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WATERBODY CENSUS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Water body Census". The topic "Water body Census" has relevance in the Environment section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of Water Body Census

For Prelims:

What is the Water Body Census?

For Mains:

GS 3: Environment

What are the findings of the Water Body Census?

What is the significance of the Water Body Census?

Way Forward

Why in the news?

The Ministry of Jal Shakti recently released the report of its first-ever census of water bodies.

What is the Water Body Census?

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has initiated the first-ever Census of Water Bodies in conjunction with the 6th Minor Irrigation (MI) Census through the centrally sponsored "Irrigation Census" program.

The primary aim of the Water Bodies Census is to establish a comprehensive national database of all water bodies by gathering data on critical factors such as their size, condition, encroachment status, usage, storage capacity, and level of storage.

What is the need for Water Body Census?

The use of water bodies data is also envisaged in the following fields:

- Authentic dataset for **estimation of recharge of groundwater**.
- Information obtained from MI Census and water body census will be highly useful in the **implementation of other water-related schemes** like Atal Bhujal Yojana.

Under Atal Bhujal Yojana, these data can be used for the assessment of Gram Panchayat-wise water budgets, preparation of realistic water security Plans, and planning various supply/ demand side measures through the convergence of ongoing schemes.

- The information will be relevant to State Governments involved in **farm-level irrigation and water management**.

What are the findings of the Water Body Census?

- **Total number of water bodies:** 24,24,540 water bodies have been enumerated in the country, out of which,
- 97.1% (23,55,055) are in rural areas and only

- 2.9% (69,485) are in urban areas.
- **States:**
- West Bengal has the highest number of ponds & reservoirs.
- Andhra Pradesh has the highest number of tanks.
- Tamil Nadu has the highest number of lakes.
- Maharashtra is the leading state for water conservation schemes.
- **Encroachment of water bodies:** 1.6% water bodies out of all the enumerated water bodies are reported to be encroached out of which 95.4% are in rural areas and the remaining 4.6% in urban areas.

What is the significance of the Water Body Census?

The Census of Water Bodies launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti has significant importance in several ways:

- **Better management of water resources:** This will help in better planning and management of water resources, leading to more efficient utilization of water and sustainable development.
- **Identification of encroachments:** This will help in identifying the areas where illegal encroachments have taken place and taking necessary action to remove them, thus protecting the water bodies.
- **Conservation of water bodies:** This information will help in taking necessary steps to conserve the water bodies and prevent them from drying up.
- **Improved irrigation infrastructure:** The data collected will help in identifying areas where minor irrigation infrastructure can be developed, leading to improved agricultural productivity.
- **Better disaster management:** The census will also help in identifying water bodies that are prone to flooding, which will enable the government to take necessary measures to prevent floods and manage them better in case they occur.

Sources:

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3a70dc40477bc2adcef4d2c90f47eb82/uploads/2023/04/2023040672.pdf>

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