Localisation of SDGs

What is the issue?

1. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, marked a paradigm shift in the development agenda.
2. With the 2030 deadline approaching, there has been a global shift towards the 'localisation' of SDGs.

What are Sustainable Development Goals?

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is officially known as Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- It is a set of 17 Global Goals with 169 targets between them.
- UN member states are expected to use these goals while framing their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years.
- The SDGs expand on, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were agreed by governments in 2000, and ended on 2015.

The 2022 UN report on SDGs focuses on the progress and challenges for achieving inclusive growth and development.

Why localization of the SDGs is to be undertaken?

- Localisation process is needed as it recognises the sub-national contexts of setting of goals to determine the means of implementation.
- It also offers customised solutions to the local level problems.

What is India's position in localization of SDGs?

India has progressed with the idea of SDG implementation at the policy level. This is evident by the timely submission of Voluntary National Reviews of 2017 and 2020 and adoption of SDG Index.

- India has initiated the 'localisation' process with the implementation of TADP (Transformation of an Aspirational District Programme) in 2018.
- SDG localisation takes it from district to the Gram Panchayat (GP) level.
- The preparation for a Local Indicator Framework (LIF) at GP level is already in process where nine themes have been designed subsuming 17 SDG, Kerala being a front-runner.

What is needed?

- The desired foundational framework already exists, but a mission-mode intervention led by a **'Whole of Government' approach** is required.
- For localisation at the village level, **handholding from the district** is a must.
- One, there is a need to **spread awareness** among the masses and sensitise the elected representatives (ERs) at the village and district level, for which the local culture's soft power must be harnessed.
- There is also a need to conduct awareness sessions on how VPs can generate their own resources.
- Further, **workshops** with multilateral development institutions like UNDP, block and district level administration, SHGs will be beneficial.
- For training ERs, **standardised institutional module training** finalised at the State level, may be provided through dedicated training institutes.
- Finally private sector also must be roped in - SBI's village adoption and macro-based Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana can be a template.
- There is a need to **streamline the institutional framework**. Inspite of an existing institutional skeleton, as set up under Mission Antyodaya, much remains to be desired.
- The Village Panchayat Development Plans (VPDPs), which are to be concretised under by a "facilitator" as per Mission Antyodaya, are made using a 'ticking the box' approach due to lack of agency to them.
- The **contextualisation of planning** to local needs is missing because of the tied nature of funds.
- **Four-tiered institutional structure** to engage all key stakeholders is recommended.
- At the village level, an SDG Cell consisting of political and permanent executive, line departments, and leaders with mass reach is needed.
- These Cells may be brought together by a block-level nodal officer.
- A District Cell and Project Director of Institution Formation and Capacity Building can be set up to coordinate the efforts at village and block level ensuring vertical integration in planning.
- A State Level Steering Committee headed by Chief Secretary with officials from Planning Departments, Capacity Training institutes and other key departments, should be set up.
- The final spice in the recipe is to **create a dashboard** that fetches data from block level data feeding centres on LIFs.
- This dashboard will be a repository of information and also incentivise VPs to perform through identification of model GPs, review, recognition and documentation of good work.

Reference

[The Hindu Business Line | A grassroots approach to pursuing SDGs]

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