

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 90

ANSWERED ON 03.02.2025

WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN TAMIL NADU

90. SHRI M. MOHAMED ABDULLA

Will the Minister of **Jal Shakti** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether measures are being implemented to ensure the long-term sustainability of water conservation efforts in Tamil Nadu, on a district-wise basis, and the manner in which the progress of these efforts are being monitored over time;
- (b) specific water conservation initiatives that have been undertaken in Pudukkottai district under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan, and the manner in which these initiatives have addressed the region's water scarcity challenges; and
- (c) the impact of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan in Pudukkottai district over the last three years, particularly in terms of groundwater replenishment and rainwater harvesting?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) Water is a State subject, and the Central Government supplements the efforts of States/UTs in ensuring the long-term sustainability of water conservation initiatives. The Government of Tamil Nadu has reported that various measures have been implemented across all districts under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan to strengthen water conservation. These measures are aligned with five key focus areas:

- i. **Water Conservation & Rainwater Harvesting** – This includes the construction of check dams, ponds/tanks, trenches, rooftop rainwater harvesting structures, open well recharge systems, sand filters for open well recharge, bench terracing, and canal desilting.
- ii. **Renovation of Traditional & Other Water Bodies/Tanks** – These include efforts to restore and rejuvenate existing water bodies to enhance storage and recharge capacity.
- iii. **Reuse and Recharge Structures** – These include soak pits, stabilization ponds and other structures designed to facilitate groundwater recharge and water reuse.
- iv. **Watershed Development** – Various watershed management activities such as gully plugs, percolation tanks, staggered trenches and other related interventions have been implemented.
- v. **Intensive Afforestation** – Large-scale plantation drives and nursery development programs have been undertaken to improve green cover and enhance soil moisture retention.

The progress of these efforts is closely monitored through the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain (JSA: CTR) portal (jsactr.mowr.gov.in), developed by the Ministry of Jal Shakti. This portal enables tracking and reporting of water conservation works across all districts.

(b) As reported by the Government of Tamil Nadu, several significant water conservation initiatives have been undertaken in Pudukkottai district under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan over the past three years. These initiatives have been instrumental in addressing the region's water scarcity challenges and enhancing groundwater recharge. The key interventions include: Check Dams – 1,400 constructed; Ponds/Tanks – 2,141 rejuvenated; Trenches – 976 created; Rainwater Harvesting Structures – 122 installed; Bench Terracing & Canal Desilting – 3,480 works completed; Renovation of Traditional & Other Water Bodies – 3,518 restored; Soak Pits – 15,042 constructed; Gully Plugs – 3,897 installed; Percolation Tanks – 196 developed; Staggered Trenches – 6 created; Nurseries – 1,062 established; Plantation Drives – 1,454 plantation works undertaken.

These efforts have significantly contributed to improving water availability in the district by enhancing surface water storage and groundwater recharge capacity.

(c) The sustained implementation of water conservation measures under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan has led to a noticeable improvement in groundwater conditions in Pudukkottai district. As per the latest Groundwater Resources Assessment published by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), Pudukkottai district has witnessed significant positive outcomes:

Out of 45 firkas (administrative units for groundwater assessment) in the district, 36 firkas are categorized as "safe", 6 firkas are in the "semi-critical" zone whereas no firkas are classified as "critical" or "over-exploited".

The improvement in groundwater levels is attributed to the systematic execution of various water conservation and recharge activities inter-alia including the efforts under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan. The Government of Tamil Nadu has reported that it has been continuously prioritizing water conservation efforts, particularly in water-stressed regions, to further enhance groundwater sustainability.
