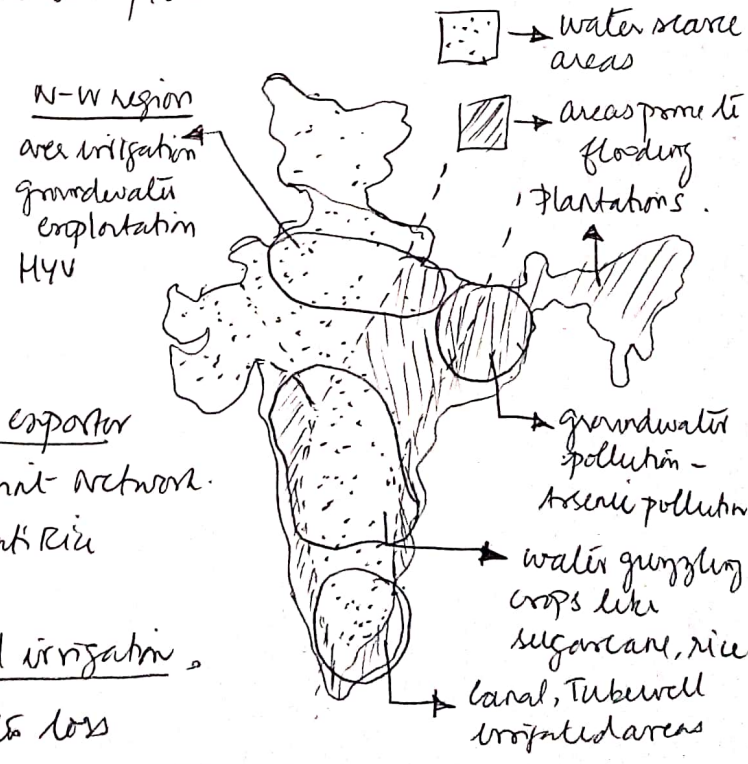


Minimizing the usage of water for agriculture is the most effective way of solving India's impending water crisis. Elaborate

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India is facing extreme water shortage. Reports have listed out the fact that 21 Indian cities face run out of groundwater affecting 40% of the Indian population, 6% of Indian GDP by 2030. The irony is that, when one region of India is reeling under monsoon floods, the other regions face water shortage.

- 1) India is not a water poor country. The increase in demand is primarily due to growing population and inefficient usage
- 2) Agricultural activities alone use 78% of the total consumable water resources in India. The water withdrawal is highest followed by China and US
- 3) Shift in sources of irrigation i.e. canal irrigation to groundwater irrigation in net irrigated areas has presurised and overexploitation.  
e.g. Punjab region, production of kg of rice exploits more groundwater than in Bihar
- 4) Growth of water guzzling crops like sugarcane, rice, cotton in relatively dry regions, leads to depletion of rivers.
- 5) India is said to be biggest virtual exporter of water according to water footprint network.  
e.g. India being largest exporter of Basmati Rice harvests 65% of groundwater.
- 6) Faulty irrigation practices like flood irrigation, minim of farm ponds leads to water loss
- 7) Green revolution centred practices like HYV seeds, fertilizer usage increases demand of water, eventually leading to water scarcity and pollution
- 8) Aids and incentives, loan waivers by state governments promote



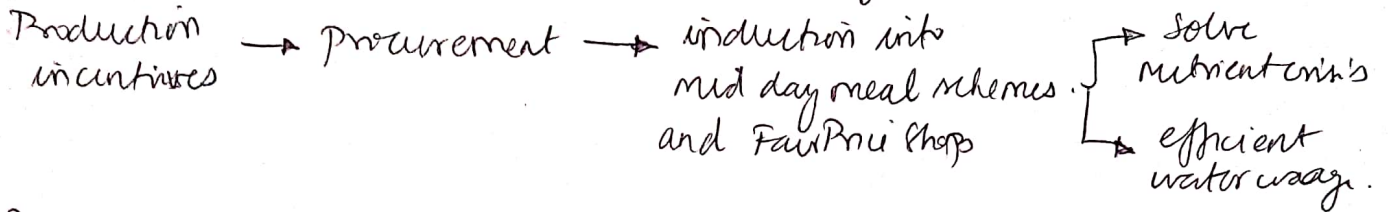
AGRICULTURE and water scarcity in India

farmers to produce demand driven crop like rice, wheat. (2)  
eg: electricity subsidy accentuated sugarcane industry in the  
Mandya region of Karnataka

Thus, any serious efforts towards water management should focus entirely on management of agricultural irrigation in India.

Some efforts towards providing safe drinking water to all by 2030 include

1) Shift towards climate resilient crops by state intervention



2) Rationalisation of subsidies can balance the demand and supply leading to diversification of crops eg: nutrient band subsidies

3) Efficient irrigation ~~ways~~ like drip and sprinkler irrigations can increase yield without polluting water bodies

4) Shift towards sustainable agroeconomic practices. Like Zero band natural farming, mixed farming, subsurface irrigation and precision farming.

5) Rejuvenation of canals, desilting rivers to meet the demand.

6) Adopting traditional water conservation practices - knowledge base of anustro - Kuls, Tankas, mountain bamboo water drip, Baori etc.

Short term fire fighting strategy must be a step towards future conservation, when the alarm bells for impending 'ZERO DAY'S' have been set. 'Zan Andolan' must be the bandwagon for implementing such policies.