Atal Bhujal Yojana (AJY)

**Syllabus subtopic:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

**Prelims and Mains focus:** About Atal Bhujal Yojana- Objectives, funding and implementation, CGWA.

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 25, 2019 launched a scheme to conserve ground water in regions with low water tables.

**About Atal Bhujal Yojana:**

- It is a Rs.6000 crore **World Bank approved Central Sector Scheme** of the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.

- The funding pattern is **50:50** between Government of India and World Bank.

- Aims to improve ground water management in priority areas in the country through community participation.

**The scheme “envisages”:**

- Community participation eg, “formation of Water User Associations”.
- Monitoring and dissemination of data.
- Water budgeting.
- Panchayat-level plans.
- Information, Education & Communication (IEC) activities.

**Priority areas:**
The priority areas identified under the scheme fall in the states of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

These States represent about 25% of the total number of over-exploited, critical and semi-critical blocks in terms of ground water in India.

They also cover two major types of groundwater systems found in India – alluvial and hard rock aquifers- and have varying degrees of institutional readiness and experience in groundwater management.

**Implementation of the scheme:**

Funds under the scheme will be provided to the states for strengthening the institutions responsible for ground water governance, as well as for encouraging community involvement for improving ground water management to foster behavioural changes that promote conservation and efficient use of water. The scheme will also facilitate convergence of ongoing Government schemes in the states by incentivizing their focussed implementation in identified priority areas.