

Executive Summary

Introduction

Access to clean drinking water is a basic necessity of human beings. It is one of the most essential requirements of life. Rajasthan is the largest State in the country, covering 10.40 *per cent* of the total geographical area of the country. The total surface water resources in the State account for only 1.16 *per cent* of the country's total surface water resources. Scanty rainfall and excessive use of groundwater for irrigation and drinking purposes have caused depletion of groundwater to an alarming level.

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is the flagship scheme launched on 15 August 2019 to provide Functional Household Tap Connections to every rural household. At the time of the launch, 96,06,728 households in Rajasthan were targeted to be provided with Functional Household Tap Connections under JJM. As on 07 January 2025, a total of 47,65,980 households (49.61 *per cent*) have been provided with Functional Household Tap Connections, and 48,40,748 households (50.39 *per cent*) remained to be covered.

Output-Outcomes Framework of Jal Jeevan Mission

In Jal Jeevan Survekshan, Rajasthan ranked between 30th and 34th among the 34 States and Union Territories during the period from October 2022 to March 2024. As on April 2024, over half of Rajasthan's water quality-affected habitations remain uncovered under JJM, with slow progress in vulnerable tribal areas, aspirational districts, backward blocks, schools and Anganwadi centres. Though Rajasthan achieved relatively higher coverage of Functional Household Tap Connections in health centres (73.68 *per cent*), *Panchayat Ghars* (87.27 *per cent*), and *Ashramshalas* (66.00 *per cent*), the coverage of schools (41.12 *per cent*) and *Anganwadi* centres (44.80 *per cent*) remains low. The low Functional Household Tap Connections coverage was primarily caused by delays in awarding the works, delays in completing the Regional Water Supply Schemes, and low utilisation of available funds, *etc.*

As of January 2025, only one out of 302 blocks of Rajasthan achieved 'Har Ghar Jal' certification status. Further, only 400 GPs (3.56 *per cent*) and 4,254 villages (10.05 *per cent*) had been certified as achieving 'Har Ghar Jal' certification status in the State. This shows slow progress in certification across the State.

The State had not made any provision for installing HH meters under the JJM. Consequently, there is no mechanism to monitor the actual quantity of water supplied to households. No evaluation study was conducted by the State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) for the impact assessment of JJM on health conditions of rural communities, empowerment of women, dropout rate of girls from school and increase in employment.

Despite clear guidelines, the State Government did not institutionalise any mechanism for social audits in villages covered under JJM. Neither any guidelines/instructions were issued, nor any third party/NGO was nominated to conduct social audit.

Recommendations:

- *The State Government may give priority to water quality-affected habitations, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) areas, aspirational districts, schools, and Anganwadi centres through a time-bound action plan with periodic review.*
- *The State Government may direct the Executive Committee of the State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) to commission independent evaluation studies at defined intervals, covering health outcomes, reduction in drudgery, school attendance of girls, and livelihood impacts, as envisaged in the JJM Operational Guidelines.*
- *The State Government may ensure installation of functional flow meters/household meters and conduct regular evaluation studies and social audits to improve monitoring and accountability.*
- *The State Government may issue detailed guidelines for the conduct of social audits under JJM, clearly defining the scope, frequency, roles of Gram Panchayats/VWSCs, and reporting formats.*

Planning and Monitoring

In 24 out of the selected 28 villages, the Village Action Plans were prepared between 19 days and 17 months after the schemes were approved by the State Level Scheme Sanctioning Committee, thereby defeating the very purpose of bottom-up planning. These timelines indicate an absence of planning at the village community level.

The State Water and Sanitation Mission did not implement essential policies relating to incentives, O&M and discouraging wastage of water. The District Water Sanitation Mission also did not carry out mandated key functions in the selected villages, such as making provisions for source sustainability and greywater management. Village Water Sanitation Committee was not constituted in 3,910 villages (9.32 *per cent*) in the State as of April 2024. Further, out of 12 completed projects of the selected villages, only two schemes were handed over to Village Water and Sanitation Committees, and only 10 selected villages achieved the prescribed minimum service delivery level of 55 lpcd. Also, community contribution was not collected in 13 of the selected villages, and the collected contribution was not utilised by the Village Water and Sanitation Committees in the other 13 of the selected villages. Out of the selected villages, training on Field Test Kits for water quality testing was not provided to women in 21 villages, and quality testing of the source was not conducted in 17 villages.

Recommendations:

- *The State Government may ensure timely preparation of Village Action Plans before DPR approval and community participation in scheme design and implementation.*
- *The State Government may ensure finalisation of key policies on O&M, user tariffs, and incentive/disincentive mechanisms without delay.*

- *The State Government may ensure proper constitution of VWSCs with mandated representation, training in financial management and water quality testing, and empowerment to undertake regular social audits.*

Post-Operational Management and Sustainability

During 2017-24, the number of over-exploited blocks, categorized on the basis of replenishment of ground water, increased from 185 (62.71 *per cent*) to 214 (70.86 *per cent*), and the number of safe blocks decreased from 45 (15.25 *per cent*) to 37 (12.25 *per cent*), representing a worrying trend. With only 12.25 *per cent* of blocks remaining in the safe category as of 2024, the State faces serious risks to its long-term water security, underscoring the need for strengthened groundwater recharge, regulated abstraction, and systematic monitoring to support sustainable water use. Water and energy audits were not conducted by the Department for any of the rural water supply schemes. As a result, critical insights into water losses due to leakages, unauthorised or illegal withdrawals and inefficiencies in energy usage could not be identified and prevented.

In nine groundwater-dependent selected villages, there was either no provision for recharge structures or the structures were not constructed. The absence of planning and implementation of source sustainability measures under the JJM, particularly for groundwater-based schemes, reflects non-adherence to the prescribed guidelines. Not providing recharge structures in villages dependent on tube wells, including non-execution of approved provisions, exposes water supply systems to the risk of source depletion. This undermines the long-term reliability of the drinking water supply, increases vulnerability to seasonal shortages, and compromises the sustainability objectives of the Mission.

Further, only 858 schemes (30.81 *per cent*) under JJM were handed over to the respective VWSCs for further Operation and Maintenance (O&M) in the State. Moreover, no water tariff structure and billing system were established for rural water supply schemes to recover O&M costs.

Against the targeted 45,000, 25,890 people (57.53 *per cent*) were selected as *Nal Jal Mitras* for managing O&M of water supply scheme. Besides, the State also failed to leverage technological advancements for improving the efficiency, monitoring, and sustainability of water supply schemes under JJM.

Recommendations:

- *The State Government may institutionalise periodic water and energy audits for rural water supply schemes, beginning with high-consumption and groundwater-based schemes, and use audit findings to reduce losses and optimise operating costs.*
- *The State Government may introduce a graded water tariff framework for rural water supply schemes, supported by metering or proxy measurement mechanisms, and set annual targets for the collection of O&M charges by VWSCs.*

- *The State Government may finalise and notify a comprehensive O&M policy with clear roles, funding arrangements, and timelines, and ensure time-bound handover of completed schemes to VWSCs after certifying readiness in terms of manpower, finances, and training.*
- *The State Government may accelerate training and certification of Nal Jal Mitras to cover all Gram Panchayats, and link their deployment to post-handover O&M support to ensure uninterrupted and sustainable water supply services.*

Financial Management

During 2019–25, underutilization of central funds led to a short release of ₹ 29,145.92 crore (70.38 *per cent*) of the central share to the State, against the total allocation of ₹ 41,414.24 crore of the central share. Payments were processed *via* the Sanchalan Portal of the State Government, rather than directly through PFMS. Moreover, details of transactions were uploaded to the PFMS portal later, breaking real-time monitoring. Additionally, the SNA account was not mapped to PFMS, and the EAT module was also not utilised, resulting in a ₹ 929.72 crore (as on 14 February 2025) discrepancy between PFMS and JJM-IMIS expenditures. Also, 511 payments totaling ₹ 133.22 crore made by the PHED Divisions during 2021-24 failed due to incorrect beneficiary names and account details.

Convergence-based works were not included in the Annual Action Plans for 2020-24, resulting in missed opportunities for integrated water resource management and fund optimisation. Further, in the Annual Action Plan 2020-24, only ₹ 129.13 crore (9.66 *per cent*) community contribution had been received as on 10 February 2023.

During the audit instances of inadmissible expenses on the salary of regular staff and the *Shilanyas* ceremony amounting to ₹ 5.89 crore were observed. Besides, an excess payment of price variation amounting to ₹ 0.44 crore was made due to the adoption of an incorrect value of work and base indices.

Recommendations:

- *The State Government may prepare and monitor a rolling, milestone-linked expenditure plan for JJM works to improve fund absorption and ensure timely utilisation of central releases.*
- *The State Government may mandate end-to-end use of PFMS, including the EAT module, for all JJM transactions, with monthly reconciliation between PFMS, IMIS, and bank records to eliminate reporting discrepancies.*
- *The State Government may strengthen payment controls by instituting mandatory validation of beneficiary and vendor bank details before payment processing, to prevent failed transactions and execution delays.*

- *The State Government may enforce financial discipline by prohibiting inadmissible expenditures, recovering excess payments promptly, and systematically leveraging convergence with other schemes to optimise available resources.*

Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance

During the period from 2019 to 2025 (upto 20 January 2025), the Department spent only ₹ 40.39 crore (8.31 *per cent*) on Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance activities and ₹ 445.84 crore (91.69 *per cent*) remained unspent.

The State Level Laboratories could test only 41 out of the 78 parameters mandated under the ‘Uniform Drinking Water Quality Monitoring Protocol’, and a facility for testing radioactive and virological parameters was also not available there. The District Level Laboratories, in selected districts, were equipped to test only 9 to 22 parameters against the requirement to test at least 34 water quality parameters. No Block Level Laboratory was functional as on July 2024 despite spending ₹ 2.94 crore. There was a significant vacancy of 102 posts (45.74 *per cent*) in all laboratories of the State (as of February 2024).

As per the instructions of GoI, state has to create a ‘Drinking Water Quality Commissionerate (DWQC)’ to separate water quality testing from water supply delivery by 02 October 2022. Although a proposal for its establishment was prepared and submitted in July 2022 by the Chief Chemist (JJM & Rural) to the Mission Director (JJM), the DWQC had not been established as of August 2025.

Audit observed that against the target of 3,22,803 Chemical and Bacteriological test, 1,01,824 quality tests of water sources were conducted in Rajasthan during 2022-24. Further, the remedial measures were taken in case of 53,734 chemically (50.64 *per cent*) and 299 bacteriologically (63.35 *per cent*) contaminated samples during 2021-24.

Despite planning to procure over 28.15 lakh Field Test Kits, only 11.46 lakh Field Test Kits were procured.

Recommendations:

- *The State Government may establish and empower institutional mechanisms by establishing the Drinking Water Quality Commissionerate, giving independent charge to the Chief Chemist, and ensuring adequate recruitment of microbiologists, chemists, and support staff.*
- *The State Government may expedite utilisation of WQM&S funds by prioritising the establishment of BLLs, procurement and deployment of FTKs, and execution of remedial measures for contaminated sources.*
- *The State Government may conduct efficient planning under special campaigns, with clear timelines and accountability, ensuring 100 per cent coverage of villages, schools, and Anganwadis for water quality testing, along with proper geo-tagging and follow-up remedial measures.*

Procurement and Execution of Works

The Department overlooked the aspect of justified costing, resulting in the cancellation of tenders. Consequently, the works could not be awarded (as of September 2024), thereby depriving 1,52,437 rural households of 1,402 villages of Districts Baran, Jhalawar and Kota of the intended benefits under JJM for more than three years. Further, in the Regional Water Supply Scheme Bhoyal (Baran), the Department's inaction in finalising the bids despite acceptance of Department's counter offers and extension of bid validity period time and again by the contractors, was incomprehensible and creates doubt on Department's intention towards finalising the tenders.

Further, out of 26 selected Regional Water Supply Schemes, only eight had been completed within the prescribed time, two were completed with a delay of 447 to 744 days, and 16 remained in progress, despite the passage of 11 to 38 months beyond their stipulated completion dates. Further, in all 26 selected Regional Water Supply Schemes, an amount of ₹ 122.31 crore was paid (as of December 2024) to the contractors without following the provision of third-party inspection and certification. Audit scrutiny also revealed suspicious/irregular payments of ₹ 7.07 crore based on fabricated/missing/fake/cancelled/reused or other contractors' invoices across selected JJM works. Further, payments of ₹ 8.32 lakh for already existing Functional Household Tap Connections made in selected villages also remained suspicious. In Karauli, pipes were procured even before bid opening and later diverted to Sojat City before issuance of a 'No Objection Certificate', which creates doubt on the overall tendering process.

Recommendations:

- *The Department may strengthen tendering and procurement processes by ensuring transparency, proper justification for cancellations, and timely finalisation of contracts.*
- *A robust system of financial scrutiny, including invoice verification, e-way bill matching and third-party checks may be established to prevent fraudulent claims.*
- *Quality assurance mechanisms may be enforced through mandatory third-party inspections, GIS mapping of the pipe network, and strict penal action against contractors for substandard work.*
- *Use of digital monitoring tools may be prioritised to improve accountability and timely completion of works.*