Swachh Survekshan 2020

Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) has released the results of the Swachh Survekshan League 2020 recently.

What is Swachh Survekshan?

- The Swachh Survekshan is the world's largest cleanliness survey which covers more than 4370 Indian cities.
- It was rolled out 4 years ago as the answer to a problem that municipal law failed to solve.
- It is a completely digitized and paperless survey.

What is the survey's purpose?

- Sanitation and public health are responsibilities of State governments.
- It is no secret that they have spectacularly failed at managing growing volumes of municipal and hazardous waste.
- The problem has only been compounded by the absence of plans that take a holistic view of housing, sanitation, water supply, waste management and transport.

What did the MOHUA do?

- Ahead of the launch of Swachh Survekshan 2020, the Union MOHUA is trying to stir up competition among cities.
- It stirs up by pre-ranking them for their performance during 2019 and assigning points to be added this year.
- As an idea, unleashing the competitive spirit among States may seem appealing.
- **But in reality**, the problems confronting urban India require large-scale infrastructure creation, full adherence to legal requirements on waste management, and transparent technical audits.
- Many cities remain clueless on handling their waste.
- Bhopal, which figures among the top 5 cleanest cities under the just-released list, continues to live with the effects of the gas disaster of 1984.
- Ranks and prizes clearly cannot solve the national waste management crisis.

What are the targets fixed by the MOHUA?

- Looking ahead to the next edition of the Survekshan, the MOHUA has identified ambitious targets like,
    1. 100% processing and safe disposal of waste.
    2. Complete faecal sludge and septage management and
    3. Wastewater treatment and reuse.
- The Ministry has also sanctioned funds under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) to help States set up facilities necessary to manage waste.

What could be done?

- States should ask for **extended funding** under such schemes to create the infrastructure for a future-focused clean-up.
- Simultaneously, they should institute measures to reduce waste.
- The emphasis worldwide is on creating a circular economy centred at the principle of material recovery from all kinds of waste, reuse, recycling and reduced pressure on natural resources.
- A sound ranking of cities and towns would naturally give the highest weightage to this dimension of sustainable management, replacing symbolism with an environmentally sound approach.
- Such rigour in **policy formulation** can make the Centre's goal of eliminating single-use plastic by 2022 seem more realistic, and industry would find a compelling reason to switch to alternatives.
- Retooling Swachh Survekshan 2020 to go beyond perception management and **adopt sustainability** is essential to make it a genuine contest.

Source: The Hindu

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