

Jharkhand State Water Policy

Our Vision

“ To ensure the sustainable development and optimal use and management of the State’s water resources to provide the greatest economic and social benefit for the people of the State of Jharkhand in a manner that maintains important ecological values within rivers and adjoining lands. ”

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1.0 Need for the Jharkhand State Water Policy

- 1.1 Water is the prime natural resource. Acknowledging the vital importance of this scarce resource for human and animal life, as well as for maintaining ecological balance for economic and developmental activities of all kinds is a matter of utmost concern. In view of uneven distribution of rainfall in the State, some of the area comes under heavy water deficit. Therefore planning and management and its optimum, economical, equitable and sustainable use has become a matter of extreme urgency.

It is important to make sure that the right of every citizen to equitable access to water for his or her basic needs is protected and enforced through appropriate policy, and legislative and programme initiative.

State water policy is therefore, a necessary prerequisite for proper planning, thoughtful utilization and sustainable management of water. It calls for a multidisciplinary and holistic approach that considers water as part of the ecosystem for the benefit of all and not as a commodity for the profit of a few.

- 1.2 Since independence of India and till formation of the State of Jharkhand in 2000, some investments were made in the water sector for the development of water storage projects and other water supply related schemes. This resulted in:

- (i) creation of irrigation potential from a few thousand ha. to around 3.00 lakh ha. and thereby increased agriculture productivity and agro-based industries;
- (ii) enhancing the drinking water supplies to the major cities and towns as well as to rural areas; and
- (iii) made available industrial water supplies to spur industrial growth.

However, inadequate measures of the last 63 years of the water challenges require immediate attention. The isolated and fragmented approach adopted to surface and groundwater development and management is deteriorating water qualities of both, surface as well as groundwater, due to release of untreated effluent by the industries and municipal bodies and some parts of the State is facing scarcity of water during non-rainy season.

- 1.3 Increasing conflict among the competing uses of the water for various purposes (such as, ecological, municipal, irrigation, industrial, etc.), poor operation and maintenance of the created

infrastructures in the water sector has resulted in poor service delivery, large gap in the irrigation potential created and utilized. Therefore careful planning, development and management of the water resources in the State, is called for.

- 1.4 Water resources are important to the people of Jharkhand in many ways –for the health and well being of people to sustain environmental values, rural and urban water supply, agricultural production on which the most rural income depends, rural livelihood, hydropower generation, industrial, and benefits for commerce and industry on which growth in employment, to meet the needs of a growing population, will depend.

In many of the river basins and sub-basins of the State, competition for limited water supplies and conflict among these different uses of water have emerged and are growing. The growing scarcity of water and the competition for water services come at the same time when the State also needs to find new ways to overcome stagnation in agricultural production growth to increase productivity, to expand and intensify irrigation and increase income opportunities in rural areas. These challenges also come at a time when the budget resources of the state are limited and stretched. Hence, both the State and all water users, must find ways to become more efficient and productive.

- 1.5 To face these new challenges and to ensure the future welfare of its people, there is a need to adopt State Water Policy for Jharkhand. This policy will broadly have a five-pronged strategy :-
First, the State will adopt a new State Water Policy framework to create the enabling environment for better and more equitable and productive water resources management in an environmentally sustainable manner for promoting growth reduction in poverty and minimizing regional imbalance,

Second, the State will restructure the fundamental roles and relationships of the State and the water users. To create the incentive for water users' organizations and entities to participate more fully in water resources management to manage, operate and maintain their water distribution and service facilities and grant these, and new water users' organizations and entities a stable and predictable entitlements of water so that they can decide on the best use of water without bureaucratic interference.

Third, the State will create a new institutional arrangement at the State level and at the river basin level to guide and regulate water resources planning, development; to decentralize the responsibility for water resources planning, development, management, operation and maintenance functions to the river basin and sub-basin level by suitably defining the