

1. Significance of Water and Sanitation for the Healthy India

Context:

- According to UN, 2.1 billion people live without safe drinking water at home and 80% of those who have to use unsafe and unprotected water sources reside in rural areas.

Brief Background:

- UN recognized the right of every human being to have access to enough water for personal and domestic uses which must be safe, acceptable and affordable.
- **SDG 6** specially focuses on water: **“Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”**.
- In India the per capita availability of water in the country as a whole decreased from 5,177 m³/year in 1951 to 1,588 m³/year in 2010.
- In our constitution **Article 47 conferring the duty of providing clean drinking water and improving public health standards to the state**.
- In addition to the availability of water, quality of drinking water is also a Crucial Issue.

Importance of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:

- Contaminated water and a lack of basic sanitation are undermining efforts to end extreme poverty and disease in the world's poorest countries.
- Unclean water and poor sanitation are a leading cause of child mortality. Childhood diarrhoea is closely associated with insufficient water supply, inadequate sanitation, water contaminated with communicable diseases agents, and poor hygiene practices
- **Loss of productivity to water and sanitation-related diseases costs many countries up to 5% of GDP.**
- Universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and hygiene would reduce the global disease burden by 10 per cent.

Need for Better Water Governance:

- The water crisis in the 21st century has more to do with poor management than scarcity and stress. Water management refers to the government making decisions to manage water systems. Water governance includes both internal and external processes through which societies manage their water resources.
- According to UN world water report (2016), the crisis of water is largely due to the failure of water governance and for the sustainable development of water resources, water governance should be given due priority.

- The traditional modes of water capturing in ponds have been lost to the demands of rising population and liberal implementation of town planning rules.
- India has been also poor in treatment and re-use of household wastewater. About 80% of the water reaching households in India is drained out as waste flow through sewage that then pollutes other water bodies including rivers and also land.

Success Stories of Better water Governance in India:

- Rajasthan's **Mukhya Mantri Jal Swavlambhan Abhiyan, launched in 2016**, is a multi-stakeholder programme which aims to make villages self-sufficient in water through a **participatory water Management Approach**.
- It focuses on converging various schemes to ensure effective implementation of improved water harvesting and Conservation Initiatives. Use of advanced technologies such as drones to identify water bodies for restoration is one unique feature of the programme.
- Gram Sabha in villages are responsible for budgeting of water resources for different uses, providing greater power to the community members in Decision-Making.

Government Initiatives:

- Scientific management of water is increasingly recognized as being vital to India's growth and ecosystem sustainability.
- Ministry of Jal Shakti launched '**Jal Shakti Abhiyan**'- campaign for water conservation and water security. The campaign run through citizen participation while focus on water-stressed districts and blocks in the country.
- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchaey Yojana – 'Har khet ko pani'** and 'More Crop per Drop' – focuses on improving water use efficiency.
- Other measures such as National Water Mission, National Mission for Clean Ganga, Dam Improvement and Rehabilitation Programme, Ground water management, Flood control and Forecast, Biodiversity Conservation, Wetland conservation, Green India Mission , CAMPA , etc.

Conclusion:

- We need to emphasize the need for water cooperation to cope with challenges of the 21st century.
- We need to sensitize the people so that the movement towards water conservation takes place at the grassroots level, starting from primary schools, our office premises and each Household.