

## No extra funds for Jal Shakti Abhiyan

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With rampant water scarcity in the spotlight, whether in urban centres like Chennai or as drought in parts of central India, the Centre rolled out the Jal Shakti Abhiyan on Monday as a *jan andolan* or people's movement on water conservation.

However, there is no additional funding or specific targets for the campaign to achieve, according to Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. Instead, the campaign is meant to "bring sensitivity on the subject, and give focussed approach," he told journalists.

Over the next two and a half months, the campaign will push to implement existing water conservation schemes and increase awareness in 256 water-stressed districts.

As *The Hindu* reported last week, 256 Central Indian Administrative Service officers of Joint Secretary or Additional Secretary-level have been deputed to monitor implementation, along with 447 Deputy Secretary-level officers. Despite this huge Central deployment for a scheme on water — which is purely a State subject under the Constitution — Mr. Shekhawat said that this was "not at all a top-down scheme



"...As Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his *Mann ki Baat*, water conservation is everyone's responsibility. It needs to become a mass people's movement, just like we made sanitation into a people's movement with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan." he said.

Asked about any budget allocation or additional funding for the scheme, the Minister said that there was plenty of money already allocated for existing schemes under the Central and State budgets.

"They can be converged into a single scheme, with a focussed approach," he said.

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