

Note on Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

1. Background

Access to safe and adequate drinking water is foundational to public health, human dignity and inclusive development. For decades, rural India faced persistent challenges of water scarcity, quality contamination, seasonal variability and the daily drudgery borne disproportionately by women and children. In response, the Government of India launched the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in 2019 with the objective of providing Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) to every rural household ensuring water of prescribed quality in adequate quantity on a regular and long term basis.

Conceived as a national mission and a Jan Andolan, JJM represents one of the largest public service delivery initiatives globally. The Mission is implemented in partnership with States and Union Territories with Gram Panchayats and village institutions placed at the centre of planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of rural water supply systems.

2. From Coverage to Service Delivery: An Inflection Point

By January 2026, Jal Jeevan Mission reached a critical milestone, with over 81.53% (15.78Cr) of rural households having access to tap water. With the physical backbone of rural water infrastructure largely in place, the Mission consciously transitioned from a construction led approach to a service delivery and sustainability paradigm.

This shift marked a reorientation of priorities from infrastructure creation to ensuring regularity, adequacy, quality and long term functionality of drinking water services. The year 2025 thus emerged as a decisive inflection point, characterised by structural reforms aimed at strengthening institutions, professionalising operation and maintenance, deepening community ownership and embedding evidence based decision making across governance levels.

3. Core Pillars of Jal Jeevan Mission

JJM's approach to rural water security rests on a set of interlinked pillars:

- **Universal Access through FHTCs:** Provision of household tap connections as the basic unit of service delivery, replacing standposts and distance based access.
- **Water Quality Assurance:** End to end monitoring of drinking water quality across the supply chain supported by laboratory networks and community based surveillance.
- **Source Sustainability:** Integration of conservation, recharge and conjunctive water use to safeguard drinking water sources particularly in water stressed and climate vulnerable regions.

- **Community Ownership and O&M:** Empowering Gram Panchayats, Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) and Self Help Groups to manage in-village systems and ensure financial and operational sustainability.
- **Institutional and Digital Reforms:** Strengthening governance systems through digital public infrastructure, role clarity and accountability mechanisms.

4. Key Highlights

As reported by States and Union Territories on the JJM-IMIS portal during 2025:

- Over 15.78 crore rural households have been provided with tap water connections marking one of the fastest expansions of household level water access globally.
- Tap water supply has been extended to nearly all government schools 9.23L (89.62%) and Anganwadi Centres 9.66L (85.60%) strengthening the enabling environment for health, nutrition, hygiene and education outcomes.
- In Japanese Encephalitis (JE)-Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) affected districts household tap water coverage increased to 2.48Cr (83.34%) dramatically contributing to improved public health outcomes.
- Aspirational Districts recorded substantial gain with nearly 2.91Cr (79.60%) households of rural households now receiving water through taps.
- A nationwide water quality monitoring network comprising 2,800+ laboratories including a large number of accredited facilities supports systematic testing complemented by community led testing using Field Test Kits.

5. Governance and System Reforms

A defining feature of JJM's current phase is the strengthening of governance systems to support service oriented delivery.

In 2025, the Mission embedded digital public infrastructure as a core instrument of governance. Unified data systems now integrate information on assets, sources, functionality, water quality and sustainability, enabling lifecycle management of rural water supply schemes. Role-based dashboards at national, state, district and Gram Panchayat levels have repositioned data from passive reporting to active decision support.

At the district level, structured review and inspection mechanisms were institutionalised to ensure accountability, verify functionality and address implementation gaps. Joint inspection protocols and digital documentation have strengthened transparency and inter-departmental coordination.

At the grassroots, Panchayats and village institutions were digitally empowered to monitor scheme performance, record meetings and engage citizens, reinforcing downward accountability and local ownership of services.

6. Special Dialogues, Campaigns, and Knowledge Leadership

As Jal Jeevan Mission entered its service delivery and sustainability phase structured dialogue, continuous engagement and institutional learning became central tools of governance. During 2025, the Mission institutionalised multiple platforms to strengthen two way communication across national, state, district and community levels while systematically documenting and disseminating field learning.

- **National Consultation and Strategic Reviews:** A Consultation cum Review Meeting on Jal Jeevan Mission and its extension was convened in New Delhi on 11 March 2025 bringing together senior officials from States and Union Territories. The consultation reviewed progress towards Har Ghar Jal, assessed preparedness for long term operation and maintenance and deliberated on residual liabilities, financial sustainability and institutional readiness. Emphasis was placed on strengthening governance at State, district and Gram Panchayat levels enhancing water quality surveillance and aligning implementation strategies through clearly defined institutional arrangements.
- **Jal Jeevan Samvad with District Leadership:** To reinforce last mile service delivery a series of Jal Jeevan Samvad review interactions were initiated with District Magistrates and District Collectors from May 2025 onwards chaired by the Additional Secretary & Mission Director, National Jal Jeevan Mission. These focused engagements addressed district specific challenges related to scheme saturation source sustainability, water quality management, grievance redressal and activation of Gram Panchayat and VWSC dashboards through e-Gram Swaraj integration.

In total, 729 District Magistrates and District Collectors participated in these structured dialogues, reaffirming district leadership as the operational fulcrum of sustainable rural water services.

- **District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad:** The Department further institutionalised District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad as a dedicated peer-learning and governance platform. Launched on 14th October 2025 the forum enabled district leadership to exchange experiences and solutions on service delivery challenges.

Subsequent editions focused on:

- Source sustainability and regulatory strengthening
- Operation and maintenance systems
- Grassroots leadership and community ownership

Districts shared best practices in 24x7 water supply, water quality assurance, community engagement and O&M financing, positioning Peyjal Samvad as a key instrument for horizontal learning, accountability and institutional memory under the Mission.

- **Sujal Gram Samvad:** At the grassroots, Sujal Gram Samvad was institutionalised as a multilingual dialogue platform with Gram Panchayats and village communities.

These interactions enabled villagers to articulate service delivery challenges share local innovations and discuss sustainability concerns in an inclusive and participatory manner. By grounding reforms in lived experience, Sujal Gram Samvad strengthened trust and reinforced community stewardship of rural water supply systems.

- **Knowledge Products and Institutional Learning:** Knowledge creation and dissemination formed a critical pillar of JJM’s sustainability agenda in 2025. A landmark publication, “Jan Bhagidari se Har Ghar Jal - Handbook on Community Managed Piped Water Systems” provided comprehensive guidance for Gram Panchayats, VWSCs, Self-Help Groups and community leaders on commissioning, handover, operation and maintenance and escalation mechanisms.

The handbook also introduced Jal Utsav as a people-centric engagement framework, spanning:

- Jal Mahotsav at the national level
- Jal Rajyotsav / Nadi Utsav at the State and UT level
- Lok Jal Utsav at the Gram Panchayat and village level, shifting the focus from infrastructure creation to long-term stewardship.

In parallel, the monthly Jal Jeevan Samvad newsletter evolved into a living repository of governance insights, policy updates, and field innovations, strengthening transparency, peer learning, and institutional continuity. Several thematic and narrative publications released during the year documented the Mission’s social impact, inclusivity, and transformational outcomes across diverse rural contexts.

- **Republic Day Recognition of Grassroots Leadership:** As part of the 76th Republic Day Celebrations, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) hosted 172 VWSC members from 27 States/UTs in Delhi on 27th January 2025 recognising frontline leadership in rural water governance.
- **National Workshop on O&M Sustainability:** The Union Minister of Jal Shakti inaugurated a National Workshop on Operation & Maintenance of Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes, reaffirming JJM’s sustainability pillars Jan Bhagidari, stakeholder collaboration, political commitment, and optimal resource use. The workshop also marked the release of Niwas Vartika, the quarterly newsletter of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation (SPM-NIWAS).
- **Sarpanch Samvaad National Quality Conclave:** On 15th September 2025, the Sarpanch Samvaad National Quality Conclave convened by the Quality Council of India** with DDW brought together 75 Sarpanches from 22 States and marked the onboarding of over 60,000 Sarpanches onto the Sarpanch Samvaad digital platform, strengthening Panchayat-led quality governance.
- **Vision for Sujalam Bharat Platforms:** Under the Vision for Sujalam Bharat framework, DDWS organised thematic workshops and conferences on drinking water

sustainability, highlighting the Sujalam Bharat Database, Decision Support System (DSS) and Sujal Gaon ID as enablers of data driven planning. The Sujalam Bharat App was launched on 10th December 2025 creating a unified digital backbone for rural water assets nationwide.

- **Jal Seva Aankalan Launch:** A major governance reform in 2025 was the launch of Jal Seva Aankalan on 30th December 2025, a Gram Panchayat led functionality assessment rooted in Gram Sabha deliberations. The framework assesses service regularity, adequacy, water quality, O&M and source sustainability with public disclosure through digital platforms to strengthen transparency and trust.
- **Community Radio and Digital Outreach:** To deepen community engagement, DDWS launched “Swachh Sujal Gaon Ki Kahani: Radio Ki Zubani”, a national community radio programme aired through 100 stations in 13 national and 34 local dialects. Parallel digital outreach under Swachh Sujal Gaon generated wide visibility, with over 6,300 social media posts reaching 6.6 million users.
- **Skilling for O&M Sustainability:** Under JJM, the Multi-Skilling Nal Jal Mitra Programme was advanced to train approximately 2.5 lakh youth for operation and maintenance of rural water schemes. Courses aligned to NSQF Level-4, delivered through Short-Term Training (STT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pathways are being converged with national skilling programmes.
- **Capacity Building and National WASH Experts:** SPM-NIWAS emerged as a key capacity-building anchor, conducting 137 trainings under JJM in 2025 and training 3,698 stakeholders. The institute also empanelled 129 National WASH Experts, who undertook 1,197 village visits for technical ground-truthing and system strengthening.
- **Global Knowledge Engagement:** India’s WASH leadership drew strong global engagement through bilateral cooperation with Nepal, technical exchanges and participation in international platforms such as the UNC Water and Health Conference 2025 reinforcing India’s role as a global knowledge contributor in rural water and sanitation.
- **Innovation and Research Governance:** Innovation and research were strengthened through a Technical Committee chaired by the Principal Scientific Advisor / Member NITI Aayog, which recommended 32 innovative projects and 8 R&D initiatives led by premier institutions including Indian Institute of Technology and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

7. Strategic Partnerships Driving Sustainability

As Jal Jeevan Mission transitioned from infrastructure creation to service oriented and institutionalised water governanc, strategic partnerships played a key role in

strengthening digital systems, convergence, quality assurance and long-term sustainability.

- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for the WASH sector, the Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation (SPNIWAS) and Arghyam signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 19th February 2025. The partnership focuses on developing a robust digital ecosystem to support and strengthening data-driven governance, interoperability and sustainability.
- Drinking Water and Sanitation partnered with the Ministry of Women and Child Development for the 7th edition of Poshan Pakhwada 202, held from 8th to 23rd April 2025 under the theme “Purn Poshan Ki Shuruwaat, Shuddh Jal aur Swachhta Ke Saath”. The campaign reinforced safe drinking water and sanitation as foundational enablers of nutrition through large-scale community awareness activities across States and Union Territories.
- DDWS entered into an MoU with the Quality Council of India on 3rd September 2025. The collaboration focuses on strengthening Panchayat leadership through initiatives such as Sarpanch Samvaad and embedding quality assurance approaches across rural water and sanitation interventions, aligned with the vision of Swachh Sujal Gaon.
- DDWS partnered with Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG-N) to develop a GIS-integrated Decision Support Platform for enhancing planning, monitoring and informed decision-making across administrative levels.
- Jal Jeevan Mission initiated collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE, Ministry of Education), to engage youth and students in field-based learning and social audits. Supervised student teams from AICTE institutions and MyBharat/NSS will assess rural water supply schemes and Gram Panchayats with the first phase of exposure visits scheduled from January 2026.

8. Impact and Way Forward

The Jal Jeevan Mission has fundamentally altered the landscape of rural water supply in India, moving access to safe drinking water from aspiration to entitlement. Beyond infrastructure, the Mission has contributed to improved public health, reduced drudgery for women, enhanced dignity and strengthened local governance institutions.

As JJM moves into its next phase, the focus will remain on sustaining services, strengthening community-led operation and maintenance, enhancing climate resilience and deepening institutional capacity at all levels. Anchored in the principles of Jan Bhagidari and cooperative federalism, the Mission continues to advance India’s vision of long-term water security in alignment with the broader goal of Viksit Bharat 2047.