GS-III: A Jan andolan of Water

Context

PM Modi announced this Independence Day the Jal Jeevan Mission which plans to supply water to all households by 2024.

Jal Jeevan Mission:

- A New Ministry—"Jal Shakti Mantralaya" to manage water resources and water supply in an integrated and holistic manner with the State Governments has been created.
- Jal Jeevan Mission is to ensure HarGharJal (piped water supply) to all rural households by 2024.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission will converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across the country.

Implementation status of the National Rural Drinking Water Programme:

- The National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) aims at assisting states in providing adequate and safe drinking water to the rural population in the country.
- As of February 2018, 74% habitations are fully covered (receiving 55 litres per capita per day), and 22% habitations are partially covered (receiving less than 55 litres per capita per day).
- The Ministry aims to cover 90% rural households with piped water supply and 80% rural households with tap connections by 2022.

Need of Piped water:

- The World Bank estimates that 21 percent of communicable diseases in India are linked to unsafe water and the lack of hygiene practices.
- According to World Bank, more than 500 children under the age of five die each day from diarrhoea in India alone.
- By 2020, India will be formally categorized as a “water stressed” country, one where per capita availability of water is less than 1,000 cubic metres or less.
- A June 2018 Niti Ayog report grimly forecasts water demand will be twice the present supply and India could lose up to 6 per cent of its GDP.
- In 2017, his government launched the Har Ghar Jal programme with the same objective. It was to ensure safe drinking water to all household with piped supply being the main mode.
- Contamination of drinking water it has been noted that NRDWP is over-dependant on ground water. However, ground water is contaminated in over 20 states. According to NITI Aayog, nearly 70 per cent of all of the country’s fresh water sources are contaminated.
- For instance, high arsenic contamination has been found in 68 districts of 10 states. These states are Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Assam, Manipur, and Karnataka.
Challenges

- The proposed Jal Jeevan Mission will make source sustainability measures mandatory prior to pumping and distributing water to households.
- In the traditional approach, the provision of drinking water was viewed primarily as an engineering solution, with schemes being planned and executed by the public health and engineering departments.

Conclusion

Water is an ideal sector for the applicability of the principle of subsidiary that is the idea that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level. The ongoing Jal Shakti Abhiyan will help in creating awareness about the importance of integrating source sustainability and water reuse with the provision of household water supply.