

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



## Executive Summary

This Performance Audit Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India includes findings of Performance Audit on '*Implementation of Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal Yojana in Bihar*'. A summary of the important audit findings is given below.

*As per the 2011 census, only 2.60 per cent of rural households and 20 per cent of urban households in Bihar had access to tap water supply. For drinking water, the State was primarily dependent upon ground water. Overall, 28 out of 38 districts in the State suffered from poor water quality due to presence of various contaminants (arsenic, fluoride and iron).*

*The Government of Bihar (GoB) launched (December 2015) Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal (HGNJ) yojana, with the objective of providing adequate and safe drinking piped water to every household in the State and to reduce waterborne disease; and end dependency on hand pumps for drinking water by the year 2020.*

*The HGNJ yojana was implemented in the State through three departments viz., Panchayati Raj Department (PRD), Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED) and Urban Development and Housing Department (UD&HD). The HGNJ yojana was funded from the State's own budget; grants received under Central as well as State Finance Commissions and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS). During the period 2017-18 to 2022-23, the PRD, PHED and the UD&HD allocated ₹ 30,500.92 crore to their implementing units for HGNJ yojana.*

*A Performance Audit of HGNJ yojana covering the period from 2017-18 to 2022-23, was conducted in 12 sampled districts of the State between June to November 2023. The important audit findings are highlighted below:*

*The reported coverage of rural households under the Scheme, as of March 2023, was inflated. Total coverage of 98.70 per cent of the targeted rural households was reported against coverage of only 95.71 per cent rural households, as of November 2025 (as per Jal Jeevan Mission-Har Ghar Jal dashboard).*

*As regards urban areas, as of March 2023, UD&HD reported coverage of 94 per cent of the targeted households under the Scheme, showing non-achievement of the Scheme targets of 100 per cent coverage of urban households by March 2020.*

*Non/inadequate baseline surveys led to unreliable estimates for targeting and coverage of households under HGNJ yojana. PHED could not cover 11.22 lakh households under 46,633 rural wards including 8.07 lakh households in quality affected wards.*

*There was lack of clarity in bifurcation of wards between PHED and PRD for implementation of schemes causing lack of coordination between these implementing departments. Audit noted that 77 quality affected wards were covered by the Ward Implementation and Management Committees (WIMCs) of*

*Gram Panchayats (GPs) without water treatment plants and 19 non-quality affected wards were not covered under the Scheme.*

*In 1,000 fluoride affected habitations, schemes were implemented by PHED without preparation of a Detailed Project Report and without undertaking detailed survey and identification of worksites. This led to installation of Fluoride Removal Plants in 15 schemes worth ₹2.77 crore in those habitations, where water quality was not affected by high levels of fluoride.*

*The HGNJ yojana schemes were commenced with delays. In PHED, although the schemes were to be completed by the end of the year 2019-20, however, 59 per cent schemes commenced only in the year 2019-20 or at the fag end of 2018-19, resulting in delays in providing tap water supply services.*

*Despite implementation efforts under HGNJ yojana, water quality management in Bihar remained deficient. Many quality-affected wards were not covered or lacked functional water treatment plants. Even where water treatment plants were installed, they were often non-functional or under-capacity. Chlorinators were largely absent in PRD and ULB schemes, compromising disinfection standards.*

*Water quality testing was inadequate due to infrastructure gaps, manpower shortages, non-utilisation of test kits, and non-operational mobile labs. National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI, accreditation remained limited to a few laboratories. Consequently, a significant number of households were exposed to unsafe water, defeating the scheme's primary objective.*

*All water quality affected wards were not covered under the scheme. In 41 wards, schemes were implemented under PHED and ULBs wards without installation of Water Treatment Plants.*

*In five test-checked PH divisions, ₹ 2.31 crore was paid to contractors for works that had actually not been executed.*

*Institutional provisions and guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of HGNJ yojana across rural and urban areas were marred by systemic deficiencies. The Implementation & Monitoring Cells, State/District Project Management Units, and Quality Monitors faced critical manpower shortages, adversely impacting oversight. Monitoring platforms like NischaySoft and Nagarsewa were either unreliable or non-functional. Community engagement awareness programme through Lavuk Committees, Jal Choupals, and health camps was minimal, while quality control mechanisms at both third-party and local levels were grossly underutilised.*

*The installation and maintenance of IoT devices for real-time scheme monitoring suffered from non-standardised procurement practices, cost inconsistencies, and poor post-installation follow-up. Moreover, public grievance redressal systems were weak, with most beneficiaries unaware of complaint mechanisms and inadequate documentation of grievance disposal.*

*These lapses collectively hindered effective monitoring of implementation, and service delivery under the HGNJ Yojana.*

***Recommendations:***

***The State Government may:***

- 1. ensure efficient planning and 100 per cent coverage of eligible beneficiaries under HGNJ by carrying out detailed surveys and identification of households/wards.***
- 2. ensure enhancing coordination amongst departments/executing agencies to ensure that essential components like chlorinators etc., required for provision of safe drinking water are provided for in all water supply schemes, irrespective of implementing agency.***
- 3. ensure separate and detailed accounting of funds allocated for the HGNJ yojana under all grant heads, rather than merging them within overall Saat Nischay scheme. In addition, the Departments should monitor the actual expenditure incurred against these allocations to ensure transparency, accountability and effective financial oversight.***
- 4. improve planning and monitoring mechanisms by ensuring proper surveys before scheme execution and adopt a common, real-time reporting system across departments to reflect actual field progress.***
- 5. strengthen contract and financial management by ensuring adherence to agreement terms and enhancing oversight to avoid delays, excess payments, and incomplete works.***
- 6. support continuous service delivery by ensuring timely O&M funding, resolving electricity supply issues, encouraging user charges collection, and enhancing coordination among implementing agencies and local bodies.***
- 7. ensure coverage of all quality affected wards with functional WTPs to provide safe drinking water to targeted households.***
- 8. ensure focus on improving testing facilities by upgrading infrastructure of laboratories and deploying adequate manpower. The Departments may strengthen its supervision and monitoring mechanism to ensure that all required water quality tests are carried out.***
- 9. ensure taking timely and appropriate remedial/mitigation measures in cases where contamination via presence of more than permissible limits of Arsenic, Fluoride, Iron, are detected.***
- 10. ensure strengthening institutional and field-level monitoring by filling key vacancies (State Quality Monitors, District Quality Monitors, JEs, AEs), ensuring regular functioning of Monitoring Cells, and operationalizing MIS portals for reliable data reporting.***

***11. ensure quality control and transparency through mandatory third-party certification of materials, standardised IoT procurement and maintenance and activation of community-based monitoring mechanisms like Vigilance Committee, Lavuk Committees and Jal Choupals.***

***12. ensure improving grievance redressal by establishing accessible complaint systems and ensuring timely resolution with proper documentation and oversight.***