

WATER CHALLENGES & UNION BUDGET 2023



The Hon'ble Finance Minister, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the union budget for 2023–24, has announced a few new schemes that will also support water sector growth. Although the budget is silent on several key aspects of the water sector like wastewater treatment and building sewage treatment and reuse systems as the increasing challenges of water contamination due to the unrestricted release of both municipal and industrial wastewater into rivers, ponds, and other water bodies across the country. Also adopting modern technology for the management of water and wastewater, recycling and reclamation, and huge volumes of potable water lost in distribution lines should have been considered.

Over the past few years, the government has been taking various initiatives, especially the rural water supply schemes under the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), which started in August 2019 after the Hon'ble Prime Minister announced it in his Independence Day address. We have seen the development of rural water infrastructure in the country and for the current fiscal; the FM has announced a budget increase for JJM projects to Rs.70,000 Crore against last year's allocation of Rs.60,000 Crore. This mission is indeed a game changer for rural households who are getting clean drinking water facilities at their homes. Since its launch, this rural water supply scheme is being implemented in a mission mode and it has already covered almost 57% of the total households (193.63 million), and the new allocation will expedite the projects undergoing to connect the remaining 43% of households.

Karnataka has been facing the difficult challenge of water scarcity for many years and the inter-state dispute on the water is not yet resolved. The Finance Minister has announced the central assistance of Rs. 5,300 Crore to Karnataka for augmenting water supply through the Upper Bhadra Project to provide sustainable micro irrigation and filling up of surface tanks for drinking water purposes. This is going to help in easing the water scarcity situation in the drought-prone central region of Karnataka.

The Aspirational Blocks Programme covering 500 blocks is launched for providing essential government services across multiple domains such as health, nutrition, education, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure. This will help in building and retrofitting water infrastructure for resource augmentation that will support making drinking water facilities available for the people.

Rs. 15,000 Crore allocation for three years to improve socio-economic conditions of the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) under the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission will also help in creating and improving clean drinking water and sanitation infrastructure in the tribal areas apart from other basic facilities like education, health, and road connectivity.

We are hopeful that all these projects and dedicated investment will help increase the market size of water and wastewater treatment equipment, membranes, chemicals, and other ancillaries.



Abdul Rahman Mohammed
CEO, Sahara Industry