Evaluation of India's Public sanitation programmes

Why in news?

The government needs to identify the shortcomings in Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin if it wants to transform India from open defecation free to open defecation free-plus status by 2024-25.

Status of sanitation in India
• Until 2014, 600 million people (approximately 60% of the world's open defecators) were practicing open defecation across the country, of these 550 million were in rural India. • As per Government of India, sanitation coverage in the country improved from 39% in 2014 to 100% in 2019. • **Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G)-** Around 50% villages achieved ODF+ status under phase II of the mission. • **ODF+ village-** It is one which has sustained its Open Defecation Free (ODF) status along with implementing either solid or liquid waste management system. • **Top performing States**- In terms of % of ODF+ villages are - **Big States**- Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu - **Small States**- Goa and Sikkim. - **Union Territories**- Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra Nagar Havelli & Daman Diu and Lakshadweep have 100% ODF+ Model villages.

What are the steps taken by India in sanitation?

> *Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 6) aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.*

- **Central Rural Sanitation Programme**- It was started in 1986, India's first efforts to provide safe sanitation in rural areas focussed mainly on providing subsidies to people to construct sanitation facilities.
- **Total Sanitation Campaign**- In 1999, a restructured Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) was initiated to create supply-led sanitation by promoting local sanitary marts and a range of technological options.
- **Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan**- TSC is modified into Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan in 2012 to achieve total sanitation by promoting toilet construction, solid waste management, and hygiene education.

> *The target for reaching total sanitation was revised from 2012 to 2022.*

- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**- It is a *"Clean India Mission"* launched in 2014 to make

India open defecation-free (ODF) by constructing toilets, promoting proper waste management and fostering a culture of cleanliness.

- **Swachh Bharat Mission**- It involves toilet construction, waste management practices and awareness campaigns. It has two components
  - **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U)-** It concentrates on making cities and towns clean.
  - **Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G)-** It aimed at universal sanitation coverage in rural areas, to make India ODF by October 2, 2019, as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary.

What are the initiatives taken under SBM-G?

- **Phase I**-It was launched from 2014-2019 to improve the levels of cleanliness in rural areas through Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities and making Gram Panchayats Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitised.
- **Phase II-** It will be implemented in mission mode from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with a focus on the sustainability of ODF status and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).



- **Goal of ODF status**- The primary objective is to make all rural areas in India Open Defecation Free by constructing toilets in households and ensuring the usage of these facilities.
- **Toilet Construction and Individual Household Latrine (IHHL) Scheme**- It provides financial assistance to eligible households to build toilets.
- **Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)-** It emphasizing community participation and behavioural change by mobilizing communities to collectively take action to end open defecation.
- **Information, Education and Communication (IEC)-** The mission places a strong emphasis on IEC activities to create awareness about the importance of sanitation, hygiene practices, and the usage of toilets.
- **Awards-** They are given to districts, states, and individuals for outstanding contributions to the mission.
- **Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM)-** The mission recognizes the importance of proper waste management and efforts are made to promote the construction of compost pits, soak pits, and other waste management infrastructure in rural areas.
- **Swachhagrahis-** They are volunteers who play a crucial role in mobilizing communities and promoting sanitation and hygiene practices at the grassroots level.
- **Gramin Swacch Survekshan**- It assesses the cleanliness and sanitation status of rural areas, encouraging healthy competition among districts.

What are the challenges in achieving total sanitation in India?

- **Unused toilets**- NSSO survey in 2012 revealed the reasons for non-use included lack of superstructure (21%), malfunctioning (22%), unhygienic conditions (20%), and personal reasons (23%).

- **Factors impact toilet use-** Education, household size and economic conditions impact the toilet use.
    - For example- Larger households have higher chances of not using toilets due to overcrowding and social norms.

Surveyed States in 2018	Toilet access	Atleast one member who did not use
Bihar	59%	38%
Gujarat	66%	50%
Telangana	76%	14%

- **Infrastructural deficit**- The absence of a superstructure or a proper shelter around the toilet facility can discourage its use.
- **Water supply**- A higher non-use of toilets in Gujarat was due to a lack of access to water in Dahod district, one of the two districts selected from the State.
- **Lack of privacy**- This may make individuals uncomfortable and hesitant to use the toilet.
- **Poor quality**- Individuals are likely to avoid facilities that are not in proper working condition due to concerns about hygiene and functionality.
- **Unhygienic conditions**- Issues such as inadequate cleaning, foul odors, or the presence of pests, can contribute to non-use, poor sanitation and cleanliness standards may lead individuals to seek alternative, perceived cleaner options.
- **Personal reasons**- IT may include cultural or habitual preferences, psychological factors, or individual choices such as convenience, comfort, or privacy.
- **Purity concept**- Cultural beliefs surrounding notions of purity may dissuade individuals from using toilets on their premises, leading to avoidance based on social and religious considerations.
- **Caste-** Social hierarchies and caste dynamics can influence toilet usage patterns, with certain groups facing stigma or discrimination related to sanitation practices.
    - A multi-State study reveals a higher percentage of non-users among upper castes compared to backward castes
- **Gender disparity**-Gender norms may impact toilet usage, particularly for women who may face challenges related to safety, accessibility, and menstrual hygiene.
- **Data challenge**- The left-out households and toilets unused for defecation must be identified under phase II as there is 10% gap between access to toilets and unused toilets.
- **Policy paralysis**- Phase II lacks criteria for multiple toilets in larger households and does not address the provision for attached bathrooms.
    - The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide tap water by 2024 shows no correlation between expenses and ODF Plus villages.
- **Behavioural change**- It remains a challenge as it depends on social networks like caste and overall improvement in living standards.

What lies ahead?

- The behavioural change in sanitation needs better coordination and synergy of programmes that address the basic needs of the rural population.
- Social engineering can be adopted through social networks to overcome regressive

norms and caste hierarchy.

References

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