Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban

Source: PIB

Why in News?

As a prelude to **Swachh Bharat Diwas,** the annual Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) fortnight was also organized by Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban and Gramin between 15th Sept to 2nd Oct 2023.

- The fortnight aims to mobilize the participation of crores of citizens across the country via various activities such as Indian Swachhata League 2.0, SafaiMitra Suraksha Shivir and mass cleanliness drives.

What is Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban?

- **About:**
  - **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U)** was launched on 2nd October, 2014, by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** as a national campaign to promote cleanliness, sanitation, and proper waste management in urban areas.
  - It aimed to make cities and towns across India clean and free from open defecation.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 1.0:**
  - The first phase of SBM-U focused on achieving the target of making urban India ODF by providing access to toilets and promoting behavioral change.
  - SBM-U 1.0 was successful in achieving the target and 100% of urban India was declared ODF.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (2021-2026):**
  - SBM-U 2.0, announced in Budget 2021-22, is the continuation of SBM-U first phase.
  - The second phase of SBM-U aimed to go beyond ODF to ODF+, and ODF++, and focus on making urban India garbage-free.
  - It emphasized sustainable sanitation practices, waste management, and the promotion of a circular economy.

What are the Achievements of Swachh Bharat Mission?

- 12 crore toilets have been built in the last nine years, liberating the country from the **scourge of open defecation and 75% of the total villages** have achieved the **Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus status.**
- Urban India has become **Open Defecation Free (ODF)**, with all 4,715 **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** completely ODF.

- 3,547 ULBs are ODF+ with functional and hygienic community and public toilets, and 1,191 ULBs are ODF++ with complete faecal sludge management.
- 14 cities are certified Water+, which entails treatment of wastewater and its optimum reuse.

What are the Shortcomings of SBM?

- **Decline in Regular Toilet Use:**
    - Despite the initial success in increasing toilet access, the paper highlights a decline in regular toilet usage in rural India from 2018-19 onwards, raising concerns about the sustainability of the program.
- **Disproportionate Impact on Marginalized Groups:**
    - The largest drop in toilet usage was observed among Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) socio-economic groups, indicating that the program's benefits have not been equally sustained across all segments of society.
- **Concerns about Sustainability:**
    - The decline in toilet usage in recent years raises questions about the sustainability of the program's achievements, casting doubt on the long-term impact and behavioral change intended by SBM.
- **Spatial Variation in Toilet Use:**
    - At the national level, regular use of any toilet (improved or unimproved) increased from 46% to 75% on average in rural areas during 2015-16 and 2019-21.
        - This increase was across all population and socio-economic sub-groups, and especially pronounced for the poor and socially disadvantaged groups
    - But even as the regular use of any toilet for SC and ST people saw a jump of 51 and 58% points respectively between 2015-16 and 2018-19 - reaching almost the same levels as those in the General Category, gains were reversing since then.
- **Challenges in Richer States:**
    - Despite progress, wealthier states showed **mixed performance and smaller gains in toilet use compared** to economically poorer states, highlighting the need for tailored strategies in different socio-economic contexts.
    - States like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Gujarat showed smaller progress in regular toilet use compared to economically disadvantaged states, **indicating that the program did not have the same impact across all states.**

What is Open Defecation Free Status?

- **ODF:** An area can be notified or declared as ODF if at any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open.
- **ODF+:** This status is given if at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well maintained.
- **ODF++:** This status is given if the area is already ODF+ and the faecal sludge/septage and sewage are safely managed and treated, with no discharging or dumping of untreated faecal sludge and sewage into the open drains, water bodies or areas.

Way Forward

- Intensify efforts to promote behavioral change through targeted and community-specific campaigns, emphasizing the importance of regular toilet usage, hygiene, and safe sanitation practices.
- Engage communities to take ownership of sanitation facilities and practices, fostering a sense of responsibility and pride in maintaining clean and functional toilets.
- Ensure equitable distribution of benefits by targeting vulnerable and marginalized groups, providing them with access to sanitation facilities and emphasizing sustained usage through awareness and education.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. As per the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in India, which one of the following statements is correct? (2019)

(a) Waste generator has to segregate waste into five categories.
(b) The Rules are applicable to notified urban local bodies, notified towns and all industrial townships only
(c) The Rules provide for exact and elaborate criteria for the identification of sites for landfills and waste processing facilities.
(d) It is mandatory on the part of the waste generator that the waste generated in one district cannot be moved to another district.

Ans: (c)

Mains:

Q. What are the impediments in disposing the huge quantities of discarded solid waste which are continuously being generated? How do we remove safely the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? **(2021)**

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