Welfare Database of Citizens

The Economic Survey 2018-19 has recommended setting up of a **central welfare database of**

citizens by **merging different data** maintained by separate ministries and departments. //

- The principle behind the recommendation is that the most data generated by the people, of the people, should be used for the people.
- The government already held a rich repository of administrative, survey, institutional and transactions data about citizens, but these data are scattered across numerous government bodies.
- The government would be able to utilise the information embedded in the database **for enhancing ease of living for citizens,** enable truly evidence-based policy, improve targeting in welfare schemes, uncover unmet needs, integrate fragmented markets, bring greater accountability in public services and generate greater citizen participation in governance, etc.
- The **datasets that can be merged** include birth and death records, pensions, tax records, marriage records; survey data such as census data, national sample survey data; transactions data such as e-national agriculture market data, UPI data, institutional data and public hospital data on patients.
- It has been suggested that **database be created as a public good** within the legal framework of **data privacy.** Even, a part of the generated data can be monetised to ease the pressure on government finances. **Access to a selected database can be provided to the private sector for a fee.**
    - Indian government is working on finalising the personal data protection policy.

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