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Catch the Rain Campaign 2026 Strengthens Community-Led Water Conservation, Groundwater Recharge and Climate-Resilient Water Security Across India

Published On: 23-07-2026

Recent Developments:

- A **nationwide campaign** is being conducted from **4 July to 4 August 2026** to promote **rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, restoration of traditional water bodies, plantation activities** and **Jan Bhagidari** in water conservation.
- The campaign was launched in response to the **Prime Minister's Mann Ki Baat** appeal to conserve every drop of rainwater and sustain the momentum of water conservation across the country.
- The campaign is led by the **National Water Mission** under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** and integrates **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain (2026)** with the **Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain** initiative.

Catch the Rain Campaign:

About:

- **Catch the Rain** is a flagship campaign of the **National Water Mission** based on the tagline "**Catch the Rain, Where it Falls, When it Falls**", encouraging every region to adopt locally suitable rainwater harvesting measures before the monsoon.
- The campaign follows a **decentralised, location-specific and community-driven approach** to improve water security through sustainable water resource management.

Major Activities:

- The campaign promotes construction of **check dams, recharge pits, recharge shafts, rooftop rainwater harvesting systems**, desilting of tanks, restoration of stepwells, removal of encroachments and reuse of abandoned borewells for groundwater recharge.
- States have been advised to establish **Rain Centres** at **Collectorates, Municipalities and Gram Panchayats** to provide technical guidance on suitable rainwater harvesting methods.
- Residential, commercial and institutional buildings are encouraged to install **rooftop rainwater harvesting systems** to improve groundwater recharge, increase soil moisture, reduce urban flooding and minimise road damage.
- District administrations, educational institutions, public sector organisations, transport agencies and security establishments are encouraged to map water bodies, remove encroachments and actively implement water conservation measures.

Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain (2026):

About:

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- **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain** was launched on **1 June 2026** by expanding the **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari** initiative and integrating it with the **Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain** campaign.

Objectives:

- The campaign aims to maximise **rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, water storage and community participation**, transforming every rainfall event into an opportunity for long-term water conservation.
- It promotes **low-cost, scientifically designed and locally appropriate interventions** to strengthen climate resilience and sustainable water management.

Convergence with Government Schemes:

- The campaign converges with **Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission–Gramin, Per Drop More Crop** under **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Finance Commission Grants** and various **State Government schemes**.

Community Participation:

- **Panchayati Raj Institutions, Urban Local Bodies, Self-Help Groups, youth organisations, educational institutions, civil society organisations** and local communities are mobilised to strengthen participatory water governance.

Evolution of Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari:

Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari 2.0 (2025):

- The initiative was launched on **1 June 2025** to accelerate **groundwater recharge** in **over-exploited and critical** districts through low-cost, hyper-local interventions.
- Against the target of constructing **1 crore** groundwater recharge structures by **31 May 2026**, more than **1.5 crore** structures were reported nationwide, exceeding the target by over **50%**, while outstanding performers were recognised during the **6th National Water Awards**.

Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari 1.0 (2024):

- The initiative was launched on **6 September 2024** at **Surat, Gujarat** to strengthen community participation and make water conservation a nationwide movement.
- Guided by the principles of **Community, Corporate Social Responsibility and Cost (3Cs)**, it promoted low-cost recharge structures, revival of abandoned borewells, scientific local solutions and convergence through a **Whole-of-Government** and **Whole-of-Society** approach.
- Implemented from **1 April 2024 to 31 May 2025**, the initiative exceeded its target of **10 lakh** recharge structures by creating more than **27 lakh** artificial groundwater recharge structures across the country.

Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain:

About:

- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain** was launched on **World Water Day (2021)** with the theme "**Catch the Rain, Where it Falls, When it Falls.**"

Focus Areas:

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- The campaign promotes **rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, watershed development, rejuvenation of water bodies, afforestation** and **Jan Andolan-based water conservation**.
- It builds upon the success of the original **Jal Shakti Abhiyan (2019)**, initially implemented in **1,592 water-stressed blocks** across **256 districts**, and has since evolved into an annual nationwide campaign with changing themes.

Jal Shakti Kendras:

Institutional Role:

- **Jal Shakti Kendras** are being established as district-level institutional hubs to support local water conservation and groundwater management.

Functions:

- They function as **knowledge, awareness and facilitation centres**, promoting rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and sustainable water management practices.
- They provide **technical guidance** to communities, district administrations and implementing agencies for effective planning and execution.
- They strengthen **Jan Bhagidari** by connecting citizens, institutions and government departments with practical water conservation solutions.

Water Harvesting System:

Meaning:

- A **water harvesting system** is a technique or structure designed to collect, store and utilise **rainwater, surface runoff** or other water sources for domestic use, irrigation and groundwater recharge.
- It represents a sustainable approach to water resource management aimed at reducing water scarcity and improving long-term water security.

Types:

- **Rainwater Harvesting**, collecting rainwater through rooftop systems, storage tanks and underground reservoirs.
- **Groundwater Recharge Systems**, allowing harvested rainwater to percolate into aquifers through recharge wells and recharge shafts.
- **Surface Water Harvesting**, storing runoff in ponds, tanks and reservoirs for irrigation and other productive uses.
- **Urban Water Harvesting**, capturing rainwater from rooftops and paved surfaces to reduce pressure on municipal water supply systems and improve stormwater management.

Significance:

- It provides a **reliable local water source**, improves groundwater quality and reduces saline water intrusion in coastal regions.
- It minimises **urban flooding, waterlogging, soil erosion** and sediment deposition in rivers and reservoirs.
- It enhances **groundwater recharge**, improves water availability during dry periods and reduces dependence on over-exploited aquifers.
- It strengthens **climate resilience**, supports sustainable agriculture and addresses groundwater depletion caused by rapid urbanisation.

Challenges in Water Conservation:

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Groundwater Over-Extraction:

- Excessive groundwater extraction for agriculture, industry and domestic consumption continues to outpace natural recharge in many regions.

Climate Change:

- Erratic monsoon patterns, increasing drought frequency and extreme rainfall events reduce the effectiveness of conventional water management practices.

Urbanisation and Encroachment:

- Rapid urban expansion has reduced permeable surfaces, increased runoff and led to encroachment of lakes, wetlands and traditional water bodies.

Maintenance and Community Ownership:

- Long-term sustainability depends upon regular maintenance, local participation and institutional accountability.

Way Forward:

Nature-Based Water Management:

- Promote watershed restoration, wetland conservation, river rejuvenation and ecosystem-based water management for long-term sustainability.

Technology Integration:

- Expand the use of **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**, **remote sensing**, **Artificial Intelligence** and digital monitoring for water resource planning and groundwater assessment.

Community-Centred Governance:

- Strengthen **Panchayati Raj Institutions**, **Urban Local Bodies**, **Water User Associations** and citizen participation to improve local ownership of water assets.

Demand-Side Water Management:

- Encourage **micro-irrigation**, **water-efficient agriculture**, **wastewater reuse** and behavioural change to improve water-use efficiency.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Constitutional and Policy Framework:

- **Water** is primarily a **State Subject** under **Entry 17 of the State List**, while regulation of **inter-State rivers and river valleys** falls under **Entry 56 of the Union List**.
- **Article 48A** directs the State to protect and improve the environment, while **Article 51A(g)** makes protection of natural resources, including water, a Fundamental Duty.
- The **National Water Policy (2012)** advocates **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)**, river basin planning, demand-side management, water-use efficiency and community participation.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 aims to ensure universal access to safe water and sanitation and promote sustainable management of water resources by **2030**