

## **Sub-Theme : Inclusive and Equitable Water Governance**

### **Topic: Equity in Water Allocation and Access to All Sectors**

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#### Background:

Equity in water allocation is fundamental to inclusive and sustainable water governance. Competition for water across domestic, agriculture, industry, and environmental sectors is intensifying. Equitable allocation requires that water distribution is fair, transparent, and guided by priority needs, vulnerability, efficiency, and long-term sustainability., ensuring inclusive allocation especially in the many water stressed basins in the country. Major challenges in this regard pertain to over-extraction, inefficient use, growing demand–supply gaps, unregulated groundwater extraction often linked to affordability rather than need, etc. Climate variability, weak water accounting, limited institutional coordination, and inadequate participatory mechanisms also contribute to disputes and inefficient outcomes, highlighting the need for stronger basin-level planning, transparent allocation frameworks, and integration of environmental flow requirements.

#### Objective:

- To develop understanding of equity in water allocation and access across sectors.
- To discuss governance issues regarding fair distribution, especially in stressed river basins.
- To explore institutional mechanisms and policy frameworks for equitable and transparent allocation, including stakeholder participation and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- To highlight the role of water accounting, demand management, and efficiency improvement in achieving equitable access and reducing inter-sectoral conflicts.
- To identify pathways for integrating climate resilience, sustainability, and environmental flow requirements into allocation decisions.

#### Suggested Sub-Topics:

- Equity & Policy Frameworks.
- Basin-Level Allocation Planning.
- Groundwater Access and Regulation.
- Water Accounting & Transparency Tools.
- Climate Resilience and Risk-Based Allocation.
- Case Studies / Innovations / Success Stories.

#### Expected Outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of equity-based water allocation approaches and inclusive governance mechanisms.
- Policy-relevant recommendations for improving water allocation frameworks across sectors and regions.
- Actionable suggestions for strengthening water accounting, transparency, and institutional coordination for equitable access.
- Increased awareness of best practices and lessons from national and international experiences on equitable water sharing.

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