Data Sharing by PSUs Crossing the Last Mile

Why in news?

A policy framework for sharing data is the need of the hour and Karnataka govt's e-Sahamathi initiative shows the way.

What is the journey of data sharing by the public sector in India?

- **Before 2005-** In India, before 2005, the right to information was recognised as a fundamental right by various international declarations/conventions and even a few State governments in India.
- **After 2005-** Right to Information Act was enacted in 2005 to empower citizens through transparency and accountability.
- However, for most part, the onus remained on the citizen to seek information from public authorities.
- **National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) of 2012** was released whereby every public authority was required to share non-personal, non-sensitive data produced using public funds (also called as open data) for promoting transparency and driving innovation.

What are the social and economic benefits of data sharing?

- It is estimated that by 2025, data and AI could add up to 500 billion dollar to India's GDP.
- Studies suggest that data access and sharing can help generate social and economic benefits worth between 0.1% and 1.5% of global GDP in the case of public-sector data.
- The scope for innovating and driving positive change is enormous in case of data exchange between public-private sector in a trusted ecosystem.

What are the challenges?

- **Unsustainable models-** Many of the start-ups require complete, accurate and validated datasets to train/test their AI-based models, to make predictions/draw conclusions or to be able to provide personalised or customised services.
- For data exchange/sharing, businesses source primary data from the field, enter into bilateral deals for data sharing, use open datasets in public/private sector, or obtain data without appropriate consent/legal compliance which are not sustainable.
- **Data privacy**- Data privacy or confidentiality issues may arise on seeking, operating or holding data.
- **Absence of data exchange platforms**- For an efficient data economy, it is imperative that data consumers can interact with one/multiple data fiduciaries through a platform.
- In the absence of such a mechanism, the cost of discovery, negotiation and compliance would render the ecosystem inefficient.
- **Lack of policy framework**- There is a lack of enabling policy framework to accelerate data

sharing and purpose-based application in a rights-respecting environment.

How Karnataka government's e-Sahamathi initiative shows the way?

- e-Sahamathi is a tool to empower citizens to own, control and share their data with various private and public companies to get jobs, seek admission in universities or colleges, and any such purpose.
- The digital platform was developed by the e-Governance Department of the government with support of National Informatics Centre.
- **Working**- Under the system, a citizen has to login using his Aadhaar number and share his/her data with companies by making a request to the Consent Manager of e-Sahamathi.
- The Consent Manager would send the data to the companies/universities or any other entity.
- Universities and companies have to register with e-Sahamathi to be able to access the data.
- **Prior consent**- e-Sahamathi allows a citizen to provide her consent to interested third party private service providers to use her data for specified purpose.
- **Grievance redressal**- There is a requirement to appoint a grievance redressal officer for handling/disposing of user grievances/complaints.
- Any complaint will have to be resolved within 30 days of receipt.
- **Other provisions-** Other provisions include
    - auditing the service provider
    - preventing misuse of data
    - data retention and data deletion upon revocation of consent
- **Extension of services**- Keeping in view the principles of cooperative federalism, the guidelines also provide for extending the services of e-Sahamathi as a consent manager to other State governments and the Centre.
- **Benefits**
    - ensures privacy
    - data protection
    - eliminates physical verification of certificates/documents
    - eliminates submission of fake certificates by candidates
    - avoids delay and corruption
    - ensures lawfulness, fairness and transparency

What lies ahead?

- With fourth industrial revolution technologies, data can be used, re-used and re-purposed with infinite possibilities.
- Through appropriate technologies and governance frameworks, data sharing can enable benefits and innovation.
- Access to public sector data and private sector data in a trusted ecosystem, which is consent-based and purpose-driven, will be instrumental in creating value and promote equitable access to digital and data economy.

References

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