



## Looming Water Crisis

### What is the issue?

\n\n

- \n
- Cape Town in South Africa is facing the prospect of all its taps running dry by June-July this year.
- \n
- This is a wake up call for stakeholders across the globe to assess practices of water usage.
- \n

\n\n

### What is the looming water crisis?

\n\n

- \n
- According to the United Nations, 2.1 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services.
- \n
- Water scarcity already affects 4 out of every 10 people.
- \n
- 90% of all natural disasters are water related.
- \n
- Nearly 3 lakh children under five die every year from diarrhoeal diseases.
- \n
- 80% of wastewater flows back into the ecosystem without being treated or reused.
- \n
- Meanwhile, the demand for water in urban areas is projected to increase by 50-70% in the next 3 decades.
- \n

\n\n

### What is the New Agenda for Water Action?

\n\n

\n

- A crisis as that of Cape Town is looming large in other cities in the world as people continue to be reckless in their use of water.

\n

- 12 world leaders (11 heads of state and a special adviser of a high-level panel on water) wrote an open letter to global leaders recently.

\n

- They warned that the world is facing a water crisis and issued a New Agenda for Water Action.

\n

- It observed the need to make “**every drop count**” and called for a new approach.

\n

- The panel called for **rethinking** how people understand, value and manage water as a precious resource.

\n

- It also demands catalysing **change** and building **partnerships** to achieve the water-related goals of Sustainable Development.

\n

- The social, cultural, economic and environmental values of water to society need to be reassessed.

\n

- Water needs to be **allocated** in ways which maximize overall benefits to societies.

\n

- It mentioned the need to put in place policies to allow for at least a doubling of **water infrastructure** investment in the next 5 years.

\n

- It called for governments, communities, the private sector, and researchers to collaborate.

\n

\n\n

## **What is India's water scenario?**

\n\n

\n

- In India, **Bengaluru** is ranked second in the list of 11 global cities which might face the threat of running out of drinking water.

\n

- According to a forecast by the Asian Development Bank, India will have a **water deficit** of 50% by 2030.

\n

- Although India receives an average **rainfall** of 1,170 mm per year, it is estimated that only 6% of **rainwater** is stored.  
\n
- India's water needs are thus primarily met by **rivers and groundwater**.  
\n
- **Water scarcity** can lead to disastrous consequences impacting food production as most of the farming is rain-fed.  
\n
- Ground water caters to about 60% of the country's irrigation, 85% of rural drinking water requirements and 50% of urban water needs.  
\n
- This signifies the importance of according top priority for replenishing the aquifers.  
\n
- Millions across India still do not have access to safe drinking water.  
\n
- Some of the notable challenges and concerns include:  
\n

\n\n

- i. growing population  
\n
- ii. lack of adequate planning  
\n
- iii. crumbling infrastructure  
\n
- iv. indiscriminate drilling of borewells  
\n
- v. large-scale consumption of water  
\n
- vi. false sense of entitlement in using water carelessly  
\n

\n\n

## **What are the possible measures?**

\n\n

- The World Bank's Water Scarce Cities Initiative seeks to promote an integrated approach.  
\n
- It aims at **managing water resources and service delivery** in water-scarce cities as the basis for building climate change resilience.  
\n

- Putting in place an **efficient piped supply system** (without leakage of pipes) has to be top on the agenda.  
\n
- **Ancient India** had well-managed wells and canal systems.  
\n
- The Indus Valley Civilization had a well-managed canal system, while Chanakya's Arthashastra also talks of irrigation.  
\n
- **Indigenous water harvesting systems** need to be **revived** and protected at the local level.  
\n
- **Micro irrigation practices** like drip and sprinkler systems have to be promoted in a big way for efficient water use in agriculture.  
\n
- Digging of **rainwater harvesting** pits must be made mandatory for all types of buildings, both in urban and rural areas.  
\n
- Sustained measures should be taken to **prevent pollution** of water bodies and contamination of groundwater.  
\n
- Ensuring proper treatment of domestic and industrial waste water is also essential.  
\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n



**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*  
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative