Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste

What is the issue?

- The Supreme Court has stayed construction activity in States that do not have a solid waste management policy.
- In this context, understanding the Construction and Demolition (C&D) Wastes' potential becomes essential.

What is Construction and Demolition Waste?

- Construction and demolition waste (C&D) is generated during the construction, renovation, and demolition of buildings or structures.
- These wastes include materials such as concrete, bricks, wood and lumber, roofing, drywall, landscape and other wastes.
- Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules 2016 was released by Ministry of Environment.
- It clearly defines the duties of Waste Generator, Service providers and Contractors, State Government and Local Authorities and Pollution Control boards.
- C&D wastes can revolutionize the construction industry, especially the Housing Industry, if they are properly reused.

What are the guidelines in place?
• Earlier in 2012 the Ministry of Urban Development urged States to set up C&D waste management facilities.

• The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), in 2017, brought out the guidelines on Environmental Management of C&D Wastes in India.

• It observed that Construction accounted for nearly 65% of the total investment in infrastructure.

• Therefore it becomes more important to know how to effectively manage construction and demolition waste.

• Further the CPCB’s Waste Management Rules of 2016 and the guidelines 2017 mentions clear timelines on

  i. formulating policies
  ii. identifying sites for processing
  iii. commissioning the wastes

What are the concerns?

• Despite the above, the performance of industry and the State pollution control boards is poor.

• Around 25-30 million tons of C&D waste is generated annually in India of which only 5% is processed.

• It is significant that 36% of C&D waste comprises soil, sand and gravel.

• This waste impacts soil fertility and is a health hazard in urban areas.

• The virtual absence of recycling also goes against India’s commitments with respect to carbon emission reduction.

• There is an urgent need to recycle C&D waste.
This is because the rampant sand mining is already destroying river beds and eventually worsening the impact of floods.

What could be done?

- Promoting Green buildings, which entail that C&D waste is utilized, can be made mandatory all over the country.
- At present they are only incentivized in certain States.
- As the 2016 rules have pointed out, the Bureau of Indian Standards and Indian Roads Congress should initiate processes for the use of recycled material.
- For example, pavements and drainage structures can be made this way.
- Recycling will reduce housing costs, given the materials shortage, and can be an integral aspect of 'affordable housing'.
- The construction sector should be more environmentally responsible, by shifting to the use of recycled water and recycling its own waste.
- All stakeholders, especially States and industry, need to create an environmentally sustainable ecosystem.

Source: BusinessLine