

# Jal Jeevan Mission extended till 2028 with 'enhanced outlay'

**Jacob Koshy**

NEW DELHI

Indicative of the challenges in executing the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious promise to provide potable tap water to all rural households by 2024, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget speech on Saturday, said the scheme would now be completed by 2028.

Announcing an "enhanced outlay" without specifying an amount, she



**Water woes:** The Centre provisioned ₹70,000 crore for this fiscal, but, as of February, expects to spend only ₹22,694 crore. FILE PHOTO

underlined that the mission's focus would be on the quality of infrastructure, operation, and man-

agement of rural piped water supply schemes through people's participation. So far, 80% of rural

households have a piped water connection, up from the 15% in 2019.

To this end, the government has spent ₹3.6 lakh crore since 2019.

A perusal of the Budget documents shows that the nodal Jal Shakti Ministry expects to spend ₹67,000 crore in 2025-26. This is a little less than the ₹69,992 crore it actually spent in 2023-24. In 2024-25, the Ministry provisioned to spend ₹70,000 crore, but, as of

February, expects to spend only ₹22,694 crore.

A source privy to the workings of the mission, requesting anonymity, told *The Hindu* that the scheme first targeted the "low hanging fruit" of ensuring water supply to places that had most of the infrastructure in place but no last-mile connectivity.

This approach pushed coverage up to 50%. Following this, increasing coverage of households be-

came tougher, the source said.

Another challenge emerged during the pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war, raising the prices of equipment.

"When the scheme was envisioned, the outlay was nearly ₹7 lakh crore, with half to be borne by States. Now we require nearly ₹4 lakh crore to complete the scheme," the source said.

This means the Jal Shakti Ministry requires nearly as much as it used from 2019 to 2024 to complete the remaining 20%.

