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**TOPIC**

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**Water Crisis in India**

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## WATER CRISIS IN INDIA

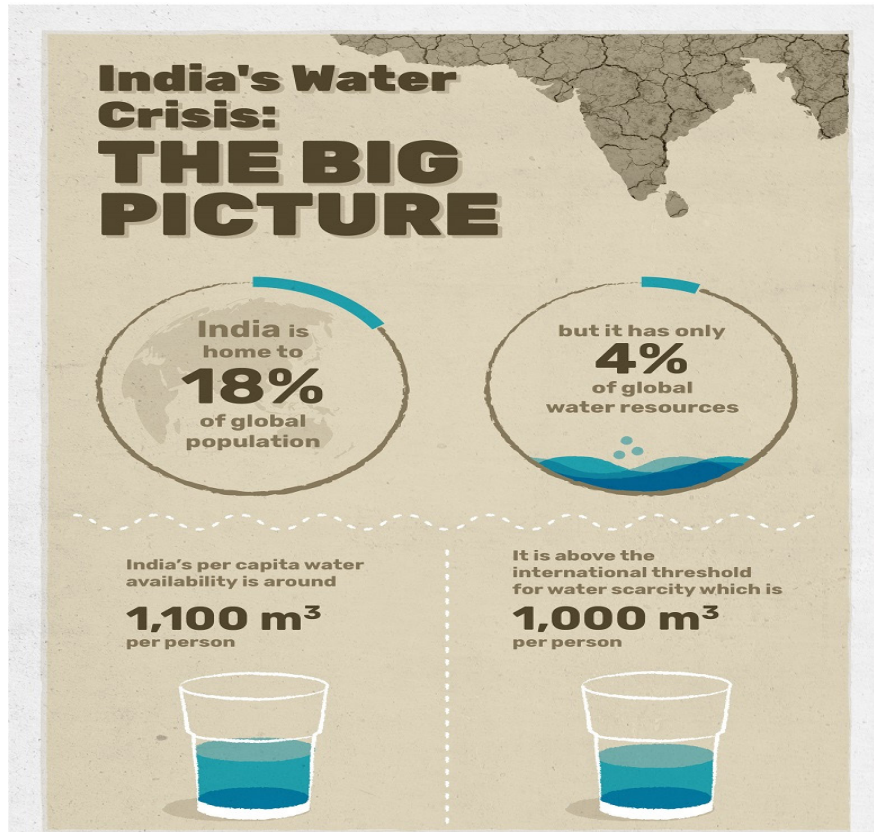
### Context

- The **water crisis** has affected more than **7,000 villages, 1,100 wards, and 220 talukas** thus far in **Karnataka**.

### Water Scarcity in India

#### Status:

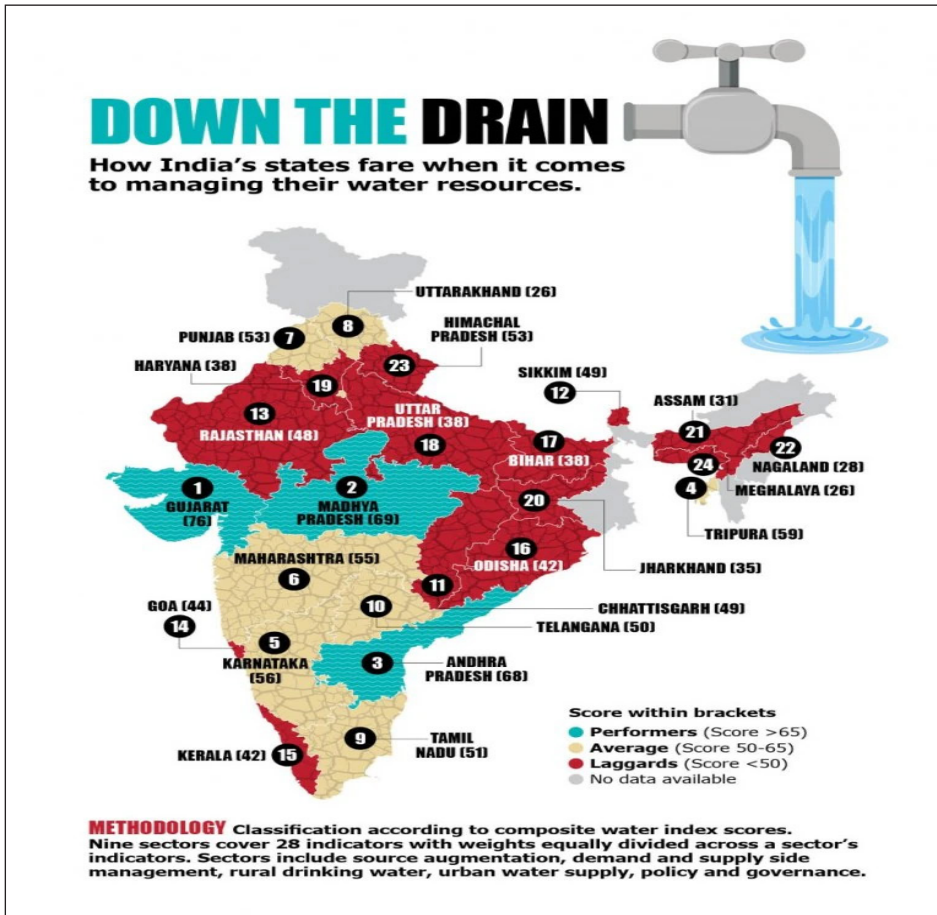
- High Water Stress:** India has about **18 percent of the world's population** but **only 4 percent of the world's water resources** (NITI Aayog Report, 2017), making it among the most water stressed in the world.



- Low Per capita water availability:** It is around 1,100 cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>), well below the internationally recognized threshold of water stress of 1,700 m<sup>3</sup> per person, and dangerously close to the threshold for water scarcity of 1,000 m<sup>3</sup> per person.



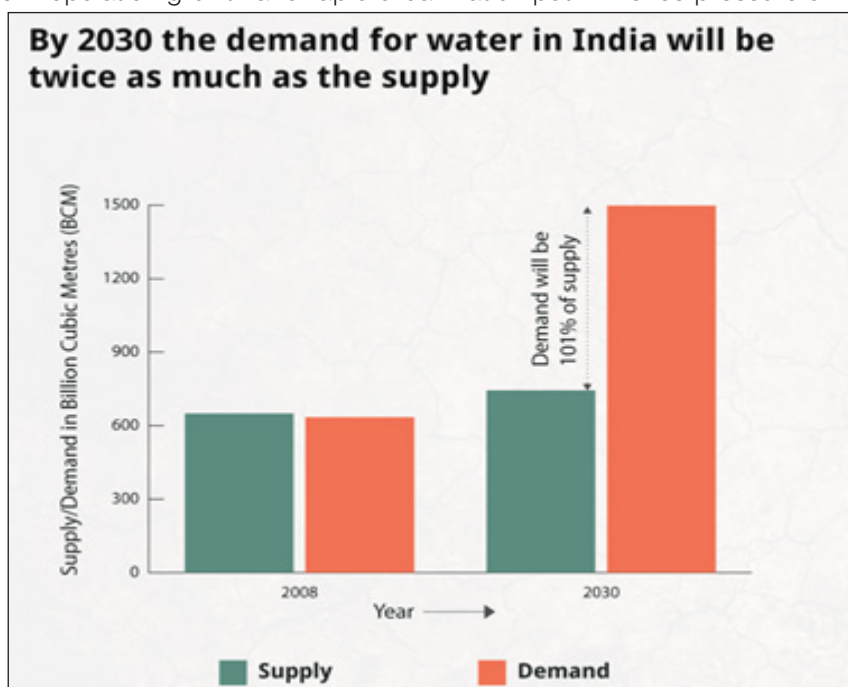
- Uneven Distribution:** Monsoon rains are crucial, and erratic rainfall patterns worsen water stress in many regions.



- **Strained Access:** Millions lack access to safe drinking water, relying on polluted sources or struggling to afford clean water.
- **Widening gap between water demand and availability:** Rapid urbanisation and industrialisation are taking a heavy toll on the overall water demand scenario.

**Reasons for scarcity**

- **Rising Demand:** Population growth and rapid urbanization put immense pressure on water resources.



- **Overexploitation:** Excessive groundwater extraction for agriculture and industry depletes aquifers faster than they can be replenished.
- **Pollution:** Industrial waste and agricultural runoff contaminate surface water sources, making them unfit for consumption.
- **Poor Infrastructure:** Leakages in pipes and canals waste precious water, further straining supplies.
- **Climate Change:** Unpredictable weather patterns disrupt monsoons and exacerbate water scarcity.

### Measure to overcome the water scarcity

- **A circular water economy:** To maximize the utility of every litre of water and reduce the city's dependence on external sources.
- **Water Saving Techniques:** Drip irrigation and other efficient methods are being introduced in agriculture.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educating people about water conservation and sanitation practices is crucial.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Upgrading water treatment plants and distribution networks is essential.
- **Sustainable Water Management:** Integrated water resource management that considers all stakeholders is needed.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaboration between government, businesses, and NGOs can accelerate progress.
- **Community Participation:** Empowering local communities to manage water resources effectively is vital.
- **Technological Solutions:** Exploring desalination, wastewater treatment, and rainwater harvesting technologies can provide new water sources.

### Major Government initiatives

- **National Water Mission;** The main objective of the NWM is 'Conservation of water, minimising wastage, and ensuring its more equitable distribution both across and within States through integrated water resources development and management'.
- **The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):** Launched in 2019 with the aim to provide a functional tap connection within the premises of each rural household in India by 2024.
  - ♦ The mission addresses **SDG target 6.1** which focuses on achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030.
- **Ministry of Jal Shakti:** The Government has created the Ministry of Jal Shakti in May 2019 to consolidate interrelated functions pertaining to water management.
- **Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY):** The aim of the scheme is to improve the management of groundwater resources in such areas, which accounts for about 37 percent of such blocks in the country.
- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):** It is a centrally sponsored scheme (core scheme) launched in 2015. The centre- state share will be 75:25 per cent. In the case of the north-eastern region and hilly states, it will be 90:10. Its objectives are-
- **Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP)-** It aims to provide Central Loan Assistance (CLA) to major and medium irrigation projects that were in an advanced stage of completion to achieve the targeted potential, ultimately resulting in saving water and improving efficiency.
- **National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme (NAQUIM):** Under NAQUIM, groundwater aquifers have been mapped and management plans have been made for 80 percent of the country.
- **Bureau of Water Use Efficiency (BWUE):** It will be a facilitator for the promotion of improving water use efficiency across various sectors namely irrigation, drinking water supply, power generation, industries, etc., in the country.

**Way Ahead**

- In **Narmada Bachao Andolan v Union of India (2000)**, the Court concluded that water is part of the right to life enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. Hence, it is **our collective responsibility to ensure this basic human right is fulfilled**.
- The water crisis demands **immediate and collective action**. By adopting **sustainable practices, promoting water conservation, and investing in infrastructure**, India can mitigate the crisis and ensure a water-secure future.

Source: TH

