

Chhattisgarh to revive depleting groundwater in forests, build 1089 drains

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The initiative is aimed at revival of 4,28,827 hectares of groundwater reservoirs within the forest-covered land. (Photo: Milan Sharma/India Today)

To help conserve depleting groundwater resources within hectares of forested areas, the Chhattisgarh government has identified 1089 drains for treatment and revival in the forest areas. The programme will be implemented under the Narva Development Scheme -- the Narva Garuva Ghurwa Baari Vikas Yojana.

The initiative is aimed at the revival of 4,28,827 hectares of groundwater reservoirs within the forest-covered land.

A provisional budget of Rs 160.95 crore has been earmarked from the Compensatory Afforestation Management and Protection Authority (CAMPA) fund for 137 drains. These drains are located over 31 forest divisions, one national park, two tiger reserves, one elephant reserve, and one social forestry area.

Further, under the groundwater revival scheme, 10,77,000 land enrichment structures have been completed at the cost of Rs 160.95 crore. Approximately 3,12,000 hectares of land has been treated and revived, the government said. It is 86 per cent of the revival done.

Altogether, 12,64,000 ground-water augmentation structures will be constructed at the cost of Rs 209 crore in 2020-21.

Groundwater enrichment structures to be built as under:

- 58 drains of Indravati Tiger Reserve
- 42 drains of Guru Ghasidas National Park
- 28 drains of Achanakmar Tiger Reserve
- 11 drains of Kanger Valley National Park

10 drains of Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve
2 drains of Tamoripingala Elephant Reserve.

State Forest Minister Mohammad Akbar said, "More than 25 lakh ground-water augmentation and promotion structures will be constructed, within the approved works of the Campa Fund in the year 2019-20 and 2020-21, with a budget of Rs 370 crore."

"With this, 313 water catchment areas of 1,995 drains, comprising of 7 lakh 4 thousand hectares of land will be treated and enriched with structures including stop dam, check dams, gliplugs, dykes and loose boulder check dams," he said.

Water enrichment structures will be built in 58 drains of Indravati Tiger Reserve, 42 of Guru Ghasidas National Park, 28 of Achanakmar Tiger Reserve, 11 of Kanger Valley National Park, 10 of Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve and 2 drains of Tamoripingala Elephant Reserve, the state government has said.

The construction of the water storage structures, built out of Campa Fund will ensure the availability of drinking water for the people and wildlife residing in the forest region of the state. Additionally, it will also increase the moisture of the soil due to water-logging, making the land more fertile and thus increasing cultivation and source of income.

The name, 'Narva Garuwa, Ghurwa, Baari' given by the Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel means a collective action to boost water conservation along with livestock development, use of compost and cultivating fruits and vegetables organically.

Already, as per state records, 20 lakh man-days of employment are being created through forest planting, river bank creation. Similarly, about 50 lakh man-days of employment are available from the Narva Development Plan under Campa Fund.

CAMPA is the biggest source of fund for Chhattisgarh Forest Department, which got Rs 5791.70 crore on August 29, 2019. The central government had released Rs 47,436 crore to different states in a major boost towards promoting afforestation and achieving green objectives in the country.

Source: <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/chhattisgarh-to-revive-depleting-groundwater-in-forests-1733250-2020-10-20>