Data-based Policy Making

What is the issue?

There have been concerns regarding the information gap growing between the state and citizens with reports of missing data

What are the gaps in data-based policymaking?

> Data-based policy making is an approach of optimal use of sensor data, and collaborate with citizens to co-create policy

- **No data** - the government declared that it has no data on the number of migrants who lost their jobs, frontline health workers had lost their lives during the pandemic, etc.
- **Political motives** - Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation decided not to release the results of all-India Household Consumer Expenditure Survey 2017-2018 before the 2019 parliamentary elections
- **Avoidance of responsibility** - India was told that there was no data on deaths due to 'no oxygen' because States did not give the data
- **Unvalidated data -** Most of the administrative data collected by states are not validated.
- For example, the data on the flow of funds below block level that are submitted by local bodies are generally not validated.
- **Manipulation of data -** The data also gets misused, abused or even manipulated
- **Disparity in data -** Union government report on education shows that Tamil Nadu has around 27 educationally backward districts but the same report ranks Tamil Nadu 4th in educational attainment

What are the benefits of proper data-based policy making?

- Redressal of inter and intra-district inequalities

- Targeted resource allocations
- Improves transparency in policy making
- Greater accountability in public services
- Promotes peoples' participation in the governance

What does this call for?

- Decentralisation of data collection processes with States building their own databases can prevent data suppression and delays
- States need to invest heavily in both human and technical infrastructure
- A data protection regulation framework as recommended by Justice B.N.. Srikrishna committee has to be in place

Source: The Hindu

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