

IAS PARLIAMENT

A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

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IDSA – OCTOBER 2017

1. CREATING A CLEAN INDIA

How is open defecation harmful?

- The age old practice of open defecation causes over 1 lakh preventable child deaths every year through diarrhoeal deaths.
- A study by the World Bank estimates that nearly 40 percent of India's children are stunted, primarily because of lack of sanitation.
- Lack of sanitation has an adverse impact on economic potential of people and is estimated to cost over 6 percent of GDP.
- Women's safety and dignity are often compromised due to open defecation.

What is the solution?

- The Government of India has launched **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)** on 2nd October, 2014 with the following objectives:-
- (i) Eliminate open defecation,
- (ii) Conversion of insanitary toilets to pour flush toilets,
- (iii) Eradication of manual scavenging,
- (iv) 100% collection and scientific processing/disposal reuse/recycle of Municipal Solid Waste,
- (v) To bring about a behavioral change in people regarding healthy sanitation practices,
- (vi) Generate awareness among the citizens about sanitation and its linkages with public health.
- (vii) Strengthening of urban local bodies to design, execute and operate systems,
- (viii) To create enabling environment for private sector participation in Capital Expenditure and Operation & Maintenance (O&M) costs.

What has been the progress of SBM?

- The rural sanitation coverage has gone up from 39 percent to current figure of 69 percent.
- Over 230 million people in rural India have stopped defecating in open.
- 193 districts and about 2,35,000 villages are declared ODF status.
- Five states Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Haryana and Uttarakhand have become ODF.

What are the features of SBM?

- SBM is bringing changes in people's minds and not about creating infrastructure and that's what it makes it different from earlier sanitation programs.
- The behavioral change is achieved through Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and shifting the focus from outputs to outcomes.
- The community is at the centre of entire process. They have become the Swachhta Champions of change.
- The GOI also organized a special event for awarding 6000 women sarpanches on International Women's Day to promote and propel the SBM further.
- Virtual classrooms are being run by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to scale up the participation of community and behavior change triggering.
- The SBM aims to create at least one Swachharaghi per village, who is trained in community approaches to sanitation to eliminate open defecation.
- Electronic and print media mass media being used to reinforce the sanitation messages and broaden its appeal.

- Film stars like Amitabh Bachan is leading "Darwaza Bandh" campaign on TV, radio and outdoor hoardings across the country.
- The ODF status declaration and verification involves a third party, which helps to identify the gaps if any and to take remedial measures.
- Incentive mechanisms are being developed for sustaining ODF, including prioritizing ODF villages for centrally sponsored schemes like piped water supply.
- Districts are also being ranked based on the performance under "Swachhta Darpan" which leads to the healthy competition in promotion of SBM.
- Another important difference of SBM from earlier programs is that waste is now seen as a resource. Effective recovery tools are being implemented to manage and reduce solid and liquid wastes.
- The private sector has been inspired to contribute to the SBM, not only the money contributing under CSR, but also leveraging their human and managerial resources to help the direct implementation of SBM. For example Tata Trusts is sponsoring 600 young professionals to work in each district to make each district ODF.

2. ENABLING OPPURTUNITIES FOR RURAL INDIA

What is the issue?

- The recent HSBC study points out that 69% of rural households who own up to 1 hectare of land or are landless do not seem to have faces rural distress unlike the top 31 percent.
- Nearly 8.85 crore households in rural India is reported either a deprivation or automatically excluded from the developmental process.
- The report on functioning of DAY - NRLM brings out to notice that the incomes were 22 percent higher in the implemented areas than in control areas and how greater investments in productive assets and in education, health and nutrition was seen wherever women Self Help Groups under DAY NRLM is active.
- Poverty free, connotes an ability to develop one's fullest human potential through education, health, skills, sanitation, clean drinking water, nutrition, food security, housing, gender and social equality and empowerment, most of all sustainable diversified economic activities for higher incomes.

What are the Government Interventions?

- Financial allocations have been almost doubled when compared to 2012 -2013 levels by allocating 1.05 lakh crores to rural India programmes.
- The Annual transfers under 14th Finance commission to Gram Panchayats have been increased to 35,000 crores from 25,000 crores.
- The convergence of Animal Husbandry and livelihood diversification has also added additional incomes to the households.
- The dream of one crore beautiful households for the poor under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana has been modified and given new impetus to cater homeless people needs.
- The special allocation up to 60 percent was made under MGNREGS for the Agriculture and allied activities which ensures a prosperous village.
- The new mission on water conservation guidelines is created to give a thrust on 2264 water stressed blocks and with a focus of developing technologically sound and scientifically vetted water conservation.
- The planning exercise under the Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise in the backward blocks using the SECC deprivation data and knocking the doors of every household and planning for its well being

strengthened the partnership with poorest households.

- The use of citizen centric apps like "Meri Sadak" app which is used to get the feedback on roads, which helps to upload pictures of conditions of roads facilitated more connection to households.
- A cell phone based Janata Information system is launched whereby every program in the village concerned can be seen by any villager to improve the scrutiny of the implementation of the program.
- The availability of Banking correspondent or post Office outlet with micro ATMs at fixed village locations on pre determined dates will unlock the potential of digital transactions which will aid the migrant labours, pensioners, etc.,.
- The schemes like PMGSY, PMAY uses space technology for geo tagging of assets which enables better maintenance and avoids duplication.
- The DAY NRLM scheme has demonstrated enormous social capital through community mobilisation and group formation, the economic activity development and livelihood diversification.
- The detailed monitoring of bank linkage program ultimately aims at poverty reduction and also provide access to the formal institutional credit system.
- Special training programs for Barefoot Technicians and rural masons aims to reduce over time and aims to provide the skilled employment for better wages and remuneration.
- The Livelihood in Full Employment (LIFE) initiative under MNREGS to promote skill development among MNREGA workers is an example of large scale innovation to reduce poverty and enhance the status of poor.

- The solid resource management and liquid resource management programs in states like Tamilnadu, AP and Telangana provided good results and it will be implemented all over the Nation in the coming years.
- The use of space technology like ISRO's Bhuvan portal for crop assessment and usage of digital assessment in PMFBY aids faster settlement of claims which also helps in reduction of distress of farmers.

3. FARMER'S WELFARE HOLDS THE KEY

What is the issue?

- New India is a grand and ambitious vision of Government of India which seeks to transform the country into a prosperous, healthy, educated and a clean and green nation.
- But to attain these goals Agriculture sector must be promoted as it provides 55 percent of workforce and yields 14 percent to national GDP.

What are the strategic moves of the government?

- The seven point strategy plan is unveiled for the first time with a target to double the Farmers' income by 2022.
- The **seven point strategy plan** covers areas like Increase in production, Effective use of input cost, Reduction of post-harvest losses, Value Addition, Reforms in Agriculture Marketing, Risk, Security and Assistance and Allied Activities.
- The **PMKSY** was launched to achieve convergence of investments in irrigation at the field level, expand cultivable area under assured irrigation (Har Khet ko pani), improve on-farm water use efficiency to reduce wastage of water, enhance the adoption of precision-irrigation and other

water saving technologies (More crop per drop), enhance recharge of aquifers and introduce sustainable water conservation practices by exploring the feasibility of reusing treated municipal based water for peri-urban agriculture and attract greater private investment in precision irrigation system.

- The **Soil Health card scheme** is tailor-made scheme to issue 'Soil card' to farmers which will carry crop-wise recommendations of nutrients and fertilizers required for the individual farms. This is aimed to help farmers to improve productivity through judicious use of inputs.
- Groups of farmers would be motivated to take up organic farming under **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)**. Fifty or more farmers will form a cluster having 50 acre land to take up the organic farming under the scheme. It will be promoted by using traditional resources and the organic products will be linked with the market.
- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)** was launched from Kharif 2016 to provide comprehensive insurance coverage for all food crops (cereals, millets & pulses), oilseeds crops and annual commercial/horticultural crops against all non-preventable natural risks.
- Integration of agri-markets across the country through the e-platform (**e-NAM**) is seen as an important measure for overcoming the challenges posed by the present agri-marketing system namely - fragmentation of State into multiple market areas, each administered by separate APMC, multiple levy of mandi fees, requirement for multiple license for trading in different APMCs, licensing barriers leading to conditions of monopoly, poor quality of infrastructure and low use of technology, information asymmetry, opaque process for price discovery, high level of market charges, movement controls, etc.
- Government of India has launched a campaign named as **India emergence through village emergence** so as to improve the means of livelihood amongst the rural, to accelerate rural development process to strengthen Panchayati Raj across the country to establish social equality to create awareness about the agricultural schemes.
- Under **My Village My Pride** scheme, 20,000 agriculture scientists have been engaged to adopt a village which is also involved to pay awareness to adopt the ways of sophisticated scientific farming and their implementation.
- **Farmer FIRST** initiative was launched to move beyond the production and productivity and to privilege the complex, diverse & risk prone realities of the farmers through enhancing farmers-scientists contact with multi stakeholders participation for technology development and application.
- The ICAR has initiated a program on **Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture (ARYA)** in selected districts through KVKs with an objective for entrepreneurial development of Youth in Rural Areas to take up various Agriculture, allied and service sector enterprises for sustainable income and gainful employment.
- NITI Aayog, premier independent think tank prepared a **Three Year Action Agenda** for Doubling farmers income and recommended the following :
 - Reform the Agricultural Produce Marketing to ensure that farmers receive remunerative prices.
 - Raise productivity through enhanced irrigation, faster seed replacement and precision agriculture.
 - Shift to high value commodities: horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries.

- The apex research body of the country, The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** continuously researches in creating new and enhanced seed varieties which also released more than 600 improved crop varieties so far.
- **Technologies** like Precision farming, integrated farming, resource conservation technologies and protected cultivation are just few examples which hold great promise and potential.
- Similarly **new machineries** like Laser land leveler, precision seeder and planter and modern and **scientific practices** like zero tillage farming, raised bed plantation and ridge plantation also promise attractive returns on investment which adds to the income of farmers.

4. ZERO TOLERANCE TO CORRUPTION

- India's "zero tolerance to corruption" approach, as well as "minimum government and maximum governance" approach resulted in simplification of the governance model in recent years.
- Some of the steps included abolition of the system of attestation/ authentication by Government servants for submission of certificates, abolition of personal interviews for recruitments to lower level posts and weeding out inefficient public servants and those of doubtful integrity above the age of 50 years, prematurely.
- Further the Government demonetized high value currency to eliminate black money and corruption. A special investigation team was constituted to fight black money. Government also conducted online auctions of coal blocks.
- Government sought international cooperation in G-20 meetings on ending tax havens in Europe and other countries. In bilateral

meetings with Swiss authorities India has said combating the menace of black money and tax evasion was a "shared priority" for both the countries.

What is the framework?

- India's fight against corruption is led by a robust and time tested institutional and legislative framework including the Prevention of Corruption Act, an independent Central Vigilance Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Judges (Inquiry) Act, the Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta Act 2013, Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2011, Prevention of Money /Laundering Act, Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act which cover a number of areas of criminalization and bribery.
- All civil servants are mandatorily required to declare their assets on an annual basis. The Elected Representatives are required to declare their assets every election cycle.

What are the government initiatives?

- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), the biggest financial inclusion initiative in the world, provided universal and clear access to banking accounts with overdraft facility.
- In 2016, the Aadhar Act was promulgated to ensure targeted delivery of financial and other subsidies, benefits and services. The Act provided for an efficient, transparent and targeted delivery of subsidies to individuals, through assigning aadhar identification numbers.
- The third major step initiated by the Government was the introduction of BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) which is a mobile application developed by National Payments Corporation of India. The BHIM application facilitates e-payments directly through banks and can be used on all mobile devices.

- Collectively the Jan Dhan Yojana—the Aadhar Act and the BHIM Application have provided for a smart government where subsidy flows reach the beneficiary in a timely and effective manner.
- Clearances using Real Time Gross Settlement, National Electronic Transfer of Funds, Immediate Payment Service and electronic clearing system are rapidly integrated into banking sector to promote transparency and curb illegal transactions.
- Central Vigilance Commission is formed to look in to the matters of corruption in which the civil servants and public authorities are involved.
- Measures like Government E-Market (GEM) have helped improve the accountability and integrity in public procurement.
- Outreach activities for public/citizens include the display of hoardings, banners, posters and distribution of handouts etc. at prominent locations/places in offices/field units and also at places with public interface, organization of grievance redressal camps for citizens/customers by organisations having customer oriented services/activities and the taking of the online “Integrity Pledge” developed by the Commission.
- Seminars, discussions and other outreach events have been planned involving the private sector, professional associations, trade unions and associations for wide participation of all sections of civil society
- “Awareness Gram Sabhas” are being organized for dissemination of awareness in Gram Panchayats (in rural and semi-urban areas) to sensitise citizens on the ill-effects of corruption. Last year, 70,000 such Gram Sabhas were organized during the Vigilance Awareness Week.
- A new feature is the establishment of "Integrity Clubs" in schools and colleges as

children are the future assets of the country and it is important to cultivate moral values in them.

- Further the Government has sought to strengthen the auditing and accounting processes. Looking at the enormity of the flow of funds to urban and rural local bodies, the C& AG has identified their audit as a critical area.
- The C& AG has also focused on the large volumes of digital information emerging from increasing automation of tax filing, assessment and recovery procedures.

What are the Legal Measures?

- There have been significant efforts made to promote transparency in Government. The Right to Information (RTI) Act is a rights based law that has created a durable stake for citizens in the administration of the Nation.
- The RTI Act has led to improvements in governance. By sharing information, the citizens have become part of the decision making process, which leads to creation of trust between citizens and Government.
- The Prevention of Corruption Act is an Act to consolidate the law relating to the prevention of corruption. The law provides for punishments for taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of official acts.
- The investigative powers have been given to the CBI and State Police Authorities. Government has said that accountability standards for public servants have to be kept at realistic levels so that officers do not hesitate in taking honest decisions.
- In order to give statutory protection to whistle blowers in the country, Government made amendments to the Whistle Blowers Act in 2015. The amendments addressed concerns relating to national security and strengthened the safeguards against disclosures, which may

prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

- Further the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988 was amended to empower the Income Tax authorities to attach and confiscate benami properties. Besides, if a person is found guilty of offence of benami transaction by the competent court, he shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment and shall also be liable to fine.

5. ENERGISING YOUTH THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Indian economy is one of the largest in the world with an average GDP growth rate of 7 per cent over the last two decades.
- Classified as a newly industrialized economy among the developing nations, the country is yet to reap the benefits of demographic dividend in view of its huge young population.
- Around half of our country's labour force is selfemployed and around 93 per cent of them work in the unorganized sector.
- India's working age population is projected to touch 170 million by 2020 based on the rate of its population growth, increased work force participation and rising higher education enrolment, according to an ASSOCHAM-Though Arbitrage Study.

Is Skill Deficit a root cause?

- Lack of quality education has resulted in higher instances of employability deficit among youth.
- Scarcity of employment opportunities has increased competition in the job market.
- Absence of funds to promote vocational and skill training has led to the increase of unskilled work force, most of who are working in insecure work environments in the country.

- Continuing high drop-out rates in schools and colleges coupled with lack of entrepreneurial motivation and orientation have also caused widespread unemployment among the youth of the nation.
- Capacity building in existing systems of training, maintaining quality and relevance in training, creating institutional mechanism and financing these training initiatives are some of the challenges for skill development that the government has to face in the coming years.

What are the Government Interventions?

- A new ministry has been formed by the Government of India for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- The National Policy on Skill Development envisions enhancing employability among the labour force of the country in the midst of technological advancement and labour market demands. It aspires to increase productivity in the economy and strengthen the competitiveness of the country to raise the standard of living of the poor.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal VikasYojana (PMKVY) is a skill development programme that identifies industry-relevant skills required to acquire gainful employment for the youth.
- It is a flagship programme that intends to recognize the knowledge acquired and skills equipped by the participants by certification. Prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- Universities are establishing incubation centres and appointing mentors to support student entrepreneurs in their start-up ventures.
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship also attempts to connect

the mentors, peers and incubators to establish a solid network of entrepreneurs and E-hubs.

- The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Ahmedabad was established to provide comprehensive education and training in entrepreneurship to the country's youth and also conducts for children in order to boost their confidence and entrepreneurship oriented motivation to tap their entrepreneurial instincts.
- A separate Group A service is created to look after and promote the skill development in the country.

What are the suggestions?

- Gender focus is important to advance women and transgender focused skill development initiatives and promote entrepreneurship among the discriminated genders.
- In order to eliminate regional imbalance and oversight and lack of attention paid to the lower caste groups and other marginalized communities, special focus on skill training should be mooted for them to ensure "inclusivity for all".
- Lack of education and skills is a major impediment among the marginalized communities. It leads to lack of confidence to undertake responsibilities. Such lack of confidence and self-belief is seen particularly among women. Entrepreneurship motivation coupled with hands-on training can address these deficiencies.
- The training programmes must offer "diversified services portfolio" in order to cater to the diverse beneficiaries whose social, economic and day to day life experiences are different.
- Experts and scholars working in the field of entrepreneurship education and skill development should come together to develop a comprehensive and accessible "online assessment tools and training curriculum" for the benefit of other concerned institutes to develop and promote entrepreneurship and skill training within their campuses.
- They must also compile a discursive list of international standards prescribed for vocational education and skill training for securing gainful employment. There should be provisions for regular upgradation of vocational education framework under National Skill Qualification Framework.
- Government and other institutional bodies must engage in impact evaluation of government schemes and incentives on entrepreneurship development programmes to reduce financial stress and promote partnerships with domestic skill-entrepreneurship development players for better institutional interaction.
- The support of knowledge partners with existing institutions for capacity building, handholding and mentoring pool to support upcoming start-ups.
- There is a need to connect industry with institutions and incubation centres for synergy effects. For this, we need to define the industry focus in all our skill development operations. The scope, objectives and limitations of the skill development employment training programmes (geographically and demographically) must be drawn and clearly stated.
- Funding-linked-training mechanism to encourage enterprise creation should be devised.
- Incubation and acceleration development programmes should be facilitated to assist hi-tech entrepreneurs and skillpreneurs.

6. CREATING CASTEISM FREE INDIA

- Casteism is one of the greatest social evils plaguing the socio-economic development of India as well as its unity.
- At a time when we are looking towards an India that is united, dignified and developed it is acting as a powerful social and political divisive force, causing social conflicts, effecting stability, peace and harmony ,manipulating electoral outcomes and effecting sound legislative and executive decision making.

Caste System

- There are numerous differences among observers and scholars about the exact definition of caste system, its origin and role in different periods.
- In its most general fundamental aspects it can be described as a scriptive system of status and hierarchy.
- It is a type of social stratification system based gradation of endogamous kinship group with certain considerations of ritual purity reflected in restrictions on commensality and pollution and associated with traditional occupational specialization.
- Though, at times caste system is linked with Varana system its origin is not traced to religious scriptures. Researchers trace the origin of caste system to about 2000 years back in economic, political and material processes of evolution.

Caste in Colonial Period

- While caste has been a social reality, for quite long it was the British colonial rule that treated caste as the institutional key stone of Indian society.
- Beginning with the first decennial census of 1871, the census became the main instrument

of gathering information about the caste system and classifying it.

- British rulers themselves used caste system as one of the instruments of divide and rule. They enforced caste affiliations rigorously.
- They institutionalised caste into the working of governmental institutions. Some castes were treated preferentially for certain jobs, like in police and army, whereas some were branded as criminal.
- Some laws were also passed keeping in view caste affiliations and making those allies of the regime.
- The immediate effect of this, was that it increased caste consciousness and inter-caste competition, because now it was possible for caste relations to outgrow its regional constraints and develop caste associations to bargain some concessions from the British government.
- The national leaders attempted to reduce the differences and subsume the social justice issues in national struggle but could not succeed much.

Caste in Independent India

- The framers of the constitution were committed to the formation of an egalitarian, equitable, fraternal and just society.
- The 1950 Constitution, therefore, eliminated caste system, as instrument of discrimination, restrictions of any kind, particularly the practice of untouchability, through fundamental rights of equality, liberty and freedom.
- At the same time, in accordance with the need of positive actions to eliminate age old deprivation of some sections provisions for affirmative action for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled tribes and backward classes were also incorporated in the Constitution.

- During seven decades of independence while the influence of caste has been decreasing in social and economic spheres it has been gaining a stranglehold over the field of politics.
- There has emerged new caste based organisations, growing polarisation on caste lines, violence and reservation conflicts.
- With the introduction of democracy with universal adult franchise the need to mobilize illiterate and not so much politically conscious people who can understand politics in terms of economic programmes, performance or ideologies, caste, religion and such like community ties became relevant inputs. This in turn has given rise to what is known as casteism.
- Civil society has a great and significant role in social and political reforms. They have to create awareness and mobilise voters on non-caste, nonreligion basis, inform them about the imperatives of development, abuse of caste and religion in elections, and negative effects of that on social disharmony and conflicts.
- Civil society can also play a useful role in encouraging and arranging inter-caste marriages, dining and other social interactions to highlight the myths of separation.
- An important role is that of the Election Commission. As already mentioned, the most important cause of casteism is electoral politics. Election Commission will have to find ways to curb the use of caste. State funding of elections, strict imposition of code of conduct, voter's education etc. can be some means for that.
- Most important is political will and consensus. While almost all political parties are critical of the use and exploitation of caste in elections, yet, at the time of giving tickets and mobilising voters they co-opt caste leaders.
- Recent trends in elections suggest that voters are rising above caste and community considerations and giving importance to performances of governments, leadership, and developmental issues. This trend needs to be strengthened.

Need for Elimination

- As discussed above, casteism has been eating into the socio-economic and political fabric of our society.
- The first step towards reducing casteism is Education. Education does not mean only formal literacy or school education. It includes generation and dissemination of awareness about myths associated with the caste system.
- Voters need to be educated about how they are exploited by caste leaders without any developmental benefits either to a particular caste or society at large. In schools, teachers need to encourage students to eat and play together.
