

Millennium Post- 16- November-2022

# MSP panel stresses on changing cropping patterns to save water

*Panel also stressed on procurement of paddy on MSP and bringing more crops under it to make MSP multi-dimensional*

**DHIRENDRA KUMAR**

**NEW DELHI:** Giving a push to crop diversification for improving the underground water table in paddy growing states, the committee on Minimum Support Price (MSP) has identified over 107 crop cycles across the country for changing the crop pattern. The panel has also stressed on ensuring procurement of paddy on MSP across the country and brings more crops under MSP to make it multi-dimensional.

During its second and third meetings, which were held in Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar respectively, the members of the panel has agreed upon preparing a strategy for changing the crop pattern and introducing new crops to maintain ecological balance and improve the depleting underground water for future needs.

Summarising the discussions held during the meetings, MSP panel member Binod Anand said that cultivation of conventional agricultural crops such as paddy, cotton, sugarcane, soya and wheat are water intensive crops and saving water is one of most important challenge for all the stakeholders of agriculture sector.

"The MSP committee has also agreed to formulate

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a strategy for changing food consumption pattern that has completely changed from previous years. Members present in the meeting stressed on propagating the inclusion of millets and millet-based food items in the food basket of common masses. When the demand of other food items would increase, farmers would also take interest in cultivating those crops which would result in enhancing the income of farmers," said Anand, who is also secretary general of Confederation of NGO of Rural India (CNRI).

As per the MSP panel member, in Punjab, the change in crop pattern may be applied in Amritsar, which is a paddy belt. It has been estimated that Amritsar and adjoining areas may face acute water shortage and there would be a dearth of potable water if paddy cultivation continues for the next 10 years.

The Committee also discussed in detail about the strat-

egies to take the improvement of soil health forward as the government now has a data of soil health through Soil Health Card.

The MSP panel has also decided to recommend the government to abolish Zero Budget as it's not feasible and misleading. "Farming cannot be of zero budget. The labour cost of even a marginal farmer cannot be neglected," he said, adding that it was discussed to form a special purpose vehicle for providing assistance to farmers in case there is a loss of yield either due to crop diversification or extreme weather conditions and it was proposed to provide market linkage through new cooperatives to farmers for their agricultural products.

"It was proposed to open testing labs at PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Societies) and strengthening of FPOs by providing contact details of importers and importing countries," he said.

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# People-centric solution

*Water scarcity is a problem running parallel to climate change and can be addressed through participatory approach; write Shankar Prasad Sarma & Himani Aggarwal*

Climate change is disrupting weather patterns — leading to extreme weather events, unpredictable water availability, exacerbating water scarcity and contaminating water sources. Globally, nearly 74 per cent of natural disasters between 2001 and 2020 were water-related, including droughts and floods. The frequency and intensity of such events are only expected to increase with climate change.

It's not India alone. The Climate Change Report, 2022 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that approximately 3.3 to 3.6 billion people are highly vulnerable to climate change. A very probable increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius in the near term from 2021 to 2040 would cause multiple climate hazards — critically affecting ecosystems and humans, even inundating large swathes of inhabited lands on account of rising sea levels. Beyond 2040, climate change would be a worst catastrophe.

But the rising temperatures alone would not be a challenge to reckon with. Water scarcity would be an issue to grapple with in the long run. Acknowledging the issue, the government has embarked upon a two-pronged approach addressing the demand and supply gaps. The underlying principle is conservation of water and fulfilling the needs of all in an equitable and transparent manner. In this regard, the government has not only created an infrastructure for sourcing piped potable water to the rural households but has also created a unique self-sustaining model. Under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), piped water was made available to 10.44 crore rural households



Till global warming is reversed, there is a need to preserve the vulnerable water resource

out of overall 19.32 crore rural households as of October 31, 2022, increasing from 3.23 crores on August 15, 2019 — the day Jal Jan Aandolan was launched. JJM embarks on a holistic approach of involving all stakeholders like village communities, NGOs, self-help groups, etc. in locally securing water resources by conserving water, resurrecting neglected water bodies and aquifers and transparently supplying water to each rural household. The motto of the mission is a water-enlightened village (*jai prabudh gaon*) that will lead to a self-reliant India.

But the success story does not stop here. This mission has given wings and recognition to water warriors who have not only resurrected neglected water bodies but also educated village communities about the ways and necessities of water conservation. Swami Krishnanand is one such crusader

who has desilted a two-century old pond for rainwater harvesting in his village Pachkhura Bujurg of Hamirpur District which falls in the parched zone of Bundelkhand region. There are several such success stories. The village community of Jakhni village in Banda District has revived six ponds and 30 wells, and also replenished the groundwater table by adopting traditional methods of water conservation. "*Khet par mad, mad par khet*" (Ridge on land and trees on a ridge), is the popular slogan of the community here. The Forest Survey Report 2022 reported an increase of 2,261 sq. km in the total forest and tree cover of the country in the last two years, mostly in rural areas.

With the rural sector galvanised by the efforts of the Jal Jeevan Mission, it is only imperative for the urban areas to also pitch in. Mandatory rainwater harvesting law and

strict enforcement would go a long way for a start.

In Assam and Meghalaya, the land endowed with rich water resources and with an annual rainfall of 2,263 mm and 2,050 mm respectively, it's heartening to see big ponds outside every rural household which double up as fish ponds and occasionally irrigation water, and also elaborate bamboo-based channels on roof tops for trapping rain water. Rain water harvesting has been a hallmark of each community of the region.

However, rainwater harvesting and water-body conservation are critical for water-scarce states like Haryana and Rajasthan where annual rainfall is 615 mm and 504 mm, respectively, and given the exponential urbanization in certain districts, particularly in Haryana. A participatory approach would help replenish water bodies like Badkal,

Damdama, Badshahpur etc. Besides, maybe acknowledging the issues pertaining to water may inspire the communities to create manmade lakes like Raj Sammand, Bal Sammand, Pichhola, Amar Sagar, Garsisar etc. which Rajasthan is famous for. The need of the hour is now, as data from the Central Groundwater Board reported that out of 108 blocks in Haryana, groundwater level is critical in 11 blocks, over exploited in 55 blocks and semi critical in 5 blocks. This is reason enough to nudge, persuade or enforce the already mandatory rainwater harvesting system and participatory efforts in water conservation, and to decrease reliance on tanker water extracted from the limited groundwater.

Climate change results from excessive presence of carbon dioxide in the environment. The best way to clean it up is by planting trees. The second-best way would be to eliminate carbon by reducing its usage by adopting alternative energy sources like hydrogen, electricity etc. But till global warming is reversed, we need to preserve the resources which are critically threatened by it, water. Climate resilient development should be adopted by synergising the resources of governments, civil society and the private sector to make inclusive development choices. In this regard, enabling policies and infrastructure has been successfully laid down by the government, and it's heartening to see the success in the rural areas. It's time for the urban areas to also pitch in and catch the rain when it falls and where it falls!

Writers are from the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India. Views expressed are personal

The underlying principle behind addressing scarcity has to be conservation of water and fulfilment of the needs of all in an equitable and transparent manner

Business Line- 16- November-2022

# Geospatial economy will grow to ₹61,000 cr by 2025: Report

**Our Bureau**  
Hyderabad

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat on Tuesday said that the country's geospatial economy is expected to cross the ₹61,000-crore mark in the next three years from the present ₹41,600 crore.

Releasing the report on *Geospatial Strategy for National Development* here at the inaugural function of the Geo Smart India 2022 on Tuesday, he said that defence and intelligence, utilities, urban development, infrastructure development, agriculture, utilities and land administration would drive the growth of the geospatial market.

## PROGRESSING RAPIDLY

"The country is progressing rapidly in the field of techno-



Gajendra Singh Shekawat,  
Union Jal Shakti Minister

logy. There are about 250 geospatial start-ups in the country, which reflects the spirit of innovation, he said. He said various geospatial pilot projects were implemented in agriculture, rural development, forestry, water resources management and urban planning.

"Previously, water was a subject which was dealt by almost nine different ministries. The present government has integrated the work of these various ministries and brought them

under the Ministry of Jal Shakti," he added. Citing the 'National Hydrology Project', he said the efforts are on to establish a sound hydrological database and information system and scientific tools for effective planning and management of water resources are within each implementing agency. The National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), one of the implementing agencies, has taken up several activities to use geospatial technologies in the field of water resources.

## EASY ACCESS

The increased adoption of geospatial information across diverse sectors raises the need for easy access to geospatial knowledge. "To make it accessible to stakeholders at all levels, there is a need for collaborative development of a geospatial infrastructure," a statement, quoting the minister said.

Ishita Jalan  
Mukta Deodhar

**T**he agenda for COP27 in Egypt this year, which began November 6, is set for targeting the critical question on climate finance. The negotiations can mark an important year for the Global South, given that these countries are the most vulnerable to climate change.

According to the World Bank, India bears losses worth \$9.8 billion each year as a result of extreme events, with floods alone accounting for 50 per cent of the damages. In 2020, floods led to damages equivalent to 0.15 per cent of the country's GDP in addition to thousands of lives being lost or impacted. With its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) this year, India has set targets on improving climate adaptation.

To achieve this, mobilising more finance from both domestic and international sources is a priority. However, this can be a major challenge because international support is skewed towards mitigation projects. Moreover, the modalities of financing mechanisms have seen a shift from grants to loans.

It is necessary to find alternative means of leveraging local financing opportunities to build resilience and continue the trajectory of growth despite the increasing uncertainties due to climate change.

From the private sector, CSR allocations can be reimagined as adaptation finance. In a study by KPMG, the top 100 companies in India in 2018-19 spent approximately \$1.06 billion towards CSR initiatives.

As much as 20 per cent of the total funds were channelled towards adaptation activities in India in the 2020 financial year. Given that the industrial sector is the second largest contributor to India's GDP, the majority of CSR funds stem from here.

Hitherto, CSR funds have focused on developmental goals rather than climate adaptation.

The industrial sector is the second highest user of freshwater in the country. To address the risk of decreasing water availability, the sector is currently striving to secure its resources by investing large amounts of CSR funds in watershed programmes such as rainwater harvesting in addition to water recycling and reuse.

Often these actions are directed by context-based targets that represent the most critical challenges of the environment where businesses are embedded. Therefore, the nature of the initiatives mostly remain local.

However, they have limited benefits at a watershed scale. For example, an increase in the local water table can encourage farmers in the region to take up intensive farming at the cost of

downstream flows. Also, rainwater harvesting is a weak value addition to many existing government-led watershed projects. These are major limitations with the current approach at a time when industries continue to be threatened by the impacts of climate change, in particular, increasing variability in water availability (floods and droughts). There is a potential to address climate adaptation but it will require industries to pool finances.

In aggregate, CSR funds potentially represent the third largest pool of climate finance after government spending and multilateral financing. But current fragmented efforts are ineffective. For climate adaptation measures that involve securing a common pool resource like water, corporations would need to act collectively for 'net water positive' outcomes — this can ensure that the

**CSR funds potentially represent the third largest pool of climate finance after government spending and multilateral financing**

# 'Water credits' can fund climate needs

**JOINT EFFORT.** As the second highest user of freshwater in the country, industry can use its CSR funds imaginatively so that conservation gains are maximised



total abstraction of water does not exceed the available renewable water resource.

The benefits of such a collective approach are considerable. By securing the resource base, everyone benefits. From the industries' point of view, they could reduce risks to their own water supply in the present and the future, and also achieve higher ESG ratings.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

Water credits are one mechanism to drive collective action toward common adaptation goals.

Water credits represent a fixed quantum of water that is conserved or generated and can be transacted between water deficit and water surplus entities within a sub-basin. The concept of water credits is similar to carbon credits; however, unlike the atmosphere, the spatial limit for transaction should remain within the same hydrological unit — that is, a river basin or watershed.

For example, multiple industries can offset their impact by buying water credits from municipalities that are fund-crunched to finance large-scale floodwater harvesting or wastewater treatment projects that conserve freshwater resources at a city level and

promote wastewater reuse.

This also means that the adoption of water credits would require a multiplayer approach. Its implementation would need a systemic-level intervention to include regulatory players and local governance institutions for water resources as well as sustainability advocacy groups and industry leaders.

We need innovation in adaptation finance to achieve water resilience.

As a country, we need to fundamentally re-evaluate our priorities towards climate change by striking a better balance between mitigation and adaptation efforts. This is also one of the objectives of the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation.

This programme focuses on facilitating national-level adaptation goals that will ultimately feed into the Global Stocktake at COP28 in 2023, where country goals will be evaluated against the 1.5°C target. Channelling CSR funds more effectively towards climate adaptation may provide a new source of climate finance.

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## जलाशयों के संबंध में जल्द लागू कराई जाएगी नई नीति

● प्रधानमंत्री मत्स्य सम्पदा योजनान्तर्गत परियोजनाओं के लिए प्राप्त हुए 75 हजार ऑनलाइन आवेदन



पायनियर समाचार सेवा। लखनऊ

उत्तर प्रदेश के मत्स्य विकास विभाग के कैबिनेट मंत्री डा. संजय कुमार निषाद ने कहा है कि उप्र को मत्स्य उत्पादन के क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भर बनाना और मछुआ समुदाय का सर्वांगीण विकास करना राज्य सरकार की प्राथमिकताओं में से है। उन्होंने प्रधानमंत्री मत्स्य सम्पदा योजनान्तर्गत वर्ष 2022-23 में लाभार्थियों के चयन के लिए विस्तृत दिशा-निर्देश दिए। उन्होंने कहा कि मत्स्य विभाग के प्रबन्धीन जलाशयों के सम्बन्ध में नयी नीति का निर्धारण किया गया है, जिसे शीघ्र ही लागू कराया जायेगा।

निषाद मंगलवार को मत्स्य विभाग के कार्यों की समीक्षा के बाद

विभागीय अधिकारियों को निर्देशित कर रहे थे। उन्होंने समीक्षा बैठक में बताया गया कि वित्तीय वर्ष 2022-23 में परियोजनाओं के लिए लगभग 75 हजार आनलाइन आवेदन प्राप्त हुए हैं जो विगत वर्ष की तुलना में 10 गुना अधिक हैं। लगभग 16 विभिन्न योजनाओं में महिलाएं, अनुसूचित जाति-जनजाति को 60 प्रतिशत तथा सामान्वर्ग को 40 प्रतिशत अनुदान धनराशि देकर विभिन्न मात्स्यीय गतिविधियों में लाभ दिलाया गया है।

मत्स्य विकास मंत्री ने मत्स्य पालन एवं कृषि उत्पादन को एक साथ नवीनतम तकनीकी सुविधाएं मुहैया कराने के संबंध में विस्तृत दिशा-निर्देश यथाशीघ्र जारी किए जाने के लिए अधिकारियों को निर्देशित किया। निषाद ने कहा कि

मत्स्य क्षेत्र के भूमिहीन मछुआरों को किसान क्रेडिट कार्ड के माध्यम से भी लाभान्वित कराया गया है। उन्होंने मत्स्य क्षेत्र के सभी भूमिहीन मछुआरों को केसीसी के माध्यम से ऋण मुहैया कराने के लिए दिशा-निर्देश देते हुए कहा कि इसके लिए किसी जमानत की आवश्यकता नहीं होगी। मत्स्य मंत्री ने आगामी 21 नवम्बर को विश्व मात्स्यीय दिवस के अवसर पर राज्य एवं जनपद स्तर पर वृहद रूप से कार्यक्रम आयोजित करने के भी निर्देश दिए। समीक्षा बैठक में मत्स्य विकास विभाग के विशेष सचिव व निदेशक प्रशांत शर्मा, संयुक्त निदेशक एमएस रहमानी, उपनिदेशक विजय चौरसिया, उपनिदेशक मोनिशा तथा अन्य वरिष्ठ विभागीय अधिकारी उपस्थित थे।