Mission Antyodaya Project

Why in news?

Given the right momentum, the 'Mission Antyodaya' project bears great promise to revive the objectives of these great democratic reforms.

What about India's decentralisation reforms?

> *Democratic decentralization is defined as the transfer of powers and resources from higher to lower levels in a political system.*

- **Articles 243G and 243W** - The Indian Constitution mandate local governments to prepare and implement plans for economic development and social justice.
- **Institutions setup**
  - Gram sabha- to facilitate people's participation
  - District Planning committee (DPC)- to prepare bottom up and spatial development plans
  - State Finance Commission (SFC)- to ensure vertical and horizontal equity
- **Measures taken**
  - One-third reservation for women
  - Population-based representation to Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe communities
- **Drawbacks**- India's decentralisation reforms have failed to take the decentralisation process forward in delivering social justice and progress in rural India.
- The traditional poverty line linked to the calorie-income measure lacked sense and failed to serve as a purposive policy tool.
- As per the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011,
  - 90% of rural households have no salaried jobs
  - 53.7 million households are landless
  - 6.89 million female-headed households have no adult member to support
  - 49% suffer from multiple deprivations
  - 51.4% derive sustenance from manual casual labour
  - 23.73 million are with no room or only one room to live

What is Mission Antyodaya?

- Mission Antyodaya is a convergence and accountability framework aiming to bring optimum use of resources under various programmes for the development of rural areas making gram panchayat the hub of a development plan.
- It was adopted in Union Budget 2017-18 under the Ministry of Rural Development.
- It is envisaged as state-led initiative with Gram Panchayats as focal points of convergence efforts.
- Over 25 departments and ministries of Central and State Governments will be participating in this Mission through their specific programmes and schemes.

- It is carried out coterminous with the People's Plan Campaign (PPC) of Ministry of Panchayat Raj and its' purpose is to lend support to the process of participatory planning for Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Rural Development act as the nodal agents to take the mission forward.

What is the significance of the annual survey?

- Annual survey in Gram Panchayats is done across the country by collecting data regarding the 29 subjects assigned to panchayats by the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- These subjects are broken down into 112 parameters for data collection using detailed questionnaires.
- Also, data regarding health and nutrition, social security, good governance, water management and so on are also collected.
- The 2019-20 survey, for the first time collected data that shed light on the infrastructural gaps.

Why is social justice still a distant dream?

- **The gap report-** The data set updated annually enables development planning sectorally and spatially, from the village level to the State and the country as a whole

- The maximum score values assigned will add up to 100 and are presented in class intervals of 10.
- While no State in India falls in the top score bracket of 90 to 100, 1,484 gram panchayats fall in the bottom bracket.
- **The composite index**- The composite index data is not encouraging as more than a fifth of gram panchayats in India are below the 40 range.
- The gap report and the composite index show that building economic development and social justice remains a distant goal even after 30 years of the decentralisation reforms and nearly 75 years into Independence.
- The specific target made in the Budget speech of 2017-18 "to make 50,000 gram panchayats poverty free by 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji" is still unachieved.
- **Lapses**- The scope of reducing the rural-urban disparities and the possibilities of realising universal primary health care, literacy, drinking water supply are immense.
- But there is no serious effort to converge resources (the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the National Rural Livelihood Mission, National Social Assistance Programme, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, etc.).
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission has missed to deploy the data to improve the transfer system and horizontal equity in the delivery of public goods in India at the sub-State level.
- The constitutional goal of planning and implementing economic development and social justice can be achieved only through strong policy interventions.

References

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