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**EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**

# JJM 2.0 Must Fix the Leaky Pipe — Rural Water Needs Sustainability, Not Just Coverage

**BUSINESS STANDARD**

22 March 2026

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# JJM 2.0 Must Fix the Leaky Pipe — Rural Water Needs Sustainability, Not Just Coverage

Business Standard

22 March 2026

GS2

GS3

BS

Business Standard

MAINS RELEVANCE:

GS Paper 2

GS Paper 3



## INTERVIEW ANGLE

"The Jal Jeevan Mission has connected 81% of rural homes to taps — but what good is a tap if the source runs dry within a year?"

## WHY IN NEWS

The Business Standard editorial, coinciding with World Water Day 2026, examines the Union Cabinet's approval to restructure and extend the Jal Jeevan Mission to 2028 with an enhanced outlay of Rs 8.69 lakh crore — arguing that the next phase must shift focus from tap coverage to source sustainability.

## The Coverage Success Story

The Jal Jeevan Mission's numbers are impressive:

METRIC	2019 (LAUNCH)	2026 (CURRENT)
Rural households with tap connections	32.3 million (17%)	~158 million (81%)
Total rural households identified	193.6 million	193.6 million
States with 100% coverage	0	6+ (Goa, Telangana, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, HP)

This is one of the **largest rural infrastructure deployments** in the developing world.

## The Sustainability Crisis

But the parliamentary committee's recent warning exposes the other side: **many taps installed under JJM are running dry within a year.** The reasons:

- 1 Source depletion:** Borewells and natural pools are being exhausted faster than they recharge. In several states, water sources were depleted within 12 months of scheme launch

- ② **Data gap:** No systematic data on how many of the **6.83 lakh water supply schemes** actually have a reliable permanent source
- ③ **O&M failure:** Operation and maintenance depends on gram panchayats and Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs), many of which lack technical capacity and financial resources
- ④ **Quality concerns:** Tap water that is available is not always potable — contamination by fluoride, arsenic, and iron persists in several states

## JJM 2.0: What Changes?

FEATURE	JJM 1.0 (2019-2024)	JJM 2.0 (2024-2028)
Focus	Tap coverage	Sustainability + quality
Outlay	Rs 3.60 lakh crore	<b>Rs 8.69 lakh crore</b>
Central assistance	Rs 2.08 lakh crore	Rs 3.59 lakh crore
Digital platform	None	<b>Sujalam Bharat</b> (Sujal Gaon ID)
Monitoring	Coverage metrics	Functionality + water quality

The **Sujalam Bharat** platform assigns a unique **Sujal Gaon ID** to each village, mapping the entire water system from source to household tap — enabling real-time monitoring of functionality, not just installation.

## What the Editorial Recommends

- ① **Source sustainability audits:** Every scheme must have a documented, permanent water source with recharge assessment
- ② **Groundwater recharge mandates:** 5% of JJM funds should be earmarked for aquifer recharge structures in water-stressed blocks
- ③ **Gram panchayat capacity building:** Technical training for VWSC members; incentive-based O&M performance
- ④ **Water quality testing labs:** Expand from current ~2,000 to at least 5,000 field testing laboratories
- ⑤ **Convergence with Atal Bhujal Yojana:** Source sustainability and demand management must complement tap infrastructure

## The Bigger Picture

The editorial closes with a pointed observation: India has built pipes faster than it has secured the water to flow through them. **JJM 2.0 must ensure that the Rs 8.69 lakh crore investment does not create a network of dry taps** — which would be worse than no taps at all, as it creates false expectations and erodes public trust in government programmes.

**UPSC RELEVANCE**

JJM launch year, outlay, Sujalam Bharat, Atal Bhujal Yojana, VWSC.

**MAINS GS-2:**

Government schemes for rural development, panchayati raj and local governance capacity, parliamentary committee oversight.

**MAINS GS-3:**

Water resource management, groundwater sustainability, infrastructure governance.

**ESSAY:**

“Building infrastructure without sustainability is building monuments to failure.”

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

### JAL JEEVAN MISSION:

Launched: August 15, 2019 by PM Narendra Modi

Ministry: Jal Shakti

Objective: FHTC (Functional Household Tap Connection) to every rural household

JJM 1.0 outlay: Rs 3.60 lakh crore

JJM 2.0 outlay: Rs 8.69 lakh crore

Coverage: 32.3 million (2019) → ~158 million (2026)

Extended to: 2028

### SUJALAM BHARAT:

National digital framework for rural water monitoring

Sujal Gaon ID: Unique ID per village, maps source-to-tap systems

Enables real-time functionality and quality monitoring

### RELATED SCHEMES:

Atal Bhujal Yojana: Rs 6,000 crore; 7 states; community-led groundwater management

PMKSY: Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana — irrigation efficiency

Namami Gange: Rs 20,000 crore; river rejuvenation

National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP): Predecessor of JJM

### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

100% FHTC states: Goa, Telangana, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh

VWSC: Village Water and Sanitation Committee — local O&M body

Field testing labs for water quality: ~2,000 currently

India's groundwater assessment units: 17% over-exploited (CGWB)

Sources: [Business Standard](#), [PIB](#), [InsightsIAS](#)

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