

JJM boosts community role in water management: Study

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A recent study on Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), which envisages providing safe and adequate drinking water through individual tap connections to all households in rural India by 2024, has found that a spike in community-driven engagements is behind piped water connections rising from 16.7% in 2019 to over 76.8% as of June 2024.

The study was conducted by the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) and the Indian Institute of Management Visakhapatnam. With a team of seven, the research, conducted between 2019 and 2022, analysed data from 1,400 households across diverse geographic and socio-economic groups in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Bihar to ensure comprehensive insights. The research was published on PLOS One. The states chosen represented both high-performing and lagging ones.

The study found that the community-driven approach



BETTER ACCESS: Since the launch of JJM, Karnataka has seen a 60% rise in rural tap water connections

like village water and sanitation committees (VWSCs), significantly boosted access to clean and potable water. These committees, which actively involve women and marginalised groups, oversee water resource management and ensure sustainability of water sources and distribution systems.

The research also found that at least 30 minutes were saved by women (aged 15-45 years) and children (up to 15 years) in both years, allowing

them to focus on other activities. Additionally, a total of 86,000 water samples were tested for quality, ensuring the safety and reliability of drinking water.

Karnataka has been a frontrunner in implementing JJM, aligning its rural water supply strategies with the programme's national objectives. Since its launch, the state has seen about a 60% rise in rural tap water connections.

Prof Gopal Naik, who led the research and is JJM Chair professor at IIMB, said, "Besides our research, we have observed that people in Karnataka have been actively using these water connections and supporting each other to do so as it is benefiting them."

Looking ahead, the researchers said Karnataka is set to focus on scaling up its rain-water harvesting and aquifer recharge systems to address groundwater depletion. The state is also prioritising the installation of advanced water testing facilities to enhance water quality control.