced at ₹15,28,543

These costs were significantly lower than conventional systems previously installed by PWD (DWS) Tripura under JJM schemes, with civil works accounting for approximately 25% of the total costs.

The IRPs utilize Katalox Light Media, an innovative technology certified by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and National Science Foundation (NSF). This media is engineered with a unique MnO_2 coating technique on ZEOSORB, providing lightweight, higher filtration surface, longer service life, and more reliable performance.

The plants are equipped with advanced systems such as auto backwash and auto chlorination through Multi-Port Valves (MPVs),



Figure 11: Ashapura Roaja Para Iron Removal Plants (IRP) site | Source: CML



Figure 12: Halahali Iron Removal Plants (IRP) site | Source: CML

which not only enhance water quality but also simplify operation and maintenance for community members.

Institutionalizing Community Water Governance

What distinguishes this initiative is its emphasis on community involvement at every level of implementation and management.

Village-Level Institutional Structures

The cornerstone of this initiative was formalizing institutional arrangements at the village level:

- Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) were restructured and empowered as primary decision-making bodies
- Clear roles and responsibilities were defined for all committee members
- Local pump operators and Junior Engineers received comprehensive training on technical aspects of operating the IRPs
- A tiered governance structure was established, connecting village-level institutions with block and district authorities

Community-Led Operation & Maintenance

The sustainability of the project hinges on community-managed maintenance systems:

- Local caretakers selected from the community oversee daily operations
- Both plants operate under Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMCs) that are managed and

monitored by the VWSCs themselves

- The AMCs cover crucial aspects such as servicing, media regeneration, and electrode replacement, costing approximately ₹90,000 for the 2500 GPH unit and ₹1,02,500 for the 5000 GPH unit annually

Financial Sustainability Through Community Ownership

Financial ownership forms the backbone of this community-led model:

- While initial capital investments came from CML-Tata Trusts and JJM, the Gram Panchayats and VWSCs have instituted a transparent system of user charges
- Each household contributes a modest monthly fee toward maintenance and utility costs
- These contributions are meticulously documented in



Figure 13: Pump Operator, Dipu Ranjan while operating the pump | Source: CML



ledgers maintained by the VWSCs

- Quarterly financial reports are shared during community meetings to maintain transparency
- The pooled community resources now make the AMCs financially manageable, demonstrating the viability of user-financed operation and maintenance

Community-Led Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of this initiative is the community-led water quality monitoring system:

- Before the IRPs were officially handed over to the community, extensive testing showed dramatic reductions in iron concentration—from 4.153 mg/L to 0.153 mg/L in Ashapura and from 2.82 mg/L to 0.105 mg/L in West Halahali
- The project has trained members of local Self-Help Groups (SHGs)—primarily women—in water quality testing and surveillance using Field Test Kits (FTKs)
- Regular water quality monitoring has become a community ritual
- Test results are displayed prominently at the Gram Panchayat office, fostering transparency and building trust

Women as Water Service Managers

Women have emerged as the backbone of this water service management model:

- From traditionally being water collectors, they have transformed into water managers, technical operators, quality

“

A Resident's Story of Transformation

Mina Rani Debbarma, a resident of Biswarani Para, vividly recalls the transformation her village has undergone. *"Before the JJM scheme and iron removal plant were installed, my mornings began with a long, exhausting walk to collect water from a distant stream," she shared. "The water was often dirty and full of iron, leaving me worried about my family's health."*

Mina remembers the excitement on the day the IRP was inaugurated. *"When we first drew water from it, I couldn't believe how clear and clean it was! It felt like a gift," she said, her eyes sparkling with joy.*

"Now, with the IRP, we have clear, clean water at home. It has changed our lives!"

”



Figure 14: Mina Rani Debbarma with her FTK | Source: CML

supervisors, and financial controllers

- In both villages, women constitute over 50% of VWSC membership, with key positions held by women leaders
- Female SHG members have been trained not only in water quality testing but also in basic system operations, creating a second line of technical support

- Women-led water management committees organize monthly awareness sessions on water conservation, hygiene practices, and the connection between safe water and nutrition

Community-Led Grievance Redressal Systems

The community has established an effective multi-tiered grievance redressal mechanism:

- At the first level, residents can report issues to designated VWSC members who are accessible within the village
- For more complex problems, a dedicated phone number connects villagers directly to technical support personnel
- The VWSC maintains a complaint register that documents issues, actions taken, and resolution times
- Monthly review meetings analyze patterns in complaints to identify and address systemic issues

Key Learnings for Promoting Community-Led Water Service Management

This pilot project in Tripura offers valuable lessons for scaling community-led water service management across rural India:

- 1. Multi-stakeholder approach is crucial:** Clearly defining roles and responsibilities of maintenance groups, caretakers, and local governments empowers all parties to contribute meaningfully.

- 2. Community ownership requires comprehensive strategy:** COPS operates with a decentralized, holistic model that encompasses technical assessments, community engagement, awareness campaigns, behavior change initiatives, and innovative engineering solutions.

- 3. Long-term sustainability depends on integration of water utility principles:** Focusing on ensuring the long-term sustainability of water sources and systems, delivering reliable services, and securing financial viability creates a resilient, self-sustaining system.

- 4. Institutionalize village-level water governance:** Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and decision-making powers at the community level.

- 5. Simplify technology without compromising effectiveness:** Enable true community management through appropriate technological choices.

- 6. Build financial co-ownership:** Implement transparent user

contribution mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability.

- 7. Position women as water quality guardians:** Strengthen the health-water nexus through women's leadership.
- 8. Create multi-tiered support systems:** Combine community autonomy with technical backup for resilience.

The Way Forward

As the Jal Jeevan Mission progresses toward its goal of providing Functional Household Tap Connections to every rural household in India, this model from Tripura demonstrates that sustainability lies not just in infrastructure development but in transferring ownership, knowledge, and decision-making power to communities—particularly women.

The villages of Ashapura Roaja Para and West Halahali stand as beacons of community-led water management, showing how informed, empowered communities can secure their water future through active stewardship and inclusive governance.

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Figure 15: Monitoring visit to IRP sites jointly by officials of DWS, Tripura and CML | Source: CML

Empowering Communities to Lead Water Service Management under Jal Jeevan Mission

- Shashank Pawar – Business Advisor, CoNexus Life and Amit Pawar, Chairperson – Global Capability Centre, Social Impact and Sustainability Committee at DMA

Introduction: A People-First Approach to Water Governance

Water is more than a necessity—it is the lifeblood of communities, economies, and ecosystems. In rural and peri-urban India, where dependence on local water sources is critical, community-led water service management has emerged as a powerful model to ensure sustainability, equity, and efficiency. This approach empowers local communities to take charge of the

planning, implementation, monitoring, and maintenance of their water supply systems. Beyond fulfilling daily needs, it opens pathways to boost local tourism, improve public health outcomes, revive rural economies, and foster inclusive development.

As India advances in its mission of “*Har Ghar Jal*” under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation for All), community participation is no longer optional—it is essential.

The Philosophy of Community-Led Water Service Management

At its core, community-led water service management promotes the active involvement of people—especially women, self-help groups, youth collectives, and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)—in water governance. This includes:

- 💧 Identifying water sources and risks
- 💧 Ensuring regular operations and maintenance



Figure 16: Community celebrating long awaited water by worshipping FHTCs | Source: NJJM Image stock

- Budgeting and tariff setting for sustainability
- Monitoring quality, leakage, and usage
- Promoting water conservation and behaviour change

By placing decision-making power in the hands of those most affected, this model brings efficiency, transparency, and ownership.

Why Community-Led Models Work

Unlike top-down schemes that may struggle with implementation gaps, community-driven systems are rooted in local realities and supported by social capital. When communities lead, they protect their resources better, innovate faster, and ensure accountability.

Key Benefits of Community-Led Water Service Management:

i. Boosts Public Health Outcomes

Access to clean and reliable drinking water is directly linked to the reduction of water-borne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid. When

communities manage their water supply, they ensure timely repairs, prevent contamination, and improve hygiene practices.

Initiatives like Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) under the Jal Jeevan Mission have helped drastically reduce open defecation, improve menstrual hygiene awareness, and promote handwashing behaviour—critical in the post-COVID world.

ii. Drives Rural Livelihoods and Tourism

Reliable water infrastructure improves agricultural productivity, supports fisheries, and enables allied industries like floriculture and dairy farming. Well-managed water bodies—lakes, tanks, and rivers—can also be revitalized as eco-tourism destinations, boosting local employment.

For instance, community-led rejuvenation of stepwells in Rajasthan and lakes in Karnataka has not only restored ancient water heritage but also created eco-cultural tourism circuits. Local artisans, storytellers, and entrepreneurs benefit directly.

iii. Enhances Women's Empowerment

Women, traditionally responsible for fetching water, are the most affected by its availability. Community-led models enable them to become change-makers rather than victims. Women-led self-help groups managing water user associations, water testing labs, or running maintenance contracts are becoming the new face of rural leadership.

Empowered women ensure equitable access and build a sense of responsibility in the community, ensuring long-term behavioral shifts.

iv. Builds Social Equity and Inclusion

Community-based approaches provide a platform for marginalized groups—SC/ST communities, migrant populations, and persons with disabilities—to participate in decision-making. This reduces conflict over water access and ensures that no one is left behind, a key principle of SDG 6.

v. Strengthens Disaster and Climate Resilience

With increasing climate variability and extreme events, decentralized water management helps communities adapt. Local water budgeting, source sustainability planning, and greywater reuse can mitigate the impact of droughts and floods.

In Bundelkhand and Vidarbha regions, community-led check dams and percolation tanks have revived water tables and improved drought resilience—without large-scale state investment.

Role of Technology: Empowering the Grassroots

Technology acts as a multiplier in enabling community-led water service management. Here's how:



Figure 17: Book keeping by VWSC members | Source: NJJM Image stock



i. Digital Dashboards and IoT Sensors

Real-time monitoring tools can track water quality, flow, and storage levels. IoT sensors embedded in handpumps or piped water systems alert communities about leaks, contamination, or low pressure. Village-level dashboards help committees track functionality and usage trends.

ii. GIS and Remote Sensing for Water Resource Mapping

Using satellite imagery and GIS platforms, communities can visualize

their watershed, identify recharge zones, and prevent encroachments or pollution. This also aids in preparing climate-resilient water security plans.

iii. AI and Predictive Analytics

Artificial Intelligence can analyze historical weather and usage data to predict shortages, droughts, or system breakdowns. Community water managers can use these insights to proactively ration usage or plan alternative supply chains.

iv. Mobile Apps and Community Engagement Platforms

Apps like 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan' or state-level tools in Gujarat and Maharashtra allow community members to report issues, monitor schemes, and access training modules. These platforms bridge the gap between government schemes and the last-mile users.

v. Drone Technology

Drones are increasingly being used to survey catchment areas, monitor construction quality of water tanks or pipelines, and measure siltation

What is IoT?



Har Ghar Jal
Jal Jeevan Mission

Jal Jeevan Mission

The Internet of things (IoT) describes physical objects (or groups of such objects) with sensors, processing ability, software, and other technologies that connect and exchange data with other devices and systems over the Internet or other communications networks.



levels in reservoirs. Trained community youth or SHGs can become certified drone pilots—adding to rural employment.

Case Studies: Community Champions Across India

Nagaland's Gravity-Based Systems: Tribal villages in Nagaland have innovatively managed gravity-based water systems, where the entire planning and pipe-laying was done through community shramdaan (voluntary labour). Women's groups maintain water storage tanks, collect nominal tariffs, and reinvest in repairs.

Maharashtra's Paani Foundation Villages: Through water cup competitions and training by Paani Foundation, villages across drought-prone Maharashtra have adopted watershed practices, built percolation tanks, and ensured water availability year-round—entirely through community mobilization.

Kerala's Jala Saksharata Campaign: Kerala's campaign on water literacy trained local youth and women to

test water quality and run awareness sessions. It also trained school children as 'Jal Rakshaks', promoting early environmental stewardship.

Challenges and Way Forward:

While the benefits are clear, several challenges persist:

- Capacity building and regular handholding support is needed
- Lack of skilled technicians in rural areas
- Risk of elite capture or exclusion of marginalized voices
- Need for convergence with MGNREGA, health, education, and nutrition missions
- Ensuring financial viability through appropriate tariffs or CSR support

To overcome this, a National Framework for Community-Led Water Governance can be introduced, combining policy mandates, financial incentives, and training modules at scale.

Policy Recommendations:

- Scale-up VWSCs as decentralized institutions under the Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) with dedicated budgets.
- Incentivize women-led water enterprises through startup funding or capacity-building under NRLM and Skill India.
- Mandate technology adoption in community systems through government support or CSR interventions.
- Create rural water fellows or Jal Mitras to support capacity-building at the block level.
- Encourage public-private-community partnerships to manage water as a shared resource.
- Recognize successful communities through national awards and exchange visits.

Conclusion: Water Belongs to the People—Let the People Lead

Water is not just a service—it's a shared responsibility. As India marches ahead to meet the goals of universal drinking water access and resilient water infrastructure, it must shift from provider-driven models to people-driven, community-owned water governance.

With the right blend of local wisdom, technological support, and institutional handholding, communities can become custodians of their water futures. When communities lead, the outcomes are holistic: improved health, local economic growth, women's empowerment, and stronger resilience to climate change.

Water is life—but more importantly, when managed by the people, water becomes a source of dignity, empowerment, and prosperity.

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Figure 18: Woman beneficiary fetching water from tap | Source: UNICEF, Rajasthan



5-day Residential Training program on Spring Shed Management for JEs/ AEs/EEs of Northeast Region at Guwahati

- Vinay Harswal, RIC, NPMU, SPM-NIWAS

A comprehensive 5-day residential training program on Spring Shed Management was successfully conducted by Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water And Sanitation (SPM NIWAS), under Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India. The training specifically planned for Junior Engineers (JEs) and Assistant Engineers (AEs) working with the Public Health Engineering Departments (PHED) and Panchayat & Rural Development (PNRD) departments in the North Eastern States was organised from 05th May to 09th May'25 at SIPRD 2nd Campus, Kahikuchi, Guwahati, Assam. Total 24 participants from Northeastern states from Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura participated in the training.

The training program commenced on May 5th, 2025, with the initial sessions dedicated to participant registration, a pre-training assessment, and an expectation mapping exercise to align learning goals. The program was formally inaugurated in the presence of distinguished dignitaries, Shri Surijit Borgohain, Joint Director, SIPRD Guwahati, Assam, Shri R.C. Borah, Retired Chief Engineer, Water Resources Department, Assam; Dr. Devesh Walia, Dean, North-Eastern Hill University; Dr. Nibedita Paul, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Science and Technology



Figure 19: Inauguration by Shri Surijit Borgohain, Joint Director, SIPRD;Guwahati | Source: SPM-NIWAS

Meghalaya (USTM) and Er.Vinay Harswal, Senior consultant, SPM NIWAS. Senior officials and faculty members from SIPRD were also in attendance along with the participating engineers.

The inaugural session began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp followed by felicitation of the resource persons. Shri Surijit Borgohain delivered the opening remarks, setting the context for the training.

Shri Mohd. Ishfaq (Retd. IAS), Advisor, SPM-NIWAS, addressed the gathering virtually, offering insightful guidance on the significance of spring-shed management for water security, especially in the North-Eastern region.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Vinay Harswal, Training Coordinator, SPM-NIWAS, officially marking the commencement of the 5-day residential training program.

The first day of the training began with introductory sessions by Shri R.C.Borah, Retd. Chief engineer, Water Resource Department, Assam focused on laying a strong conceptual foundation for springshed management in the context of water supply systems in the Northeastern Region. The session commenced with an overview of spring hydrology, the definition and function of springs and springsheds, and their critical role in mountain ecosystems. Participants explored regional challenges such as seasonal drying, source degradation, and fragmentation of institutional efforts.



Figure 20: Session by Dr. Devesh Walia, Dean of School of Human and Environmental Sciences, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong | Source: SPM-NIWAS

Overall, Day 1 set the technical and strategic context for the rest of the training, blending scientific knowledge with participatory and governance-oriented approaches.

Day 2 of the training program focused on community-centered approaches, spring water quality management, and nature-based solutions for sustainable springshed development.

The day began with Session, led by Shri Ritu Thakur (NERIWALM), which provided a comprehensive overview of spring water quality monitoring and analysis. Participants learned about sampling protocols, QA/QC procedures, and methods for analyzing hydrochemical data. The session emphasized the use of water quality data to understand aquifer behavior and introduced remedial

Subsequent sessions by Dr. Devesh Walia, Dean, Dean of School of Human and Environmental Sciences, Northeastern Hill University, Shillong delved into the geological and hydrogeological characteristics of the region, highlighting how rock structures, aquifer types, and subsurface formations influence spring discharge and reliability. The classification of springs based on flow, geology, and seasonality was explained using real examples from the region.

In the afternoon sessions, the focus shifted to field-level hydrogeological mapping and spring identification techniques. Participants learned about rock orientation (strike and dip), recharge zone identification, and multi-level spring surveys. This was followed by a comprehensive discussion on springshed delineation using topographical, geomorphological, and lineament mapping tools.

The final session was conducted by Dr. Bijoy Krishna Chetia, Hydrogeologist, PHED, Assam emphasized springshed monitoring systems and instrumentation, introducing flumes, flow meters, and data loggers for discharge measurement. Participants

also examined governance frameworks for managing and protecting springsheds



Figure 21: Session in progress 1. Bajitborlang L Chyne, NESAC 2. Dr. Bijoy Chetia, PHED Assam and Shri Sironjib Saikia, Retd. CE, 3. Dr. Chubbakkum Pongener, NEIDA, Kohima, 4. Shri Ramesh C. Borah, Retd. CE, WRD, Assam | Source: SPM-NIWAS



measures for improving water quality, alongside best practices for data compilation and reporting.

Subsequent Sessions facilitated by Dr. Nibedita Paul, addressed the critical role of community participation in springshed management. Key topics included the formation of water user groups, participatory governance mechanisms, and engagement of Panchayats, SHGs, and NGOs. The session also explored challenges in mobilizing communities and strategies for ensuring equitable and gender-inclusive participation in decision-making and monitoring. In Next Session Dr. Paul continued with an introduction to Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools, demonstrating how tools such as social mapping, transect walks, timelines, and seasonal calendars can support springshed planning. Case studies of successful community-led initiatives were shared, illustrating best practices and replicable models from across the region.

Following lunch, Session, conducted by Shri Tapasranjan Das (NERIWALM), introduced participants to nature-based and bio-engineering solutions for slope stabilization and recharge enhancement. The session detailed vegetative measures, contour planting techniques, and key considerations for designing and implementing recharge structures in fragile hill ecosystems.

Final Session led by Dr. Amlanjyoti Kar (Retd. CGWB), focused on hydrological analysis of spring flow. Participants were trained in measuring discharge, analyzing hydrographs, and interpreting aquifer recharge dynamics and spring flow variability. Dr. Kar continued into Session 11, presenting a case study-based assessment of a spring-shed management program, covering methodology, data interpretation, and approaches to evaluating storage

needs and long-term sustainability of spring sources.

Together, these sessions provided a well-rounded understanding of how scientific tools, traditional knowledge, and community participation converge to support sustainable springshed management in the Northeastern context.

Days 3 and 4 were dedicated to Field Visits

As part of the residential training on Springshed Management, a one-day

exposure visit was conducted to the Umkokduh Spring site in Nongkhray Village, Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya. The site is part of a climate-resilient springshed development project implemented by the Department of Soil and Water Conservation with support from National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC).

The trainees observed key interventions such as percolation trenches, spring tap chambers, and afforestation for catchment treatment. These measures aim to revive critical springs, enhance baseflow, and ensure water



Figure 22: Field Visit Day 1 - Participants receiving on-site training by Dr. Amlanjyoti Kar, Retd. Regional Director, CGWB | Source: SPM-NIWAS

security for local communities through a participatory approach. The visit was facilitated and supported by Ms. Hamedari Marbaniang, Assistant Soil and Water Conservation Officer, Ri Bhoi and her team.

On-site guidance was provided by Prof. Amlanjyoti Kar, who explained the hydrogeological features and recharge dynamics of the spring. The visit offered valuable insights into practical aspects of springshed rejuvenation and helped reinforce technical concepts covered during classroom sessions.

In collaboration with PHED Assam, a one-day exposure visit was conducted on 8th May 2025 to the Baregaon Spring-based PWSS site in Baregaon No.2 Village, Rajapara Panchayat under Boko Sub-Division, Kamrup District. Trainees were accompanied

by field officers including Junior Engineer, who provided technical orientation on the scheme components. R. Amlanjyoti Kar guided the participants over the technical aspects in the field. The exposure was further enriched by Dr. Nibedita Paul, Mrs. Jolly Changmai Kalita and, who led the participatory sessions using PRA tools to engage the local community and demonstrate field-level approaches to springshed mapping and community-based water resource management. Ms. Pranami Buragohain, State Coordinator, JJM, Assam and PHED team for the Boko Sub division extended their support in field for successful completion of the field visit.

The visit provided practical insights into the implementation of 24x7 gravity-based water supply schemes, its technical components, and the

integration of community engagement in sustaining such initiatives.

The final day, May 9th, 2025, began with Session on Impact Assessment in Springshed Management conducted by Dr. Chubaakum Pongener from the North East Initiative Development Agency. This session covered the importance of conducting baseline surveys to assess the impact of Springshed Management (SSM) projects. The various types of impact evaluated included Ecological impact, Economic impact, and Social impact. The session also discussed the sustainability of the program and mechanisms for monitoring and verifying impacts through evaluation. Dr. Chubakkum oriented the participants about the importance of community engagement for successful implementation of Springshed management Program.



Figure 23: Participants and Resource Persons of the training | Source: SPM-NIWAS



Dr. Chyen from Northeastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC) in his sessions introduced the use of GIS Mapping for Springshed Analysis. Participants learned about the introduction of GIS for Water Resource Management, basic GIS concepts and components (layers, spatial data, attributes), and the importance of GIS in hydrology and watershed management. Sessions focused on the Use of Remote Sensing & Digital Tools in Springshed Management. Participants were introduced to Remote Sensing for Water Resource Management, learning what remote sensing is, the types of satellite imagery available (optical, radar, thermal), and their applications in hydrology and groundwater recharge analysis.

After the lunch break on Day 5, The participant working groups then delivered their Final Group Project Presentations, Participants from each state were divided into groups of 4 persons in each group. Total 07 groups were formed and each participants was asked to deliver the presentation from his group.

The Valedictory Session marked the formal conclusion of the 5-day Residential Training Program on Springshed Management. The session was graced by Mr. Sironjib Saikia, Retd. Chief Engineer, PHED Assam, Mr. Surjit Borghaian, Joint Director, SIPRD, Guwahati Assam, Mr. Chubakkum Pongener, NEIDA, Kohima Dr. Bijoy Chetia, PHED Assam, Shri Rituparno Chanda, Tata Trusts, Ms. Sukriti Das, Training coordinator, Assam and Vinay Harswal, SPM NIWAS.

Participants shared their feedback and reflections, highlighting key takeaways from both classroom and field-based sessions. They appreciated the practical orientation of the training and the focus on region-specific challenges and solutions related to spring-based water supply systems.

The Chief Guests addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of sustained capacity building and inter-departmental coordination in ensuring water security in the Northeastern Region. They encouraged the participants to apply the knowledge gained at the field level and contribute to effective implementation under the Jal Jeevan Mission. The session concluded with

the distribution of certificates to all participants, followed by a formal vote of thanks from SPM NIWAS. The training provided a comprehensive learning experience combining theoretical knowledge, practical field exposure, and hands-on digital tool application, equipping the JEs/AEs with the necessary skills for effective springshed management in the Northeastern states.



Figure 24: Group Presentation, Field Activities by participants and Distribution of training certificate | Source: SPM-NIWAS

Promoting Water Resource Sustainability through Women Participation

- Charu Shukla & Devendra Gandhi, PHED, Uttar Pradesh



Figure 25: Empowered as Jal Sahelis, these women raise awareness for water conservation, leading community efforts in water management

Source: PHED & UNOPS District Team, Jalaun

Water resource conservation and management require active community involvement and responsibility to ensure sustainable outcomes. In Uttar Pradesh, the Jal Jeevan Mission has been implementing strategies to achieve 100% drinking water coverage, manage greywater, and promote the long-term sustainability of water resources through community engagement.

For the past four years, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has partnered as a sector partner in the Jal Jeevan Mission across 11 districts of Uttar Pradesh. The approach focuses on making

communities aware and accountable for maintaining water resources and their functionality. The initiatives aim to move individuals beyond personal interests and inspire them to become leaders for public welfare.

This is a story of Khutmili village in Jalaun district, where women selected for water quality testing have emerged as 'Jal Sahelis' (Water Companions). Through continuous training, awareness programs, visits to water treatment plants, and initiatives like the water knowledge journey, these women now recognize the invaluable nature of water resources. Their understanding has translated into voluntary efforts to

ensure the sustainability and functionality of water resources within their community.

The *Jal Sahelis* demonstrate how awareness and training programs can empower individuals to contribute meaningfully to resource conservation. By fostering a sense of shared responsibility, these women have become instrumental in driving long-term environmental sustainability in their village. This success highlights the importance of community participation in achieving sustainable management and conservation of vital resources like water. This model not only benefits the community but serves as an example for other





Figure 26: Women as Jal Sahelis, at the forefront of water management | Source: PHED & UNOPS District Team, Jalaun

regions striving to balance resource management with local empowerment and accountability.

In the month of March, UNOPS organized a one-day training session for the *Jal Sahelis*. Following this training, the *Jal Sahelis* began efforts to transform one of the four ponds in the village into a model pond. On Earth Day, April 22, 2025, around two dozen women gathered to clean the pond through voluntary labour. They removed waste, discarded plastic bags, and debris, committing to keeping the pond clean. They also appealed to the villagers to support

them in maintaining the pond's cleanliness.

Meena Shukla, the leader of the *Jal Sahelis*, emphasized that clean ponds would ensure a continuous supply of water to drinking water sources. She stressed the importance of keeping water resources clean to provide safe drinking water for the entire village. *Jal Saheli*, Neetu expressed that preserving the ponds is the community's primary responsibility since they belong to the village. *Jal Saheli*, Neelam shared that their village water was previously saline, and during summers, water sources would dry

up, requiring the use of water tankers. However, due to the Jal Jeevan Mission's water supply for the past three years, the need for tanker water during summers has diminished.

This inspiring action of the *Jal Sahelis* in Khutmili showcases how empowering local communities can lead to tangible, sustainable outcomes for vital resources like water. The model set forth stands as a hope, illustrating how dedicated individuals can create ripples of positive change that benefit not only their communities, but also inspire others to follow the same path.

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Governance at the Grassroots

Strengthening Panchayats for Sustainable Rural Drinking Water Supply

- Shailika Sinha, NJJM

In much of the developing world, the reciprocity between central authority and local governance defines the success, or failure, of public services. India, with its scale, complexity, and democratic legacy, offers a compelling counterpoint – quiet, yet sweeping; deeply local, yet nationally coordinated. At the heart of this transformation is the Gram Panchayat, and two of India's most ambitious public welfare initiatives: Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G). Together, these have begun to redefine governance,

infrastructure, and citizenship through the lens of grassroots empowerment. Mahatma Gandhi's aspiration for *Gram Swaraj* where each village is a “complete republic, independent for its own vital wants” remains a guiding light in this journey.

For a country where over 65% of the population resides in rural areas¹, access to safe and reliable drinking water is more than just a developmental goal, it is a marker of dignity, equity, and justice. Jal Jeevan Mission

(JJM), launched in 2019, represents a bold shift in India's approach to drinking water – pivoting from infrastructure creation to service delivery, from top-down schemes to community-led governance.

What sets JJM apart is its ability to dissolve historical inequities. The same pipeline now delivers clean drinking water to all, across caste, class, and community – without discrimination. There is no special tap, no separate queue. In village after village, JJM has subtly broken age-old barriers, setting new standards for equality.

As we observed Panchayati Raj Diwas on 24th April, it is important to recognise the central role of Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Village Water &



Figure 27: Women participating in an awareness generation activity on judicious use of water | Source: NJJM Image Stock

¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1894901>





Figure 28: A water storage tank, ensuring safe, piped drinking water to household in the village | Source: UP SWSM

Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) in shaping the future of water security in rural India. The recent extension of JJM until December 2028, announced in the Union Budget 2025-26, reaffirms the government's commitment to sustaining this transformation and strengthening the systems that make it possible. At the core of this effort, is the Gram Panchayat, which is entrusted with the ownership of the in-village water infrastructure and is expected to lead its operation and maintenance.

The Constitutional Mandate and the JJM Paradigm

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment of 1992 set the stage for what we now witness in rural India. It devolved power over 29 subjects to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), with drinking water among them. For years, this remained a formal promise. Implementation remained locked in departmental silos.

JJM built on this mandate by putting communities in the driver's seat. Its decentralized, demand-driven model gave villagers and Panchayats the space to prepare its own plan and take the lead.

To cater to India's vast and diverse rural landscape, JJM operates through two broad types of schemes: Single Village Schemes (SVSs), where one village relies on its own local water source; Multi Village Schemes (MVSs), where infrastructure is shared across habitations, often drawing from surface water such as rivers, canals, or reservoirs. As on 23rd April 2025, there are about 5.78 lakh SVS and 80,417 MVS in the country.

While the technical models vary, the governance principle remains the same: Panchayats lead, communities participate, and sustainability is the goal. Whether it is a spring-fed system in the hills of the Northeast or a river-fed pipeline serving several

villages in Bundelkhand, it is the PRI that holds the thread together. When infrastructure work is largely near to completion, the intent of Jal Jeevan Mission is to capacitate the Panchayat to run the in-village infrastructure independently at their own with *Jan Bhagidari*.

Panchayats as Platforms of Transformation

There are 2.6 lakh Panchayats in India, and over 5.14 lakh Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) have been formed to support them, each with 10-15 members, at least half of whom are women.

ASHAs, Anganwadi workers, and Self Help Group leaders are now frontline actors in the water ecosystem, testing quality, collecting user charges, and managing repairs. Over 24.80 lakh women have been trained in Field Test Kit (FTK)-based testing,

converting users into water quality monitors.

This growing cadre of Nal Jal Mitras – trained local youth who maintain infrastructure, brings the Mission's emphasis on capacity to life. They are the functional edge of the system, handling everything from chlorination to leak repairs.

At the district level, Water and Sanitation Missions support Panchayats through technical guidance and emergency interventions. At the state level, departments shape strategy, vet plans, and align digital systems. At the national level, the NJJM ensures cohesion, monitors performance, and enables reforms.

Across these levels, the aim remains clear: to move from construction to service delivery, from funding projects to ensuring functionality.

A 2024 study by the National Centre for Good Governance reinforces this, highlighting how Panchayats with strong SHG leadership consistently outperform their peers on transparency, timeliness, and citizen engagement. It is in these intersections – between data and democracy,

local knowledge and digital infrastructure – that India's governance model is being re-engineered.

JJM does not view taps as endpoints. A tap is only meaningful if it runs every day, with adequate water that is safe, monitored, and financially sustainable.

To achieve this, the Mission rests on four pillars:

- ◆ **Water budgeting**, where supply is matched with local demand.
- ◆ **Source sustainability**, through recharge, protection, and harvesting.
- ◆ **Financial viability**, enabled by user contributions and transparent budgets.
- ◆ **Real-time monitoring**, using dashboards, sensors, citizen feedback, and mobile testing.

This is where the real shift lies, from episodic interventions to a service-oriented, accountable culture, where social audits, IEC campaigns, and grievance systems are not external checks, but integral components of delivery.

Hygiene, sanitation, and water are interlinked. Behavioural change in sanitation complements water access, and vice versa. Together, JJM and SBMG create what the Government calls a *Sujal & Swachh Gaon* – a village where water and hygiene are co-owned, co-managed, and co-delivered.

Towards Amrit Kaal

As India approaches the centenary of its independence in 2047, its trajectory hinges not merely on economic metrics, but on the vibrancy of its democratic institutions. Gram Panchayats, when empowered and capacitated, emerge as the custodians of that future.

When a woman tests the water from her own tap, when a Nal Jal Mitra repairs a leak before it disrupts supply, when VWSCs collect user charge and track budgets, governance is becoming local, continuous, and real.

And in a world grappling with democratic backsliding, India's Panchayati Raj revolution is a persistent reminder: real sovereignty begins at the grassroots.

Figure 29: Women form an integral part of JJM on the ground
Source: UNICEF, Rajasthan

Interaction with DM/ DCs for effective implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission

- Amit Kumar Ranjan, NPMU-NJJM

In an effort towards sensitisation about the mission's components and to take stock of ground reality, JJM initiated "JJM Samvad" with DMs/ DCs.

In this JJM Samvad series, AS&MD-NJJM chaired the first review meeting on 08.05.2025 with Nagaland's Deputy Commissioners (DCs) on implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission. While delivering his key remarks, Secretary-DDWS emphasized the importance of ground truthing, role of VWSC and DWSM, short & long-term measures for source sustainability, monitoring of schemes, convergence, etc. He also thanked districts for their support, so far.

During the meetings, DCs highlighted the progress, issues and status of schemes in their District. AS&MD emphasized that efforts to be made regarding saturation in all areas

including aspirational districts and to ensure quality monitoring, timely reporting and involvement of all stakeholders on the ground. The meeting was attended by Commissioner & Secretary and other officials. From National Jal Jeevan Mission, DS and all concerned officials were present.

Furthermore, Secretary-DDWS chaired the 4th review meeting to assess the status and implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission with DM/ DC/ CEOs from the State of Haryana, Maharashtra, and Assam. During the meeting, district authorities shared the status and planning for saturation of schemes. AS&MD-NJJM discussed the different aspects of JJM in detail with all the DM/ DCs and CEOs and reiterated for effective monitoring of schemes, regular reporting, WQ, O&M of schemes, awareness generation, etc.

"District collectors have to lead the way towards planning for the saturation of the schemes, and regular monitoring is the key to sustainability." - AS&MD-NJJM said during the meeting.

Jal Jeevan Mission has conducted JJM Samvad with over 300 DM/ DCs so far to realize the goal of Har Ghar Jal.



Figure 30: Sri Ashok K K Meena, addressing DCs/DMs, AS&MD, JS-Water and Director on dias | Source: NJJM



Figure 31: Shri Kamal Kishore Soan, AS&MD-NJJM addressing DCs/ DMs | Source: NJJM

Glimpses of Jal Jeevan Samvad with DM/ DCs



Figure 32: First DM/ DC meeting with Nagaland on 6th May, 2025



Figure 33: Second Meeting of DM/ DCs chaired by Secretary-DDWS with Uttarakhand, Mizoram and Maharashtra on 09.05.2025



Figure 34-35: AS&MD-NJJM chaired the 6th meeting to review the progress and implementation status of #JalJeevanMission in Tamil Nadu, Bihar, and Arunachal Pradesh on 13.05.2025

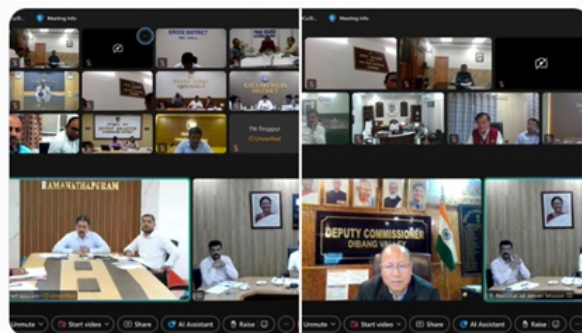


Figure 36-37: AS&MD-NJJM chaired 7th #JJMSamvad meeting with DM/DCs to review the progress and implementation status of #JalJeevanMission in Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat and Meghalaya on 14.05.2025



Glimpses of Jal Jeevan Samvad with DM/ DCs



Figure 38: AS&MD-NJJM chaired 5th #JJMSamvad meeting to review the progress and implementation status of JJM with DCs/ DMs of #Rajasthan and #Manipur on 13.05.2025



Figure 39: "District collectors have to lead the way towards planning for the saturation of schemes, and regular monitoring is the key to sustainability."
- AS&MD-NJJM said during the 8th #JJMSamvad meeting held on 14.05.2025 with DM/DCs of #Gujarat, MP, #Meghalaya, Gujarat and Kerala.



Figure 40-41: AS&MD-NJJM chaired the 9th #JJMSamvad meeting to review the progress and implementation status of #JalJeevanMission in Tripura and Uttar Pradesh on 15.05.2025



Figure 42-43: In guidance of Secretary, DDWS; 11th #JJMSamvad meeting with DMs/ DCs of Chhattisgarh & Punjab held on 19.05.2025 to review the progress and implementation of #JalJeevanMission through VC.

Glimpses of Jal Jeevan Samvad with DM/ DCs



Figure 44: AS&MD-NJJM chaired the 10th #JJMSamvad meeting with DMs/DCs of Andaman & Nicobar Island, #Goa, #Ladakh, #Tripura, #Puducherry and #UttarPradesh to review the progress and implementation of #JalJeevanMission on 16.05.2025



Figure 45: AS&MD-NJJM chaired the 12th #JJMSamvad meeting with DMs/DCs of #Jharkhand and #Punjab held on 19.05.2025



Figure 46-47: AS&MD-NJJM chaired the 13th #JJMSamvad meeting with DMs/DCs of 30 districts of #UttarPradesh, held on 30 May 2025

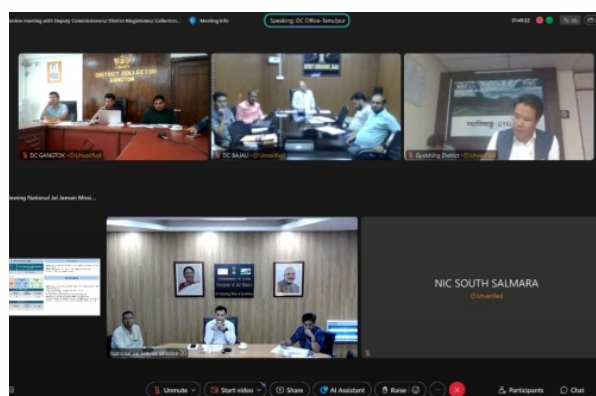
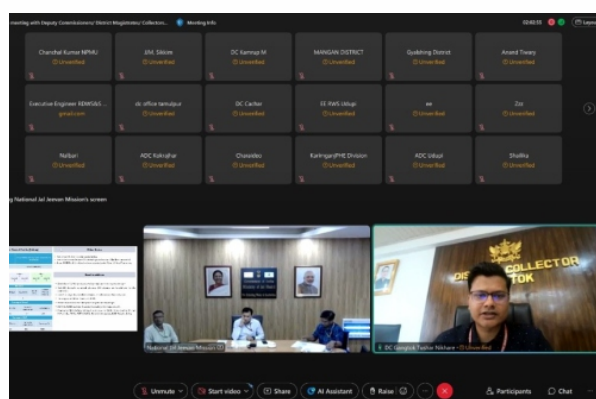


Figure 48-49: In continuation with the ongoing series of #JJMSamvad, AS&MD-NJJM chaired another meeting with DMs/DCs of 20 districts of #Assam, #Sikkim and #Nagaland on 30.5.2025



Visit of MoS to Karnal, Haryana

Sh. V. Somanna, MoS-DDWS held a review meeting on 20th May, 2025 at Karnal district headquarters in Haryana to assess the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen. During the meeting, State's senior officials and Central Government were also present. Post review meeting, MoS addressed press conference to update the media about the progress and status of the mission. He emphasized that under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, India is progressing rapidly. The press conference highlighted how every scheme of the Central Government is aimed at the holistic development of all sections of society.



Figure 50: Interaction of Hon'ble MoS with stakeholders | Source: PHED Haryana

Visit of MoS to Assam

Visited Bagarpar and Bilpar Part PWSS under Jal Jeevan Mission in Hailakandi district. Interacted with beneficiaries, Jal Mitras, ASHA workers, and department officials to review water treatment, quality, and supply. Emphasized community participation for sustainable water management. Satisfied with progress, but stressed continued engagement for optimal results.



Figure 51: Interaction of Hon'ble MoS with stakeholders | Source: PHED Assam

Field Visits by NJJM officials

In his two day visit of Odisha, Sh. Kamal Kishore Soan, AS&MD-JJM & SBMG (DDWS) visited Sundergarh district to review the overall implementation of different aspects of JJM & SBMG in the district. On his first day of visit, a meeting was conducted with CDO-cum-EO, Sundergarh; ZP and other Dist., Level Officers on the progress of missions and status of on-boarding and activation of DWSSM and VWSCs.

On 02.05.2025, Sh. Kamal Kishore Soan, Additional Secretary & Mission Director (NJJM & SBMG), visited Mega PWS at Kuarmunda which covers Kuarmunda and Nuagaon Block's 38,537 Households in 201 villages with WTP capacity 33.62 MLD, 39 ESR with Estimated cost 323.88 crore from OMBADC. Further he visited Govt High School Padampur and AWC (Goudasahi), Amrit Sarovar Tank site in Sarandaposh village under Padampur GP to see the progress of JJM. Later, at Dumerjore Village; he inaugurated 10 Nos. Battery Operated Vehicles in

presence of Swachha Sathis of Kuarmunda Block for Waste Collection under SBMG and Interacted with beneficiaries. He was accompanied by CDO, EE and other state officials.



Figure 52: AS&MD visiting the raw water pump house | Source: NJJM

Jammu & Kashmir

JM Mission Director Urges Fast-Tracking of Scheme Completion Across J&K. Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Shah (JKAS) today convened a comprehensive review meeting with the Jal Shakti (PHE) Divisions of the Union Territory via virtual mode. The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Kashmir, Superintending Engineers of all circles across J&K, Executive Engineers of civil and mechanical divisions, and officers from the Mission Directorate.

At the outset, Mr. Shah reviewed the status of water supply schemes in areas impacted by recent developments. The chair was informed that, as per field reports, water supply schemes across the UT are functioning normally.

During the meeting, the Mission Director conducted a division-wise review of progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission and reiterated the deadline of end-2025 for the completion of all projects. He instructed the newly posted Superintending Engineers to assess on-ground progress and conduct fortnightly reviews to ensure that timelines are strictly adhered to in both letter and spirit.

The meeting also featured discussions on Har Ghar Jal certification of villages reported last year, and on the

ongoing water quality monitoring and surveillance activities being carried out by the UT's network of water testing laboratories. The Mission Director emphasized the importance of timely execution and quality assurance in delivering functional household tap connections across Jammu and Kashmir, thereby achieving the vision of "Har Ghar Jal".

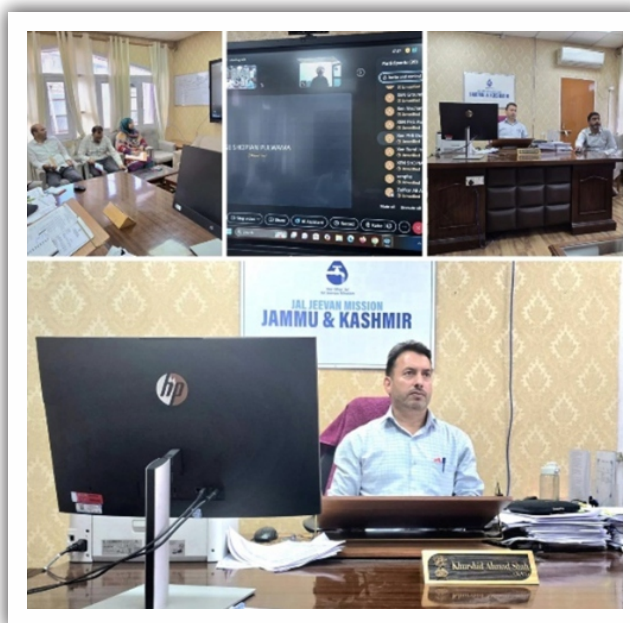


Figure 53: MD-J&K during online session with officials | Source: PHED, J&K



Meeting of Hon'ble Union Minister with Chief Ministers/ State officials and others





JJM in Media

जल जीवन मिशन से बदली ग्राम सोनखवा की तकदीर

जल जीवन मिशन में बागेश्वर अखिल, दून में 99% काम पूरा

जल जीवन मिशन से बदली ग्राम सोनखवा की तकदीर: अब हर घर में पहुंचता है खुशियों का जल

Jal Jeevan Mission transforms fortune of rural B'khand: Study

A NEW BEGINNING

70 villages across seven districts (Banda, Chitrakoot, Hamirpur, Jhansi, Jalaun, Mahoba & Lalitpur) were surveyed as part of the study

- > 95% of respondents said better health helped them save on healthcare costs
- > 92% preferred staying in their villages due to new opportunities
- > 93% of respondents acknowledged reduction in dowry-related cases due to strengthening of rural social fabric

मिशन निदेशक विमल मिश्रा ने बताया कि ग्राम-घर नल से पेयजल पहुंचने की पुष्टि ग्राम सभा की बैठक में की जा रही पुष्टि



ग्राम में जल जीवन मिशन की पुष्टि बागेश्वर अखिल की है। सभी निले अब लखन को हसिल करने के करीब हैं।

समय, धरु, कालिका के इस प्रदे में अब मिशन से भी सर पर पानी देने की आवश्यकता नहीं रहने। -प्रबन्ध सिंह धामी, मुखर्जी, प्रशासक

हरीद्वार में 95 प्रतिशत, केवल नल से 92 प्रतिशत लख



Jacob Zhimomi @jacobzhimomi · May 6
Congratulations to the villages of Tssori Old, Liphayan, Yantharo, Tsopo and Chandalashung-B under Wokha District on having attained #HarGharJal. With your active support and cooperation, this feat was possible. @nagalandphed remains steadfast in its commitment of contributing

<p>Village Tssori Old becomes 'HarGharJal' On 30.04.2025 in District Wokha, Nagaland</p> <p>100% Tap Water Connections</p>	<p>Village Liphayan becomes 'HarGharJal' On 30.04.2025 in District Wokha, Nagaland</p> <p>100% Tap Water Connections</p>
<p>Village Yantharo becomes 'HarGharJal' On 30.04.2025 in District Wokha, Nagaland</p> <p>100% Tap Water Connections</p>	<p>Village Chandalashung-B becomes 'HarGharJal' On 30.04.2025 in District Wokha, Nagaland</p> <p>100% Tap Water Connections</p>



Arun Sao @ArunSao3 · May 3
आज कोकर जिले के ग्राम पंचायत कानापोड़ में जल जीवन मिशन के कार्यो का अवलोकन किया एवं ग्रामीणों से संवाद कर योजना के जमीनी स्तर के क्रियान्वयन की जानकारी ली।



चर्चा के दौरान

BJP and 9 others

You reposted
National Water Mission @nwmgoi · May 8
Please make it a priority to engage with as many people as possible during your field visit. Together, let's ensure that the last mile is never the last priority ~ Secretary @MoJSDDWS @ashokkmeena in his address at the CNO & TO Workshop cum Orientation Program



1K



Har Ghar Jal
Jal Jeevan Mission

Jal Jeevan Samvad



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