

Composite Water Management Index, August 2019 Report

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog has released the second edition of the Composite Water Management Index (CWMI) to enable effective water management in Indian states. The objective of the report is to establish a clear baseline and benchmark for state-level performance on key water indicators, identifying high and low performance state inculcating a culture of constructive federal competition amongst states, identifying areas with deeper engagement and investment on the part of the states.

The CWMI indicators are categorized into nine themes for strategic analysis and insights. Some of the key takeaways from these themes are presented below.

- **Source augmentation and restoration of water bodies:** Overall performance on surface water restoration slipped during FY 17-18 compared to FY 16-17, due to the decline in the performance of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Nagaland.
- **Source augmentation (Groundwater):** Overall, states have displayed improvement in recharge of their groundwater resources between FY 15-16 and FY 17-18, but the median continues to remain below 50% of the total achievable score.
- **Major and medium irrigation:** Overall, the theme median stands at 8.4 points (out of 15), and North-Eastern and Himalayan states continue to outperform non-Himalayan states.
- **Watershed management:** States have moderate scores, with an almost equal split above and below the 50% mark. A collaborative (and grassroots-based) approach to watershed

development and management is necessary for ensuring long-term benefits.

- **Participatory irrigation practices:** Overall, performance declined marginally in the last three years. Despite most states having legal frameworks to promote Water User Association (WUA) involvement, actual implementation of WUA responsibilities (such as involvement in O&M of irrigation assets) remains low.
- **Sustainable on-farm water use practices:** Overall, states have failed to show any significant improvement in on-farm water use efficiency. This is a pressing concern given the large-scale national push towards the adoption of micro-irrigation.
- **Rural drinking water:** Overall scores declined in FY 17-18 from a low base in FY 16-17 (less than 50% of the total achievable score), largely due to poor performance on the new service delivery indicators introduced under the theme this year.
- **Urban water supply and sanitation:** While water access remains high on average, significant gaps exist in wastewater treatment. States have shown improvement in creation of wastewater treatment capacity, but utilization of this capacity remains low.
- **Policy and governance:** An increase in theme averages suggests a growing focus by states on water as a subject as well as the use of regulatory frameworks for better resource management. However, water pricing and data centres remain improvement areas for most states.

India's Water Situation: At Glance

A majority of Indian states are demonstrating progress on the Water Index as 80% of the states (19 out of 24)102 have shown improvement in their water management scores over the last three years.

High-performing states continue to lead on the Index where Gujarat retained the top position for the third consecutive year with 75 points and is closely followed by Andhra Pradesh with 74 points

Improvement is piecemeal where states and UTs demonstrated notable improvement on Policy

and Governance and Source augmentation (Groundwater) themes, reflected in the 2.39-point and 1.06-point increase in respective median scores between FY 15-16 and FY 17-18.

Improvement is also insufficient in states where it is most required Apart from Haryana, Goa, and Telangana, none of the other low-performing states from FY 15-16 have advanced beyond the 50-point mark in the last three years

Low-performing states bear the largest burden of national population and economic production Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, and Bihar holds 35% of India's population, and produce 35% of its agricultural output. Further, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Kerala, and Delhi, 4 of the top 10 contributors to India's economic output. This results in significant risks for India's social stability, economic growth, and food security, if the situation remains unchanged.

Please contact for any query related to this mail to Ms. Preeti Rajput, Research Associate at Preeti.rajput@phdcci.in with a cc to Dr. S P Sharma, Chief Economist at spsharma@phdcci.in and Ms Megha Kaul, Economist at megha@phdcci.in, PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Regards,

Dr S P Sharma

Chief Economist

PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry

PHD House, 4/2 Siri Institutional Area

August Kranti Marg, New Delhi-110016, India

Tel: +91 49545454

Fax: +91 11 26855450

Email: spsharma@phdcci.in

Website: www.phdcci.in

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PHD House, 4/2 Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, New Delhi - 110 016 (India) • Tel. : +91-11-2686 3801-04, 49545454, 49545400
Fax : +91-11-2685 5450 • E-mail : phdcci@phdcci.in • Website : www.phdcci.in, CIN: U74899DL1951GAP001947



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