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Har Ghar Jal initiative

Published On: 02-07-2023

Why is in news? Water mission may miss 2024 target

The government's ambitious 'Har Ghar Jal' initiative to **provide all rural households in India with potable water connections by 2024** under its flagship Jal Jeevan Mission is likely to fall short of its target.

The Jal Jeevan Mission has a financial outlay of ₹3.60 lakh crore, **with the Centre funding 50% of the cost.**

Only 75% of village homes are likely to have taps delivering drinking water by April 2024.

Despite the scheme having been announced by Prime Minister **in 2019, a time when only 16% of rural households had tap water.**

A **slew of challenges** that are overcome for its implementation — such as the **pandemic, a dearth of qualified manpower in States, the scale of the exercise, State-specific issues and even the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war resulted in major shortages of steel and cement** — meant that the project only picked up speed in several States in 2022.

There are States, for instance Rajasthan, where actual availability of water is a challenge. In West Bengal and Kerala, there are problems with water contamination. So **ensuring adequate water quality is an issue.**

Of the **nearly 19.5 crore households that are targeted under the scheme**, there are **about one crore households (5% of the total) where work hasn't even begun.**

In every village that already has access to some source of water, it takes an average of eight months to connect all households and this is if they are extremely efficient.

According to data by the Jal Shakti Ministry, **about 63% of rural households have tap connections**, meaning that about 9.1 crore households have benefited from the programme since 2019.

In Uttar Pradesh, for instance, only 5.1 lakh — or 1% — of households reported tap connections when the scheme was launched

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