

World Water Day: Centre launches Sub Mission to improve water quality

On the occasion of World Water Day, March 22nd, 2017, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation launched the National Water Quality Sub-Mission on Arsenic and Fluoride and the Water App. The Sub Mission will aim at elimination of water quality issues related to excessive Arsenic and Fluoride in the country by 2021. The Water App will strengthen the monitoring of water supply schemes in the country by providing users access to real time data about water supply schemes in their areas.

The two were launched today at a National Workshop in the capital on “Water for All” and Swachh Bharat. The workshop was presided over by the Union Minister, Ministry of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that water and sanitation are priorities for the government. He said that to realize the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi’s vision, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, it is critical to take regular stock of situation and today’s workshop is one such occasion where rich discussions will be held. He said that the Government is trying to leverage MGNREGA to ensure water is available in those areas where sources of ground water and surface water are less. He added that a collaborative effort from all the ministries is needed, and a strategy should be jointly drawn out to focus on conjunctive use of ground water and surface water, recycling of water etc.

He emphasized that water management is the shared responsibility of the States and Centre, and that innovative ways of management and financing of drinking water schemes should be sought. He further added that water management should be more outcome-based and focused on sustainability.

He said that the government was working towards a day when we will have a clean and healthy India, where every household will have a toilet and clean piped water supply. He said that the National Water Quality Sub-Mission on Arsenic and Fluoride will aim to eliminate problems of excessive arsenic and fluoride in drinking water.

Speaking about the Swachh Bharat Mission, he said that it has successfully become a Jan Andolan and that it is focusing on behaviour change rather than toilet construction alone. He said that this is the first time the Prime Minister of our country has put sanitation on the top of his agenda. As a result, he said, 119 districts and nearly 1.8 lakh villages in the country have become Open Defecation Free (ODF), including the entire States of Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Sikkim.

Speaking on the occasion, the CEO, NITI Aayog, Shri Amitabh Kant, said that we must focus on water management, and urban waste water treatment as is done in countries like Singapore. The Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Parameswaran Iyer, spoke about water conservation, and the strengthening of the National Rural Drinking Water Programme, adding that that States may look at external sources of funding and encourage user financing. He also shared an update on the Swachh Bharat Mission progress and collaboration initiatives underway as part of it.

Sanitation and Water Ministers from States across the country were present on the occasion for deliberations around pertinent themes including safe and adequate drinking water for all, National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Swachh Bharat and toilet technology.