EXAM Asset

Yojana

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Summary

Urbanisation

INDEX

1. BUILDING URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH AMRUT

Introduction

- As per the **United Nations World Urbanization Prospects Report 2018,** around 34% of India's population lives in cities- an increase of about 3% since 2011.

- By 2031, it is expected to grow by another 6% and **by 2051, more than half of nation's population will be living in cities.**

- **At present, cities contribute nearly 65% of the country's GDP, which is likely to go up by 70% by 2030.**

Urban India: Key Challenges and Opportunities

- As per census 2011, while 70% of urban households had access to water supply, only 49% had access to water supply within premises.

- As per **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) report of 2015,** more than 65% of the wastewater was being discharged untreated in the open drains resulting in environmental damage and pollution of water bodies.

- **Water and sanitation program (WSP) of the World Bank (2011)** estimated that the total annual economic impact of inadequate sanitation in India amounted to a loss of Rs. 2.4 trillion in 2006, which is equivalent to about 6.4% of India's GDP.

- **Access to safe drinking water and scientific treatment of wastewater** including septage are essential for the country in order to accomplish Sustainable Development Goal 6.

Steps Taken in this regard:

- **Atal mission for rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT),** one of the flagship missions of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), was launched in 500 cities across the country in June 2015.

- Its **aim is to provide basic services like water supply to all households,** significantly upgrade sewerage and septage and provide for non- motorized transport and public amenities like parks and green spaces at least one in each city, thus improving the quality of life for all, especially the poor and the disadvantaged.

- It is **centrally sponsored scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 1,00,000 crore** including Central Assistance of Rs. 50,000 crore spread over 5 years from 2015-2020.

Coverage of the Scheme:

1. 476 cities/towns with a population of one lakh and above as per 2011 Census.
2. State/UT capitals not covered in above statement.
3. Heritage cities classified under Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY).
4. Certain cities on banks of main rivers ad from hill States/Islands and tourist destinations.
5. In all, 500 cities were covered under this scheme.

AMRUT: Aligned with the needs of Urbanizing India

1. **Co-operative Federalism-** State Governments have been empowered to appraise, approve and sanction projects for their AMRUT cities- a departure from the erstwhile Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) wherein individual projects were sanctioned by the then Ministry of Urban Development.

2. **Framework for institutional reforms-** AMRUT lays major emphasis on institutional reforms which aim to provide governance and institutional capacities of ULBs.

3. **Principles of 'instrumentalism' and prioritisation-** A step-wise approach towards service- level benchmarking by the ULBs, a principle of 'instrumentalism' has been introduced under the Mission, which is the gradual process of achieving the benchmarks. Recognizing the urgent water and sanitation needs, states had to prioritise water supply and sewerage projects- water supply being the first priority.

4. **Incentivizing over penalizing-** In order to encourage states and reward their initiatives constructively, reform implementation is incentivised under AMRUT- 10% of the budgetary allocation is earmarked for reform incentive

and it is over and above the allocation for projects. This amount is untied and can be used on any item recognized under AMRUT with or without state/ULB share.

5. **Monitoring of the Mission-** Programme monitoring is being done at various levels. At state level, State High Power Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary monitors and approves the Mission projects in its entirety. At Central level, Apex Committee chaired by the Secretary, MoHUA, approves State Annual Action Plans and monitors the progress. Also, projects are monitored on real- time basis via Mission MIS Dashboard with geo-tagging of all projects.

Progress under AMRUT:

- Water Supply Scheme, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

- Water Treatment plant, Bhopal (Bhauri).

- Water Treatment Plant, Serampore, West Bengal.

- Faecal Sludge & Septage Treatment Plant (FSSTP) at Bhubaneswar.

- Development of the walkway along Central Library side of the Creek, Panaji, Goa.

- Kerala's first skywalk at Kollam, Thrissur Skywalk.

- Development of Open Spaces at Altinho, Panaji, Goa.

- Rejuvenation of Mandovi River Promenade from Children's Park to youth Hostel Miramar, Panaji.

- Rejuvenation and Redevelopment of Internal Lanes of Mala, Panaji, Goa.

Urban Reforms:

Some of the significant reforms are as under:

- **Online Building Permission System (OBPS) -** with a view to facilitate Ease of Doing Business in construction permits, OBPS has been operational in Delhi and Mumbai since April 2016. It has been targeted to get OBPS implemented in all cities/towns across the country by 31st March 2020.

- **Replacements of Street Lights with LED lights-** It has led to energy savings and reduction in CO2 emission.

- **Credit Rating-** 469 AMRUT cities have been credit rated out of the total 485 cities where the credit rating work has commissioned. Cities with lower rating are following measures to improve their performance so that they become credit worthy and raise funds for their projects.

- **Municipal Bonds-** Rs. 3,390 crore have been raised through municipal bonds during 2017-19 for upgrading urban infrastructure by 8 mission cities (Ahmadabad, Amravati, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Indore, Pune, Surat and Vishakhapatnam). Raising of bonds leads to improved governance, accounting systems, finance, transparency, accountability and delivery of services in the ULBs. It will also enhance their self-dependence and confidence to serve the citizens.

Jal Shakti Abhiyan-Urban:

- In order to address the national issue of water scarcity, Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) has undertaken Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) from 1st July 2019.

- The aim is to make water conservation measures a Jan andolan, through extensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities across the country in 754 water-stressed cities.

- **The Key thrust areas of Jal Shakti Abhiyan (urban) are as follows:**

  (a) **Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) -** to recharge ground water sources and to store water.

  (b) Reuse of treated wastewater.

  (c) **Rejuvenation of water bodies-** to clean and rejuvenate defunct wells and water bodies.

  (d) **Plantation-** to mobilise the local community members to conduct plantation drives across the cities.

Progress under JSA:

- 52344 new rainwater harvesting structures have been installed.
- More than 3.3 crore participants have been a part of the Jan Andolan.
- 1372 water bodies have been rejuvenated across the country.
- More than 6.7 lakh saplings have been planted.
- 40099 establishments have started using treated waste water.

Way Forward:

- AMRUT has made remarkable strides in improving water and sanitation coverage in urban areas. During the Mission Period, it envisages to cover over 60% of the urban population living in 500 cities with universal coverage of water supply and over 60% coverage of sewerage and septage services.

2. SLUMS IN INDIA – FACTS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Introduction:

- Six waves of original **surveys were undertaken between 2010 and 2016**; four waves in Bengaluru in 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2015 and the next two waves in Jaipur and Patna in 2016.**Database of over 10,000 household interviews from a diverse sample of 279 slums in three Indian cities** - Bengaluru, Jaipur, and Patna.
- **Several facts and some misconceptions were revealed** in these examinations.

FACT: Official lists under identify slums and undercount slum populations

- The first survey conducted in 2010 by obtaining a list of slums from the **Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB).**
- The **definition of slums and enumeration methodologies differ among official agencies,** but commonly they underestimate the slum population.
- Adopting one definition of slums, the **National Sample Survey Office counted 44 million slum dwellers in 2008,** but adopting another definition, the Census of India counted 65 million slum dwellers in 2011. **UN-Habitat** (United Nations Human Settlements Programme), the international authority on slums, found that **in 2014, India had as many as 104 million slum dwellers.**
- With the help of satellite image analysis, it is found **many slums, not mentioned on the official lists** for the city, where **living conditions are worse than in slums** that have been officially recorded.

FACT: Slums in each city have a variety of living conditions that fall along the continuum. People's need vary at different points of the continuum. Standardized slum policies are, therefore, not helpful.

- The **UN- Habitat employs five criteria to identify slums**; each related to a living condition that households in slums usually lack: durable housing of a permanent nature; sufficient living space; easy access to safe water; access to adequate sanitation; and security of tenure.
- And found that, **every city has slums with the most squalid living conditions**. These are the ones that usually missing from the official record.
- In the bottom quartile, **households allocate an average of 59 per cent of all expenditures** to food, which decreases to 47 per cent in the top quartile.
- Occupations, incomes, and education levels are also different. Residents of slums at different points have **diverse needs and require different kinds of public support.**
- **Implementing a common slum policy does not represent a good use of resources.** Knowing where along the continuum a slum is located helps make public expenditures more relevant and effective.

FACT: Traditional survey methods are inadequate to keep up with rapid changes. Satellite image analysis helps generate slum maps and sort slums into types.

- Rapid changes occurring simultaneously in hundreds of slums across a city overwhelm the rudimentary surveying capacities at the hands of urban improvement boards and municipal bodies, one reason why the official record is partial and outdated.

- **Satellite method much cheaper than** what it would have cost to undertake the same **exercise manually.**

- **It is also more accurate and less prone to human errors.** Regularly and reliably updating the settlement record requires making use of image analysis capacities that make use of image analysis in combination with other methodologies.

MISCONCEPTION: Official notification is required for getting basic services and saleable property titles.

- The Law lays down that **slum residents can only avail themselves of municipal services and property titles** after their slum has been officially notifies following a prescribed procedure.

- In theory, a **city should provide municipal services such as garbage pickup, piped drinking water, sewerage, internal roads, and street lighting**- only after a slum has been notified. Public expenditures cannot be justifiably incurred for places that do not exist in the official record.

- In Practice, **many non-notified slums are provided with services and infrastructure,** while many notified slums are left uncovered. The scope of corrupt practices gets accelerated by such administrative indiscretions.

MISCONCEPTION: Lacking property titles, slum residents cannot sell or mortgage properties.

- In practice, **slum properties with all types of papers are freely transacted.** An active informal market exists that produces official-looking documents.

- It **helps buyers and sellers transact informal properties**, overcoming the limitations of their property papers. No taxes are paid on these transactions, leading to a loss of potential municipal revenue.

MISCONCEPTION: Slums are temporary halting points that work as conveyor belts leading rural migrants into urban middle class.

- **Lack of movement more accurately characterizes** slum conditions. Overall, a situation of stasis- stuck-in-placidness- is characteristic of slums, whether examined at the household or at the neighborhood level.

- **Improving their prospects for upward mobility** requires progressively reducing the risk and vulnerability that are induced by living and work in informal conditions.

Conclusion:

- Overall, a situation of stasis - stuck-in-placidness- is characteristic of slums, whether examined at the household or at the neighborhood level. **Satellite images examined over a 15-year period show that few neighborhoods develop from slum to non-slum** areas in terms of physical characteristics.

- Some neighborhoods experience positive physical changes over time, most commonly in roof material. Very few neighborhoods (1%) exhibit positive changes in more than one visible feature. Many neighborhoods have experienced deterioration.

3. URBANISATION AND INFORMAL SECTOR

Introduction:

- Growth that is currently taking place is accompanied by informalisation, e.g., sub-contracting in the production process and various other mechanisms that tend to leave labour with less bargaining power. The **informalisation process is feared to involve substantial welfare losses and deterioration in terms of governance.**

- However, in the **face of inadequate livelihood opportunities** in the rural areas, even the urban informal sector, which is grossly characterized by low productivity, **tends to attract migration.**

- This in turn has **serious challenges in terms of urbanisation.** Though in the Indian context rural-urban migration rates are moderate, rural-to-large city population-flow has always been alarming. Thus, **city growth, informal sector employment, and low living standards including slum inhabitation involve considerable overlaps.**

Migration and Opportunities:

- **Higher rural literacy and improvements in educational level** may raise the rural-to-urban migration rate. The presence of disadvantaged social categories in the rural areas also has motivated migration rate, supporting the view that they migrate to escape their vulnerability.

- **Migration reduces both rural and urban poverty.** In other words, rural poor by shifting to the urban location are able to access better livelihood opportunities and thus, poverty declines.

- The **urban informal sector,** notwithstanding the **manifestation of low productivity activities,** appears to be better in comparison to the rural job market scenario.

- Higher urbanisation and work participation rate in both rural and urban areas are positively associated with migration, those in the **labour market are more likely to migrate,** and after migration they are expected to continue in jobs rather than moving outside the labour force.

- Though there is **no definite relationship between the size of the informal sector and the extent of urbanisation,** the role of the urban informal sector in providing sources of livelihood cannot be undermined. In fact, with rapid urbanisation the rural transformation is faster as the positive spill-over effects initiate new activities and opportunities.

Emergence of the Census Towns:

- The other **new challenge for urban India** can be envisaged in terms of the emergence of the census towns. The constituents of **urban areas are statutory towns, census towns, and outgrowths.**

The major distinction between statutory and census towns are as follows:

- All places with a municipality, corporation cantonment board, or notified town area committee constitute **statutory towns.**

- On the other hand, the **census towns are defined on the basis of the following criteria:** a) A minimum population of 5000;

  b) At least 75 per cent of the male workers are engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and c) A density of population of at least 4000 per square Km.

The results from 2011 census show a huge number of census towns which emerged in the last ten years (2001-2011).

Faster growth of census towns:

- If we analyse the locational aspect of these town we can say that **Census towns are mostly situated in the neighborhood of very large cities;** it is natural that migration of population will also be directed to these towns. On the whole, these towns may be treated as the satellite towns growing in response to the spur of economic activities.

- The number of **statutory towns of all sizes is rather positively associated with the number of census towns** implying that urbanisation as a whole seems to be expanding from the spill-over of the existing urban localities into the hinterland.

Census towns and quality of life:

- The **residential and infrastructural facilities** in these towns are **inadequate to keep pace with the new activities** that are spilling over as a result of saturation of the large urban centres. The **new towns do not have enough living space** to accommodate the migrant workers.

- As **migration is usually more than the actual number of job vacancies** it would mean that the surplus labour would get residually absorbed in **low productivity jobs.**

- Though the very large cities also have had the similar problems, there have been several support mechanisms at the same time. Besides, the **real earnings in the informal sector have been higher in the large cities than in smaller towns.**

- The **capacity of the small towns to provide for the population is highly limited** even after discounting for the scale factor that the large cities enjoy. There are problems relating to generation of resources required for sustainable development.

Spill-over growth is good or bad:

- If such new towns grow purely in response to the **dynamics of agriculture growth and the subsequent demand for trading or other non-agriculture activities, the outcomes are desirable.**

- The urbanisation spill-effect which ushers in a **major change in land use patterns may pose threat not only in terms of food security** in short run but also sustainable livelihood for those who lose their agricultural land.

- The **mismatch between the demand for and the supply of labour can be serious** in these towns keeping in view the employability issue.

- **Trade-offs to certain extent between growth and agricultural land are inevitable.** However, sufficient safety nets need to be created to meet the deficiencies and the new challenges.

Conclusion:

- Once the **largest cities exhaust the economic opportunities** the **second rank cities come up to replace them** in terms of investment, growth, and employment generation.

- For this, a proper coordination between the state and those who have a thorough understanding of the growth dynamics of the urban space is essential.

- In the Indian context, a clear-cut initiative for urban investment or planning is yet to emerge on the basis of the growth potential of different cities and towns with an economic-cum-geographic perspective.

4. MOBILITY – RESPONSIVE URBAN PLANNING

Introduction:

- **Mobility is increasingly circular, semi or non-permanent,** and though a bulk of it is regional, many stream of migration are also long-distance and interstate.

- This **dynamic situation of mobility is at variance with public policies** in cities that are being transformed by the presence of and contribution of these migrants.

- This gap in public policy compels migrants to find solutions outside the formal system. There is an **urgent need to equip city governments with necessary capacities, resources and powers** to recognise and respond to issue of migrants.

Concerns over Mobility:

- The **census data estimates the number of migrants at 3.3 million**; several studies including the Economic Survey of India 2017 suggest that this is a **significant underestimation, as it tends to neglect the short-term and circular migration.**

- The scale of underestimation of migration is a concern in itself because it leads to **potential neglect of Policy.**

- A second related concern is about the **places or destinations that are transformed through the presence and activities of migrants.** Assumptions that city dwellers are sedentary and linkage of citizenship to long-term residence do not fit the emergent pattern of migration that is largely circular, temporary and non-permanent.

- Most urban policies, initiated at the central or state level, seemed to have overlooked the **emerging forms of mobility.** Most migrants then are compelled to find solutions that are accessible to them and secure them outside the formal system.

- Such solutions in domains of shelter, basic services, education, and healthcare not only create difficult living conditions for the migrants, but more importantly most of these solutions **lead to new challenges for the city Government.**

Changing Scale and Forms of Mobility in India:

- The conventional mode of understanding migration is based on census definition and attempts to understand the causes of the same.

- The census defines a **migrant as a person whose residence has shifted from the place of residence enumerated in the previous census** or one who has shifted from her/his birthplace.

- Of these, **64 per cent moved more than ten years ago to their present destination.** This, however, is only part of the picture of mobility in India.

- Economic Survey of India has pointed out that there is a significant underestimation of migration in census data as well as **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data** and that both these **official data sources tend to neglect the short-term and circular migration.**

- Economic Survey of India (2016-17) places the **estimation of interstate migration at 60 million and inter-district migration at 80 million.**

- However, it is important to recognize that there are clear indications that **mobility in India is significantly increasing and that the forms of this mobility are varied** and do not correspond to a permanent move.

- **Two forms which are particularly significant are:**

 (a) Commuting and

 (b) Circular migration.

How Mobility Transforms Places?

- Large-scale migration has significant implications for places. **Conventional data measuring more permanent movement** would estimate such implications in terms of burdens on infrastructure and housing. However, there is another aspect that is solely associated with temporary form of migration.

- **Temporary forms of migrants are people who contribute to the city economy** while they are there but their efforts are directed at places which they come from i.e. the source areas. This is where they contribute in terms of remittances, investments, asset building, and state revenues.

- On the other hand, **they contribute significantly to the economic flows and outputs,** extract fewer resources from the city, and bring in new ideas and ways of doing things.

- While work and economic reasons may be the **largest drivers for such migration, education and health resource** seeking may also be supplementary reasons for the same. These create specific demands on city infrastructures and services.

- On the other hand, a proactive approach to **migration can lead to significant benefits for the city economy and city vibrancy.** A good example is that of Hyderabad Metro that uses four languages in its written messages.

Need for Vision for Supporting Migrants in Urban Policy: Short-term Housing:

- Short-term housing is perhaps one of the **most critical and unmet needs of migrants to Indian cities.** Short-term visitors to cities include all those groups that use city as a resource.

- The Need for stays longer than hotel stays and lesser than rental housing are the most neglected. **Housing markets have begun to recognize this need** and cater to it through serviced apartments.

- However, there is a **complete absence of options when it comes to the low-income end.** In older days, cities had dharamshalas. Contemporary Indian cities lack such options.

- The other significant barrier to creating short-term housing solutions lies in the current imagination of housing. Contemporary housing policies rest upon two broad principles – the **first is ownership-based housing and other is use of land as resource.**

- The **first principle helps in creation of Citizenship,** which in turn secures sustained commitment and investment in a place. Similarly **second principle helps to monetize land.**

- However, a negative impact of both these policy instruments is that they limit the possibilities of short-term housing and **undermine the needs for space for shelter in cities.**

Way Forward:

- **Only local governments** with an on-ground knowledge of realities **will be able to respond to short term housing challenges** as opposed to State Governments who have a more top-down and homogenizing view of these issues.

- It is therefore **essential to move away from the current State Government based policy** onus and equip local governments in terms of capacity to cognize such issues, collect data, and to possess the powers and resources to respond to dynamic phenomena such as migration.

5. MISSION INDRADHANUSH 2.0: REITERATING INDIA'S COMMITMENT TO VACCINES FOR ALL

Introduction:

- Immunisation programme **is a critical component of government's commitment towards Universal Health Coverage.**

- Mission Indradhanush 2.0 is integral to India's efforts of **reducing the burden of vaccine preventable diseases and achieving universal care for children.**

- Government of India had launched **'Expanded Program for Immunisation' in 1978,** which was later termed as the **'Universal Immunisation Program' (UIP) in 1985** which aims to reduce mortality and morbidity among children from vaccine preventable diseases.

Immunization program:

- India's immunization program is the **largest in the world, with annual cohorts of around 26.5 million infants and 29 million pregnant women.** Despite steady progress, routine vaccination coverage has been slow to increase.

- According to the **National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16),** the full immunization coverage is around 62%.

Factors responsible for limiting the Programme:

(a) Rapid Urbanisation.

(b) Presence of a large migrating and isolated populations that is difficult to reach.

(c) Low demand from under informed.

(d) Unaware Populations.

Achievements of the Programme:

- India has achieved ground-breaking **success in eradicating/eliminating life-threatening vaccine preventable diseases** by systematically implementing vaccination programmes.

- These include small pox, polio and more recently maternal and neonatal tetanus.

Challenges of the Programme:

- Challenges include – **vast population, poor sanitation and hygiene, difficult geographical terrain** that make containing outbreak of disease and increasing access to vaccines difficult.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges:

- The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has employed an effective approach – such as involving the community, seeking support from other Ministries and Partner Agencies, establishing an **organized surveillance system**, and employing mass campaign management **strategies to reach every unreached child for vaccination.**

- MoHWF launched **Mission Indradhanush (MI) in 2014**, to target under-served, vulnerable, resistant and inaccessible populations.

- **In October 2017, PM launched Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI)** – an ambitious plan to accelerate progress. It aimed to achieve 90% Full Immunisation Coverage with focus towards districts and urban areas with persistently low levels.

- It was an effort to shift routine immunization into a Jan Andolan, or a "peoples' movement". It aimed to mobilise communities and deal with barriers to seeking vaccines.

- IMI has contributed to a significant increase in fully immunized children in 190 selected districts in India. IMI showed that cross-sectoral participation can be effective in vaccinating children at the highest risk of infection.

- Now the govt. is poised to launch **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0 between December 2019-March 2020.**

- The aim is to deliver a programme that is informed by the lessons learnt from the previous phases and seeks to escalate efforts to achieve the goal of attaining 90% national immunization coverage across India.

Salient features of the Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0:

- Immunisation activity will be in four rounds over 7 working days excluding the RI days, Sundays and holidays;

- Enhanced Immunisation session with flexible timing, mobile session and mobilisation by other departments;

- Enhanced focus on left outs, dropouts, and resistant families and hard to reach areas;

- Focus on urban, under-served population and tribal areas;

- Inter-ministerial and inter-departmental coordination;

- Enhance political, administrative and financial commitment, through advocacy;

- Intensified Mission Indradhanush Immunisation drive, consisting of 4 rounds of Immunisation will be conducted in the selected districts and urban cities between December 2019- March 2020;

- After the completion of the proposed 4 rounds, the States will be expected to undertake measures to sustain the gains from IMI, through activities like inclusion of IMI sessions in routine Immunisation plans. The sustainability of IMI will be assessed through a survey.

Conclusion:

- With the launch of Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0, **India has the opportunity to achieve further reductions in deaths among children under five years of age, and achieve the SDG related to ending preventable child deaths by 2030.**

- Vaccines are a truly critical intervention in this journey, and are the key to safeguarding our present, and building a healthier tomorrow for our future generations.

6. DEVELOPING NATURAL FOREST COVER: A CASE STUDY FROM YADADRI, TELANGANA

Introduction:

- A systematic approach of **forest management to sustain the ecological balance and stability** of the forest is gaining momentum in India.

- Innovative reforestation approaches are **explored to increase the forest cover and climate amelioration**.

Telanganaku Haritha haram' programme:

- To generate enthusiasm across all sections of the Society **to plant and protect the saplings planted** under the 'Telanganaku Haritha haram', a flagship programme of the State **to create an entire forest instead of mere plantation.**

- It is thought that forests that have been cleared in diversion cases can be compensated by creating forests instead of plantation.

- This leads to **exploration of the principles of Professor Akira Miyawaki, a well known Japanese botanist and plant ecologist.**

- **He invented the Miyawaki restoration technique to protect the lowland areas against natural calamities like tsunami.**

Yadadri Natural Forest (YNF) Model:

- A **method of developing a natural forest in the degraded forest areas** is developed in a cost effective manner and is known as Yadari Natural Forest (YNF) Establishment Model.

- **The principles of Miyawaki method and local practices and local materials are utilized in developing this model.**

- **Miyawaki Principles of Natural Forest:**
  - ♦ No defined spacing between plants;
  - ♦ Soil enrichment must be done before taking up plantation;
  - ♦ High density planting of herbs, shrubs and tree species up to 10000 plants per hectare;
  - ♦ Further supplementation of site by seed dibbling of native species;
  - ♦ Watering should be done at least up to next rainy season after planting;
  - ♦ Mulching should be done after planting to suppress weed and prevent evaporation;
  - ♦ No existing tree in the area should be removed while doing soil enrichment;
  - ♦ Watering is to be done with tankers and pipe sprinkling instead of Hood irrigation;
  - ♦ Periodical weeding is to be done till the end of next rainy season after planting;
  - ♦ Huge crown developing tree species like Ficus should be avoided;
  - ♦ Seedlings or saplings of all sizes can be planted to give the plantation a 3-tier look of a natural forest;
  - ♦ Analysis of soil properties done in advance so as to choose the best soil enrichment practices; and
  - ♦ Except weeds no other naturally grown species shall be removed from the plots.

- **Methodology of the Model:**
  - ♦ **Site demarcation and clearance:** It is necessary to demarcate the area and clear the site of existing unwanted vegetation (except trees). The quantification of biomass and saplings requirement of the area is calculated based on the site demarcation.
  - ♦ **Soil testing and site enrichment:** To ensure long-term sustainable growth, soil testing and soil enrichment and soil amendments are very important, specially to support high density planting during the establishment years.

- **Outcomes of the Model:**
  - ♦ Higher biodiversity compared to plantation in a unit area;
  - ♦ It can be a home for wildlife like butterflies, squirrels, birds, reptiles, etc. within one year;
  - ♦ Natural forest look with multilayered evergreen trees;
  - ♦ More carbon fixing per unit area and
  - ♦ Self-sustainable forests.

Conclusion:

- A successful YNF **model can be revolutionary intervention towards increasing the greenery, climate amelioration and wasteland development.**
- The methodology adopted is described here from the systematically documented record of the previous year's plantation and the results. It is also been witnessed by apex-level Government officials and scientists from different institutes.

7. ADDRESSING STUBBLE BURNING WITH COOPERATIVE MODEL

Introduction:

- Pollution by stubble burning has become an **annual phenomenon in large parts of northern India.**
- **Rice-growing states including Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi add to the Problem of Stubble burning.**

Causes of Stubble Burning:

- **Managing the stubble becomes a constraint** for the farmers because of the adopted cropping pattern.

- The only reason to burn this asset that **can yield income and fertility to the soil** is the small gap of time between harvesting of paddy and sowing of wheat, the other main crop.

- Also, the farmers **have limited access to dispose the straw, clean the land and prepare the seed bed for wheat** well in time.

Growth of paddy Cultivation in Punjab:

- Rice was not a traditional crop of Punjab; but **with increased availability in electricity, the number of tube wells increased, which in turn increased the areas for cultivation of paddy** replacing the area under cultivation of pulses and other commercial crop.

- Punjab had been contributing about **60 per cent of the share in the food stocks of paddy** even with only 1.5 per cent of the area and it helped in shortage of food in the country.

- Apart from burning of paddy straw, the state has **other problems like overuse of chemicals, depleting in the water tabl**e etc.

- The **Minimum Support Price (MSP) was provided to paddy** along with its marketing assurance by State Procurement. There are only two crop, wheat and paddy that have assured marketing through state procurement.

Measures adapted to Deal with the Problem:

- **Cooperative Model:**

    ♦ Reduction of the sizeable area under paddy would not be a feasible alternative in order to ensure enough food stock.

    ♦ Therefore, the issue of straw burning has to be settled through other measures like manufacturing of paper and cardboard, production of mushroom where paddy straw can be used as raw material, etc.

    ♦ But there is skepticism that an individual farmer may not install such a unit irrespective of the size of the farm he is holding. Also, a single unit even of the largest size cannot be economical because the straw is spread throughout the area and transportation to a single point would be a constraint.

    ♦ Therefore, the **Cooperative Model, already experienced in the dairy,** is the most viable and prudent option in addressing this problem.

    ♦ There is a need of at least two cardboard and paper manufacturing units in every block.

    ♦ A cooperative society in the area with the **membership of local farmers and farm laborers can be formed and such units must be affiliated to the apex body** of the State federation of cooperative for rice straw management.

    ♦ **Such patronization can yield the most desirable results not only to tackle this problem but also to generate income and employment in the state.**

- **Production of Biogas:**

    ♦ Production of biogas needs technical help and extension services. The cooperative umbrella of the same pattern can however help the farmers and farm labourers throughout the State in this venture.

- **Assured Marketing of Other Crops:**

    ♦ In Punjab 89% of the farmers have their holding less than 10 acres. These farmers are therefore **unable to take any risk either of volatile price or of marketing.** In case of rice, price and marketing is assured.

    ♦ The same assurance has to be **granted for the alternative crops to increase the area of cultivation under them.**

Conclusion:

- Stubble burning has to be stopped. But it should be dealt **sympathetically with the alternative measures, and cooperative model stands out to be the most appropriate approach to address this problem**, which is more viable and sustainable.

- **Small-scale farmers would be satisfied with less but assured income** than to drift towards commercial crops irrespective of their profit that have any risk of fluctuating price and yield.

8. CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 2019: A NEW MILESTONE IN EMPOWERING CONSUMERS

Introduction:

- The **Consumers Protection Act (CPA), 1986 being the foremost legislation for protecting the rights of the consumers** had become archaic.

- Also, it **does not cover rapid change in the consumer marketplaces**, especially those dealing with online shopping, teleshopping, product recall, unsafe contracts, and misleading advertisements.

- Therefore, it was felt to **replace it with the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.** It provides for the protection of consumers and fast – track alternatives so that justice reaches to the aggrieved consumers immediately.

- **Innovative methods such as mediation,** establishment of Central Consumer Protection Authority, class action suits etc. would be part of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Key amendments in the Consumers Protection Act 2019:

- With the **growing number of pending cases in the consumer courts and huge delays in providing speedy justice** to the consumers for petty amounts, the need of the hour was to **bring in a new legislature to empower the consumers.**

- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was passed by the Parliament and received the assent of the president in August, 2019 and **provides for the protection of consumers and fast track alternatives** so that justice reaches to the aggrieved consumers immediately.

- The new Act repeals and replaces the older CPA, 1986 and **provides mechanisms for making the consumer complaint system more robust.**

- It **envisages removing anomalies and problems faced by the consumers.**

- Innovative methods such as mediation, **establishment of Central Consumer Protection Authority,** class action suits etc. would be part of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Consumers Protection Act CPA, 1986:

- It provided a **legislative framework for better protection of the interests of the consumer** by creating a formal but three- tier quasi-judicial dispute resolution mechanism at National State, and District levels exclusively for consumers.

- The **Consumer Court was established with twin objectives for speedy redressal of consumer complaints and establishes quasi-judicial authorities** unlike civil courts to provide compensation to the consumers.

Shortcomings in the CPA, 1986:

(a) The **CPA, 1986 has become outdated and does not consider rapid changes in consumer marketplace.** Due to **heavy pendency of cases** and frequent adjournments, delay in getting justice takes place.

(b) The consumer commissions have been **overburdened with pending cases** and the buyer-seller contract is tilted in favour of the seller.

(c) The **State Governments shows less interest in immediately filling up the vacant posts of President and various members in various consumer forums** and the issue of consumer protection is not always at the top of any political parties' agenda.

(d) Consumer commission is functioning with staff deputed from other departments who **do not have any experience in judicial practices.**

(e) It is seen that the award ordered by consumer commissions is very meager and the **consumer has to run from pillar to post to get the orders** implemented.

(f) There has been **lack of proper coordination** among the president and members of the consumer commissions for timely adjudication of cases and quite often around ten or fifteen adjournments are allowed.

(g) The president of the **National Commission/State Commissions are not empowered to take up suo motu action** (The term is usually applied to actions by a judge taken without a prior motion or request from the parties.) in consideration of the damages affecting a sizable number of population, e.g., misleading advertisements.

Consumer Protection Act, 2019:
Some of the **highlights of the Consumers Protection Act, 2019 are:**

(a) The definition of **'Consumer' would include both offline and online consumers.**

(b) **Establishment of the Central Consumers Protection Authority (CCPA)** which can act on:

    I.   Complaints of unfair trade practices,

    II.   Issue safety guidelines,

    III.   Order product recall or discontinuation of services,

    IV.   Refer complaints to other regulators,

    V.   Has punitive powers such as imposing penalties,

    VI.   Can file actions before consumer commission, and

    VII.   Intervene in proceeding in matters of consumer rights or unfair trade practices.

(a) The **pecuniary jurisdiction of adjudicatory bodies increased** in case of District Commission to Rs. 1 crore, in case of State Commission between 1 crore to 10 crore, and for National Commission, above Rs 10 crore.

(b) The bill also lists **punitive action against those who are found to be manufacturing, storing,** disturbing**, selling, or importing products** that are spurious or contain adulterants.

(c) Provisions for **"product liability" action for or on account of harm** caused by or resulting from any product by way of fixing the liability of a manufacturer to a claimant.

(d) Provision for "mediation" as an Alternate Dispute resolution mechanism, thus making the **process less cumbersome, simple, and quicker.**

(e) Several provisions aimed at **simplifying the consumer dispute adjudication process, enhancing the pecuniary jurisdiction** of the consumer dispute redressal agencies, increasing minimum number of member in the consumer for a, power to review their own orders by the State and district commission, Constitution of 'circuit bench' to facilitate quicker disposal of complaints.

(f) **E-commerce guidelines would be mandatory under consumer protection law,** which would include 14-day deadline to effect refund request. The e – commerce companies would also be required to ensure that personally identifiable information of customers are protected.

Challenges faced by the Consumers:

- There are huge challenges faced by online buyers such as **breach of data privacy and security', substandard and duplicate products, phishing, territorial jurisdiction.**

- In case of misleading advertisements, especially digital, the consumer courts or the **Consumer Protection Councils at Centre, State, and District level, till now do not have suo motu powers.**

- Only when somebody complains in the consumer forums, action is being taken and also the **compensation is given to only the aggrieved consumer who files a case** in the consumer court.

- Since the **adjudication process in consumer courts is slow,** setting up of mediation centres at District, State and National Commissions annexed to the consumer courts can play an important role in delivering justice.

Conclusion:

- The consumer's protection Act, 2019, with its innovative change, would **help in empowering consumers and provide justice to the needy in time.**

- CCPA would function on the same lines as the Federal Trade Commission in the USA and investigate into consumer complaints, issue safety notices for goods and services, and pass orders for recall of goods and work against misleading advertisements.

9. SOME FACTS

1. **Kartarpur Sahib Corridor:**

- The **Prime Minister inaugurated** Integrated Check Post and **flagged off first batch of pilgrims at Kartarpur Sahib Corridor in Gurdaspur, Punjab on 9 November, 2019.**

- Also, took a guided tour or digital installation on life of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and the Passenger Terminal Building prior to the inauguration of Kartarpur Corridor.

- **Integrated Check Post would facilitate Indian pilgrims to visit to Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.**

- India has signed the **Agreement with Pakistan on 24 October, 2019 on modalities for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor** at Zero Point, International Boundary, Dera Baba Nanak.

- **The highlights of the Agreement and provisions for the pilgrims are:**

  - The **4.2 km four-lane highway connecting Dera Baba Nanak from Amritsar-Gurdaspur Highway** is constructed at a cost of Rs. 120 crore;

  - The State-of-the-art passenger Terminal Building is on 15 acres of land. The fully air-conditioned building akin to an airport has over **50 immigration counters for facilitating about 5000 pilgrims a day;**

  - It has all necessary public amenities like **Kiosks, washrooms, Child care, first aid medical facilities, prayer room and snacks Counters** inside the main building;

  - Robust **security infrastructure is put in place with CCTV surveillance** and public address systems;

  - Indian pilgrims of all faiths and **persons of Indian origin can use the Corridor;**

  - The travel will be **visa free and pilgrims need to carry only a valid passport**;

  - **Persons of Indian origin need to carry Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card** along with the passport of their country.

2. **New Chief Justice of India:**

- **On 18 November, 2019, Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde was sworn in as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India.** He made and subscribed to the oath of office before the President.

- Shri Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde has been a **Judge of the Supreme Court since 12 April, 2013.** Earlier he served as the Chief Justice of the **Madhya Pradesh High Court for about six months since 16 October, 2012.**

- He has also been an **Additional Judge of the Bombay High Court from 29 March, 2000 and a Permanent Judge from 28 March, 2002.**

- Shri Justice Bobde, was enrolled as an Advocate on 13 September, 1978. He **started his practice at the High Court Bench at Nagpur** and the District Court at Nagpur and occasionally at the High Court at Bombay and the **Supreme Court of India in civil, constitutional, labour, company, election, and taxation matters**.