Blue-Green Economic Model of Development

This article is based on **"A greener urbanscape"** which was published in The Hindu on 09/06/2021. It talks about the need to incorporate Blue-Green Economic Framework as a counter to conventional infrastructure practices.

The motto of the **SDG 2030 agenda** — "Leave no one behind" — very much embodies the essence of Gandhiji's philosophy of sarvodaya through antyodaya, reaching the most marginalised first.

This guiding principle has long been a part of Indian thought and policy and is a fundamental virtue for the execution of the national programmes and missions

However, as the threat from climate hazards rise, the government of India should alter their urban planning and design approaches to incorporate Blue-Green Economic Framework as a counter to conventional infrastructure practices by harnessing blue elements (for instance, seas, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and water utilities) alongside the green (such as trees, parks, gardens, playgrounds and forests).

Blue-Green Economic Framework

- The blue economy originates in the green economy concept of incorporating strategies to mitigate climate change and adaptation to result in "improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

Green Urbanisation & Policy Making India

- **Swachh Bharat Mission:** The **Swachh Bharat Mission** (Urban) focuses on achieving an open-defecation-free India, building solid waste management capacity and bringing about behavioural change.
    - Swachhata movement, in effect, has become the harbinger of a total transformation of our urban landscape.
    - It is estimated that the various initiatives under SBM-U can mitigate 17.42 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2022.
- **Smart Cities Mission:** The **Smart Cities Mission** (SCM) envisages technological advancements of our cities to improve governance, sustainability and disaster risk resilience.
    - It sought to improve energy efficiency and non-motorised transport capacity in urban centres.
    - The overall reduction in GHG emissions from projects implemented under SCM is expected to reach 4.93 million tonnes of CO_2 by 2022.
- **Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework:** It has been adopted which aims to help cities adapt, collaborate and exchange best practices to achieve international standards for green,

sustainable and resilient urban habitats.

- **AMRUT:** Under AMRUT, water supply and management, energy efficiency and increased green spaces have been part of the goal in 500 target cities.
    - The mission is likely to result in the mitigation of 48.52 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent to GHG emissions by 2022.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:** With 1.12 crore houses sanctioned, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) has focused on new construction technologies (for eg. using fly ash bricks) that are innovative, environmentally friendly and disaster-resilient.
    - Overall, the mission has the potential to mitigate around 12 million tonnes CO_2 equivalent of GHG emissions by 2022.
- **Metro Rails:** These are an energy-efficient mass rapid transit system and Government of India plans to make them operational in 18 cities, in the near future.

Way Forward

- **Institutionalising a Blue-Green Urban Framework:** To streamline and ensure the integrity of the original blue-green canvas, governments must maintain uniform statutory terminologies and definitions, and undertake a comprehensive integration of all urban plans and records that highlight environmental features.
- **Blue-Green Economic Agenda:** India must club its ongoing green efforts with the 'blue economy' to create a blue-green economic agenda.
    - A typical blue-green infrastructure project may have several economic benefits, such as health improvement, lesser pollution, better amenities and quality of life, and social cohesion. At the same time, it could also cause a loss of trees or green spaces.
- **Fast-Tracking SDGs:** Blue-green infrastructure has the potential to fulfil multiple targets outlined in the SDGs, such as:
    - Those related to water (SDG 6 and SDG 14), land (SDG 15) and climate change (SDG 13).
    - Blue-green infrastructure can also accelerate progress on green employment prospects (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2), offsetting medical infrastructure load (SDG 3) and improving air and habitation quality in cities (SDG 11).
    - It will also have implications for SDGs related to returns on investment and startups increasing employment prospects (SDG 8), assured resilience (SDG 9), and social inclusion through greater and more equitable access to natural spaces (SDG 10).
- **Outcome-Based Policies:** The blue-green concept could transform India's urban planning approach from input to output based by focusing on the outcomes of projects and processes.
    - This means that required environmental outcomes or specific levels of performance are specified in the framework and the method to achieve the outcome is flexible.
- **Sustainable Land Management:** Climate change cannot be mitigated only through greening and reversing land degradation. This will have to be coupled with sustainable land management strategies.
    - Sustainable land management is the use of land to meet changing human needs (agriculture, forestry, conservation), while ensuring the land's socioeconomic and ecological functions over the long term.

Conclusion

The concept of blue-green infrastructure is relatively new, but many global cities have already begun the transition, driven by exacerbating climate impacts and events. While the green infrastructure concept has found some acceptance in India, the country must also consider including blue infrastructure in its sustainability transition.

Drishti Mains Question

Explain the term Blue-green economic development framework and need to incorporate it in India’s development model.