

27
3

The water accounting method should be introduced in all canal command areas to improve water use efficiency in the country. Explain

The command areas of the country are central to the development of irrigation potential and agriculture development in the country. Suitable water accounting methods can sustain the ecological developments in these regions.

Irrigation development and Issues

The number of large dams in the country increased from 304 in 1950 to 5339 in 2019 and also the canal irrigated areas increased from 83 lakh ha to 174 lakh ha in 1991-92 and decrease further.

The headwater farmers resort to cultivation of water intensive crops such as rice and sugarcane leaving no water for tail end farmers to cultivate. Illegal wells and water transport to different areas through pipelines are also on the rise.

Water accounting methods

- ① The Command Area Development introduced Wara bandhi system for equitable distribution of irrigation water to all farmers irrespective of land holding. In North-east India Dong-Bundh system is being followed for water accounting.
- ② Construction of field channels and field drains to reduce pilferage in the irrigation canals.
- ③ New water policy, recommends scarcity based system to deliver water from dams.
- ④ Catchment area regeneration which needs to be compensated ~~via~~ for ecosystem services.
- ⑤ Usage of pressurised micro irrigation for water conservation.
- ⑥ 63% of groundwater used for agriculture, so practices such as Neeru-Meru, Haryali must be encouraged.

Interstate co-operation within a central framework can set a working mechanism for command area development with best water accounting standards