

## Kurukshetra Summary June 2018

### NEW PRIORITIES FOR AGRICULTURE

- Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy. Nearly 55 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities contributing 17.4 per cent to the country's Gross Value added.
- We have envisaged the agriculture sector to grow at 4 per cent and above per annum. For this, we will have to rely primarily on productivity gains to attain the targeted growth.

The Government initiatives towards enhancing crop productivity and doubling farm income through various schemes are:

#### **Soil Health Card Scheme:**

- To address the issue of poor soil health.
- It will facilitate building-up soil database of the country and monitor the changes occurring in the soil health over time for 12 parameters. Based on such comprehensive soil diagnostics, the SHC will recommend manure, fertilizers and amendments for at least six crops.

#### **Promotion of Organic manure:**

- Compost pits for production of organic manure will be taken up by making productive use of the allocation under MGNREGA.
  - **Promotion of City Compost** - The government initiated a scheme to produce city compost and made it mandatory to ensure its sale through fertilizer industry along with fertilizers to improve soil health. This scheme has been connected with "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan".
  - **Incentives to Fertilizer Industry for Soil and Seed Testing**
  - **Rationalizing NPK Pricing to Minimize Subsidy Burden**

#### **Enhancement of Pulses Production**

- Incentives are being given for enhancement of pulses production.

#### **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana**

- It is an elaborated component of Soil Health Management (SHM) of major project National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA). Under PKVY, Organic farming is promoted through adoption of organic village by cluster approach promotion of commercial organic production through certified organic farming.

#### **Farmers Inter-State Exposure Visits and Training**

- It will prove as a powerful tool towards helping farmer bridge the yield gap.

#### **Development of Rainfed Agriculture**

- It is known that rainfed agriculture produces more than half of India's food grains. Rainfed farming communities ensure food security.

- According to the National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA), these farmers produce over 34 predominant crops (compared to the 3 or 4 crops in irrigated tracts), handle diverse crop livestock combinations and inland fisheries thereby maintaining India's rich bio-diversity. Today, it is acknowledged that even with full coverage of the irrigation potential, about 50 per cent of arable land will continue to depend on rainfall.
- It was recommended that besides watershed management, constructing check dams and farm ponds should be taken up on a mission mode for providing life saving irrigation for the crops.

### Irrigation

- Out of 141 million hectares of net cultivated area in the country, only 46 per cent is covered with irrigation.
- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana(PMKSJ):-** The major objectives of the PMKSJ is to achieve convergence of investment in irrigation at the field level, expand cultivable area under assured irrigation, improve on-farm water use efficiency to reduce wastage of water, enhance the adoption of irrigation, and adoption of 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.
- **Sustainable Management of Ground Water Resources**
- **Promoting Scientific Agriculture Through Micro-Irrigation:-** Advanced concept of Precision Agriculture need to be promoted on a large scale, emulating the success of Tamil Nadu Precision Farming Project (TNPFP)

### Reducing Crop Losses from Pests

- Crop losses in India are huge and estimates range from Rs. 90,000 to Rs. 1.50 lac crores annually.

### Biotechnology

- It is set to play a critical role in crop and livestock production by enhancing yields, nutritional profile, stress tolerance and crop protection.

### Farm Mechanization

- Farm Mechanization in India has been a story of tractorization. Time has come for promoting efficient equipment and tools and small engine driven tractors to address small farm requirements adequately.

### Agricultural Credit

- To improve credit support, government has increased the target of agricultural funding to 8.5 lakh crore for 2015-2016.
- **Towards Doubling Farmer's Income by 2022:** To double the farmers by 2022, in nominal (numerical) terms, which do not take inflation into account, would require a 15% compounded income growth rate, which is a marginal increase over the achieved increase

from 2003 to 2013. However, to increase the income in real terms would imply restructuring agriculture processes and policy interventions.

This can be done by:

- Increasing income by improving crop productivity.
- Water and agricultural input policies.
- Integrated Farming System.
- Better market price realization
- Special Policy Measures.

**Various fronts to achieve this target can be summarized as below:**

#### **Diversification of Agriculture**

- Diversification of agriculture in the First Green Revolution areas such as Punjab, Haryana and Western U.P. seems to be the need of the hour.
- Farmer is mainly concerned with the profit he gets from a particular crop or commodity. Crops like maize, soybean, pulses, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables have the potential to replace rice and wheat in this area.

#### **Promotion of Intensive Vegetable Production**

- Promotion of intensive vegetable production using improved varieties, organic manure and drip irrigation, can provide five times higher annual income.

#### **Integrated Farming System**

- The promotion of Integrated farming System Approach involving synergic blending of crops, horticulture, dairy, fisheries, poultry, apiculture, sericulture, goatary, piggery, mushrooms cultivation etc. seems viable option to provide regular income and at site employment to small land holder, decreasing cultivation cost through multiple use of resources and providing much needed resilience for predicted climate change scenario.

#### **Dairy Husbandry and Fisheries**

- To meet the working capital needs of small and marginal farmers in fisheries and animal husbandry sector, the government has extended the facility of Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) to the sector.
- For Setting up of a Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund in fisheries sector and an Animal Husbandry, infrastructure Development Fund for financing infrastructure requirement of animal husbandry sector has been allocated.

#### **Better Market Price Realization (MSP)**

#### **Operation Greens**

- This addresses price volatility of perishable commodities such as potatoes, tomatoes and onions at an outlay of 500 crore.

**Development of Warehouses for Reducing Post Harvest Losses**

- More multipurpose market yard complexes, comprised of godowns, cold storage, farmers service center etc. needs to be set up for farmers to directly participate, especially online in NAM.

**Revision of the APMC Act**

- Reforms to the APMC Acts to permit pan-India trades, electronic auction and trading in warehousing receipts assume importance. Enactment of policies that enforce the standardization of agricultural produce such that graded product would have a form of a logo or label mandatorily attached to it to signify that the product meets all the standardization and grading requirement for packing, sealing etc., and only traders who are willing to follow the regulation are given “Certificate of Authorization”.

**Launch of e-NAM**

- The Government would strengthen e-NAM, the e-trading platform for the National Agriculture Market and would expand coverage of e-NAM to 585 Agriculture Produce Marketing Companies (APMCs).
- Indian Council of Food and Agriculture recommended that launch of NAM requires easing of norms of licensing to enable seamless participation of buyers from across the country, movements of goods without restriction, harmonization of tax laws (including a uniform GST), standardization of grades and recognition of electronic trades.

**SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT FOR RURAL YOUTH**

- The first National Policy for Skill Development was formulated in 2009. The policy aimed to increase the capacity and capability of the existing skill system to ensure equitable access to various skill development efforts of Government and between Government and private sector, enhance capacity of the training institutions among other objectives. The National Policy on Skill Development, 2009 set a target for skilling 500 million persons by 2022.
- The new National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was announced in 2015. This policy aims to scale up skilling initiatives with speed, standard (quality) and sustainability. It provides for an umbrella framework for all skilling activities taking place in the government, industry and NGO sector and provides skilling for both wage and self-employment by bringing within its mandate entrepreneurship. The policy also aims for standardization of skilling standards across sectors by insisting on mandatorily accessing to the National Skill Qualification Framework.
- The institutional infrastructure for skill development consists of the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and the National Skill Development Fund (NSDF). In 2014, these were subsumed under the newly created Department of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship later converted to the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship in 2015.
- The National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) has undertaken various activities like anchoring and operationalizing the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF), developing National Qualifications Register (NQR), which is a repository of all approved

qualifications, develop a National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF), create and maintain a national database on skill development including development of a dynamic Labour Market information system.

### **Skilling Programme for Rural Youth:**

#### **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikash Yojana (PMKVY)**

- **The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, the flagship scheme on skilling was launched in 2015** to provide industry relevant skill training to the youth to enable them secure a better livelihood. **The scheme** provides short-term training to the job seekers as well as **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** to the existing workforce through accredited and affiliated training partner/training centres and ensure placement.
- In order to ensure quality and standardization in the training, various steps have been taken such as: one stop web-based solution for Centre Accreditation, Accreditation Standards Grading Metrics to benchmark the training centres across the country, evaluation of training centres for their continuous performance related to monitoring standards such as placements, branding, infrastructure etc.
- **There are projects focusing on tribal populations under PMKVY. For eg: (i) Bru Project:** The project aims for Skilling of Bru tribe of Mizoram **(ii) Katkari primitive tribe:** Project aims to skill 1020 candidates from the Katkari tribe of Maharashtra **(iii) Skilling in Odisha:** Project aims to skill candidates from 62 indigenous communities (tribes) of Odisha **(iv) Project YUVA** is a joint initiative of NSDC and the Delhi Police under which Delhi Police is to connect young 3,000 deprived youth across the capital by upgrading their skill as per their capability after which, they are given placement assistance.

#### **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)**

- The DDU-GKY is a placement linked skill-training programme to empower rural poor youth with employable skills and facilitate their participation in the labour market.

#### **Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs)**

- The Ministry of Rural Development has been implementing the Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) for the rural youth which seeks to diversify household income of rural poor.
- RSETIs provide training in agriculture, process, product and general entrepreneurship development programme (EDP) courses to candidates leading to self employment/wage employment.
- The Startup Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) helps the rural poor including artisans and weavers to set up enterprises at the village level in non-agricultural sector.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA)**

- Aiming to empower and uplift the rural youth the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship in partnership with the Ministry of power has under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA) initiated vocational training to rural youth **in six States viz; Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.**

- The objective of this skill training programme is to meet the need for trained manpower for implementing the larger mandate of the scheme i.e., to ensure access to electricity in every household of the country.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras**

- The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs) are the model skill development centres that focus on building industry standardized skill development infrastructure, training and also placement.

#### **Indian Institute of Skills (IIS)**

- These are state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence being set up across five regions of India on the lines of ITE Singapore.
- The IIS will provide “hands-on” training in advanced courses such as energy efficient construction, industrial electronic and automation etc.

#### **Takshashila (Trainers and Assessors Portal)**

- National Portal for Trainers and Assessors is an initiative of NSDC and is a dedicated platform towards the management of trainers and assessors training life-cycle.

#### **Vocationalisation of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education**

- Under the scheme, vocational education is provided to a large number of students in selected schools. UGC is offering Bachelor of Vocation Programmes in a number of colleges/universities. Academic Equivalence with 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> classes has been provided to ITI students through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) by means of credit transfer.

#### **Skill Development in LWE Districts**

##### **UDDAN**

- Udaan is a special initiative to address the needs of the educated unemployed in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). The scheme aims to enhance the skill and employability of graduates/post-graduates and 3-year engineering diploma holders to offer them jobs in the private sector.

##### **Himayat**

- Himayat is a training-cum-placement programme for the unemployed youth mainly school/college dropouts of J&K.

##### **National Career Service**

- The National Career Service (NCS) projects comprises of a digital portal that provides a nationwide online platform for the job seekers and employers for job matching in a dynamic, efficient and responsive manner and has a repository of career content.
- Government of India has made it mandatory for government vacancies to be posted on the NCS Portal

**Pradhan Mantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan (PM-YUVA)**

- The scheme aims to create an enabling ecosystem for entrepreneurship development through entrepreneurship education and training across the country in select Institutes of Higher Learning for over a period of five years (2017- 18 to 2021 – 22).

**Employment Generation of Rural Youth**

- To facilitate an environment for job creation and employment generation in rural areas, various programmes are in operation. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) aims at social inclusion through creation of productive assets as well as enhance livelihood security by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every adult member of a household who volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- The Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) is implementing the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), which is a major credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth.
- The Stand-Up India launched in April 2016 facilitates bank loans from Commercial banks to atleast one SC/ST borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up Greenfield enterprises in trading, services or manufacturing sector.
- The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana launched in 2015 extends collateral free loans below Rs. 10 lakh in the non-agricultural sector to individuals to enable them to set up or expand their business activities.
- To promote formal employment, under the Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana, 8.33 per cent of employer's contribution under Employee's Pension Scheme for new recruits earning upto Rs.15000 per month is paid by the government for three years and in labour-intensive sectors like textiles, leather and footwear 12 per cent of employers' contribution under EPF is paid by the Government for a period of three years.

**REFORMING ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS**

- A nationwide sub-programme under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, 'Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat' was launched in August, 2014 to improve language development by creating an enduring interest in reading and writing with comprehension, and to create a natural and positive interest in mathematics related to their physical and social world.

**India's Commitment to Elementary Education**

- With the formulation of National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, India initiated a wide range of programmes for achieving the goal of Unverisalisation of Elementary Education (UEE).
- This was further strengthened with the passage of the Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, effective since 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2010, which gave a legal

mandate to provide free and compulsory elementary education to every child in the age group 6 – 14 years.

- The overall goals of SSA included universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children.

**Progress achieved at Elementary level**

- Today, SSA has covered 19.67 crore children enrolled in 14.6 lakh elementary schools. The spread of SSA is majorly in rural areas as these areas account for 85.4% of all elementary schools and 74.5% of total enrolment at elementary level.
- As per UDISE 2015-16, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is 99.21% for primary and 92.81% for upper primary level, which indicated near universal enrolment at primary level. The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) has improved from 32 in 2009-10 to 25 in 2015-16.
- The Gender Parity Index (GPI) in 2014-15, indicating the gender balance in the total enrolment in schools at elementary level, has reached 0.93 for primary level and 0.95 at upper primary level.

**Recent Initiatives:**

- Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat: A lacuna was felt that there are no specified benchmarks for teachers and children to be aimed to be achieved at end of every grade. Accordingly, the Central RTE Rules have been amended to get Learning Outcomes for every class and for every subject. The Learning Outcomes for each class in Languages, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Science and Social Science up to the elementary stage had, accordingly, been finalized and shared with all States and UTs.
- The RTE Act, 2009 requires that all in-service teachers possess certain minimum professional qualifications. To ensure that all such teachers acquire such qualifications, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has been entrusted to provide an online 2 year course.
- The Central Government has also instituted the ‘Swachha Vidyalaya Puraskar’ from 2017 with the rationale to sensitize children towards cleanliness and imbibe hygienic habits and practices. This will also help in retaining children in schools, alleviate illnesses due to squalor and filth and develop responsible civic citizens of the future.

**The Way Forward:**

- The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of “Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan” has been initiated from 2018-19 with the objective of provision of inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to senior secondary stage. It envisages that each and every child progresses smoothly and continuously through various levels of schooling without any barrier.
- The scheme also marks a transformation necessitating an equitable and inclusive learning approach with special focus on Children with Special needs (CWSN), girls and marginalized communities.

### **BOLSTERING ROAD NETWORK IN RURAL AREAS**

- Construction, development and maintenance of roads are not an end in themselves, but a means to ensure that economic development is all pervasive and reaches one and all.

#### **Rural Network:**

- Government of India's Ministry of Road Transport & Highways categorizes India's road network into national highways, state highways district roads, project roads, urban roads and rural roads.
- Government of India defines the four constituents of rural roads as (i) Panchayati Raj roads, which include those constructed by Zila Parishad, Panchayat Samitis and Gram Sabhas; (ii) those constructed under Ministry of Rural Development's Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY); (iii) those constructed by State Public Works Department; and (iv) those which were constructed under the erstwhile Jawahar Rozjar Yojana (JRY).

#### **PMGSY: A Revolution in Rural Road Network**

- PMGSY commenced in 2000, with the objective of providing fair weather roads to unconnected habitations as part of a poverty reduction strategy.

#### **Gram Swaraj Abhiyan & Rural Roads**

- From 14<sup>th</sup> April to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018, the Government of India had launched the 'Gram Swaraj Abhiyan'. Objective of the campaign entailed spreading awareness about pro-poor initiatives of government and achieving saturation of eligible households/persons under seven flagship pro-poor programmes in more than 20,000 identified villages, viz. (i) Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, (ii) Saubhagya, (iii) UJALA or Unnat Jeevan by Affordable LEDs for All Scheme, (iv) Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, (v) Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, (vi) Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and (vii) Mission Indradhanush.

### **RAPID STRIDES IN RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Inclusive growth in itself does not have automatic mechanism to reach the deprived and hapless section of the society, rather it is the result of focused course of actions of the government. The demographic profile and societal essentials of inclusive growth is skewed towards rural development.
- It is found that 1 percent increase in stock of infrastructure is associated with 1 per cent increase in gross domestic product and in particular, the rural sector has a remarkable multiplier effect. So the progress of rural infrastructure is the key to rural development.

#### **Rural Housing: Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Grameen**

- First dedicated scheme was introduced in 1996 in the name of "Indira Awaas Yojana(IAY)", but was re-structured as "Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Grameen" (PMAY-G) w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.
- It targets to provide a pucca house with in-built basic amenities to all the houseless households and households living in Kutch and dilapidated house.

- Its motto is to provide “House for All” in the rural areas to 1 crore rural households, within a period of three years-2016-2019.

**Rural Roads: Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**

- This will facilitate village interconnectivity and with urban counterparts. Under this scheme, habitations need to be connected with agricultural and rural markets, schools, colleges and hospitals to enhance the quality of life in rural areas.

**Sanitation: Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin**

- To create awareness and to address the sanitation needs of the people, *Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin* was launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 to achieve “*Clean India*” by 2019.

**Rural Electrification: Saubhagya**

- Electricity connectivity in the villages is essential for the improvement in quality of life. Hence, “*Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana*’ was launched. It envisages creation of basic electricity infrastructure in villages/habitations, to improve quality and reliability of power supply in rural areas. Free electricity connections are also provided to select BPL households.
- Government has implemented one of its flagship schemes called “*Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya)*. The objective of Saubhagya Scheme is to provide energy access to all by last mile connectivity un-electrified households in rural as well as urban areas to achieve universal household electrification in the country and every household got electricity connection by 2018. But it was delayed and will be achieved by the end of 2019.

**EXTENDING TELECOM CONNECTIVITY TO RURAL INDIA**

- According to a NASSCOM report, India possesses the world’s second largest internet user base, after China. This report has made certain projections about the state of internet usage in India 2020:
  - 730 million internet users in India.
  - 75% of new Internet user growth from rural areas.
  - 70% of e-Commerce transactions via mobile phones.
  - 75% of new Internet users to consume data in local languages.
  - India to remain the fastest growing Internet market.
- Next generation 5G rollouts are predicted and targeted around 2020 in India.
- 5G connectivity is the focus of interest not only because of the obvious upgrade from 4G speeds, but also because 5G internet access will herald new services by being the backbone of IoT networks and services.
- When it comes to specific rural applications, smart sensors for irrigation and energy management, etc. would greatly benefit the farming population. Those rearing livestock could keep a track on their location via sensors and GPS technology, thus making management of livestock a simpler task.

**Over the Top (OTT Services):**

- Third party applications/services or OTT Services that ride over internet services are a major part of the digital environment today. The most common examples of OTT players are WhatsApp, Paytm, Amazon, Flipkart, Uber, Ola, etc.
- The government's financial inclusion drivers coupled with the unique national identify system and the ubiquity of mobile phones in India have given boost to App based payments and financial services for rural India. The RuPay card is one such example.
- Further, occupation specific Apps are being used to assist rural Indians. One such App is *Kisan Suvidha*. 'Launched in 2016 to work towards empowerment of farmers and development of villages, the app design is neat and offers a user-friendly interface. It also the forecast for the next five days, market prices of commodities/Crops in the nearest town, knowledge on fertilizers, seeds, machinery etc.
- Apps like myGov that allow citizens to interface with the Government have a special meaning for rural India and remote parts of the country.

**Internet of Things (IoT):**

- The Internet of Things enables, objects sharing information with other objects/members in the network, recognizing events and changes so to react autonomously in an appropriate manner.
- **Sustainable Land water Resources Management**
- **Food Security:** Through the use of sensors/RFID etc, every stakeholder in the movement of the food products can view parameters like the lifetime, environment during transportation, shelf life, etc.
- **Disaster Management**
- **Public Health:** Certain health conditions often require continuous checkups, which are hard to receive in rural areas. Wearable devices for patients will make it possible for their body conditions to be monitored without physical sessions with a doctor, and the treatment could be routinely adjustment based on the information.
- Through its Bharat Net project, the Department of telecommunications is connecting 2.5 lakh village panchayats with Optic Fibre Cable to enable delivery of this speed broadband.
- The Department's Universal Service Obligation Funds has several other schemes too to bring better mobile and internet connectivity to rural and remote areas. Keeping in mind the potential of rural markets, private technology giants such as Google and Facebook are keen on rural connectivity projects through unconventional means such as balloons and drones respectively.
- Rural content development and ICT literacy are also areas that are attracting attention.
- These technological developments will be helped along by an ever-increasing user base for internet services, as well as for smartphones in rural India, boosting investment and creating a virtuous cycle of ICT enabled rural development.

**EMPOWERING WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN INDIA**

**Landmark Schemes for Women and Children:**

- **Beti Bachao Beti Pado** (BBBP), the flagship scheme was launched initially to address the declining Child Sex Ratio. Later it included concerns such as strict enforcement of PC & PNDT Act, privisons to motivate higher education for girls and related issues of disempowerment of women on a life-cycle continuum.
- To deal with the problem of malnutrition, government has set-up the **National Nutrition Mission** (NNM). The aim is to achieve an improvement in the nutritional status of children of 0-6 years and pregnant and lactating women in time bound manner, during the coming three years beginning 2017-18.
- The **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana** (PMMVY) is a maternity benefit programme that has been made a pan-India phenomenon since 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2016. The beneficiaries would receive cash incentive of Rs. 6000/- during pregnancy and after institutional delivery.
- In 2017, government notified **Supplementary Nutrition (ICDS) Rules, 2017** to regulate entitlement of 'nutrient dense food' for every pregnant and lactating woman till 6 months after child birth, and every child in the age group of 6 months to 6 years for 300 days in a years.
- **SABLA** is a Centrally- sponsored scheme for **Adolescent Girls**, to enable them for self-development and empowerment, improve their health and nutrition status, adolescent reproductive and sexual health, through various interventions such as guidance & counseling and imparting vocational training for girls aged 16 and above.
- In 2015, **Swadhar Greh** scheme was launched to cater to primary needs of women in difficult circumstances. Setting up of shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment and care are exclusively provided, meanwhile, they are provided with legal guidance to enable family/society.
- **Mahila Shakti Kenda** scheme was launched in 2017 to address women's issues at the rural level wherein student volunteers would be engaged in 115 most backward districts for three years. These volunteers will work with local women to help them access government schemes for their benefit and to provide 'one stop convergent support services for their skill development, employment digital literacy, health and nutrition.
- **Mahila Polic Volunteers (MPVs)** will prove to be an effective alternative against the local police for women. It will serve as a public-police interface and facilitative women in districts.
- **Mahila e-Haat** is an initiative to economically empower women through financial inclusion. The government launched a bilingual portal Mahila e-Haat, a direct online digital marketing platform for women entrepreneurship/SHGs/NGOs in March 2016.
- **Passport rules have been amended** in favour of single mothers.
- In May 2016, **Training for Women Heads of Panchayats**, as an initiative was implemented at Jhalawar, Rajasthan.
- The Ministry has launched the Scheme of **One Stop Centres** to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical assistance, police assistance, legal aid/counseling and psychological- social/counseling, shelter. For girls under 18 years of age,

institutions established under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and Protection of Children from Sexual offence Act, 2012 will provide guidance.

- In 2016, the Universalisation of Women Helpline was launched to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence through a uniform number with short code 181 to all States/UTs.
- To improve overall responsiveness to gender sensitive cases and to bring visibility and strengthen gender sensitivity in police force, and advisory has been issued to all States to increase **women representation in police up to 33%**.
- To enhance the safety and security for women, **Nirbhaya Fund** has been set up.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, has seen massive improvement in the recent years.**
- To help women report incidents of **Sexual harassment at the workplace**, an online complaint mechanism, **SHE-Box** has been established.
- The **Gender Champion initiative** has been operationalized for sensitizing young students.
- **Railway Childline** is implemented by Railways for runaway, abandoned, kidnapped, trafficked children.
- In a first of its kind, Kiosks with Child Helpline have been set up at key 24 railway stations where the identified children are brought for temporary stay before they are restored to their parents or are sent to a children's home.
- **POCSO e-Box** was launched in August 2016 and is a simple and easy to use facility for children or any adult to register complaints of child sexual abuse or harassment.
- For working women, **maternity leave has been extended to a period of 26 weeks.**
- The government launched as web portal called **Khoya-Paya** for reporting missing children.
- In addition to conferring **Nari Shakti Puruskar** on eminent women, organisations and institutions rendering distinguished services to women's cause especially belonging to the vulnerable and marginalized sections of the society, 'First Ladies' who have broken the glass ceiling and ventured into unusual fields, like the first female Merchant Navy Captain, first train driver of passenger train, first female fire fighter, first female bus driver, first Indian woman to reach Antarctica among others are being recognized.
- The **National Policy for Women, 2017** was drafted and is currently under consideration.
- Under **Working Women Hostel** scheme 33 new hostels were sanctioned during last 3 years to meet the housing requirements of working or helpless women.

**INDIA MAKES STRIDES TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE**

- In India, the environment is being threatened as ecological disruptions are taking place in various ways. The November 2015 report of the World Bank found that climate change could effectively negate economic progress, pushing 45 million Indians into extreme poverty over the next 15 years.
- Other reports point out that India lost more people to the impacts of climate change than any other country and suffered third highest financial losses from extreme weather events. The Global Climate Risk Index 2018 referred to India's intense heat waves, extreme rainfall events and severe floods to label the country as the sixth most vulnerable in 2016 after Haiti, Zimbabwe, Fiji, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.
- India is set to overtake China and become the world's largest emitter of sulphur dioxide, an air pollutant that is generated when coal is burnt and can lead to severe haze, acid rain and asthma complications.
- Estimates reveal that India needs over \$1 trillion to meet its requirements to counter climate change and would like to have a meaningful resolution of the issue of long-term finance at the global climate negotiations.

**India's Initiatives**

- India has taken some definite strides in two fields – the Swachh Bharat campaign and the pursuit of renewable sources of energy, specially solar power.
- The result of Ganga cleaning would be visible on the ground by March next year as water quality would be 70 to 80 per cent cleaner from 2014-15 levels.
- As regards the power sector, India wants to raise renewable capacity to 175 gigawatts by 2022 from 45 gigawatts at present.
- India wants to emulate industrial development in neighbouring China, where solar manufacturing has created a world-leading export industry.
- Reports indicate that installed solar capacity including rooftop and off-grid segments, in the country has crossed 10 gigawatts (GW).
- India receives about 5000 trillion kilowatt hours (kWh) equivalent of energy per year through solar radiation. Just one per cent of the country's land area can meet its entire electricity requirement till 2030.
- It was pointed out that India has one of the world's highest solar intensities with an annual solar energy yield of 1700 to 1900 kilowatt hours per kilowatt peak (kWh/kWp) of the installed capacity.

**Future Outlook**

- Afforestation, desiltation of rivers and canals are replenishment of soil with organic matter-will need maximum resources that now flow to power, large industry and irrigation.
- Finally, it needs to be reiterated that at this juncture a civilization that is ecologically balanced has to be the strategy of all countries, including India.

**ACCELERATING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE**

- Right to Health is a basic human right, which is protected by Article 21 of the Constitution of India.
- The primary aim of the National Health Policy, 2017, is to inform, clarify, strengthen and prioritize the role of the Government in shaping health service systems in all its dimensions such as investment in health, organization and financing of healthcare services, prevention of diseases and promotion of good health through cross sectoral action, access to technologies, developing human resources, encouraging medical pluralism, building the knowledge base required for better health, financial protection strategies and regulation and progressive assurance for health.
- The policy emphasizes reorienting and strengthening the Public Health Institutions across the country, so as to provide universal access to free drugs, diagnostics and other essential healthcare. Some of the important features related to primary health care towards the Universal Health Coverage are:
  - i) It aims at achieving universal health coverage and delivering quality health care services to all at an affordable cost.
  - ii) It seeks to promote quality of care and focus is on emerging diseases and investment in promotive and preventive health care.
  - iii) The NHP, 2017 advocates a positive and proactive engagement with the private sector for critical gap filling towards achieving national goals. It envisages private sector collaboration for strategic purchasing, capacity building, skill development programmes, awareness generation, developing sustainable networks for community to strengthen mental health services, and disaster management.
  - iv) The policy proposes raising public health expenditure to 2.5% of the GDP in a time bound manner. It also envisages providing larger package of assured comprehensive primary health care through the Health and Wellness Centres'. It denotes important changes from very selective to comprehensive primary health care package which includes geriatric health care, palliative care and rehabilitative care services.
  - v) It seeks to strengthen the health, surveillance system and establish registries for diseases of public health importance, by 2020. It also seeks to align other policies for medical devices and equipment with public health goals.
  - vi) In order to leverage the pluralistic health care legacy, the policy recommends mainstreaming the Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH).
  - vii) The policy supports voluntary service in rural and under-served areas on pro-bono basis by recognized healthcare professionals under a 'giving back to society' initiative.
  - viii) The policy advocates extensive deployment of digital tools for improving the efficiency and outcome of the healthcare system and proposes establishment of National Digital Health Authority (NDHA) to regulate, develop and deploy digital health across the continuum of care.
- In order to attain these objectives, the country is aiming to create a vast network of public health system based on Public Private Partnership (PPP). In the Union Budget 2018-19, Government has announced two important interventions to provide health to all at their door

step. First, is through creation of Health and Wellness Centres (H & WC) that “will bring healthcare system closer to the home of people” and second a flagship National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) to cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families providing coverage up to five lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization”.

- A national health agency will be instituted under the scheme to oversee its implementation at the state-level.
- In 2016, India has similar scheme Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), which was covering an insurance of Rs. 30,000 for a family comprising of at most five members.

### **Rural Health Care: Services and Challenges**

- As per Census 2011, the total population of India is 121 crore, out of which the rural population is 83.3 crore (68.84%) and urban population is 37.7 crore (31.16%).
- The differences in health status in urban and rural areas are based on various factors such as: availability, accessibility and affordability of health services, literacy and educational status, poverty, employment and source of livelihood, income and family size, food intake and nutritional status, gender disparity, housing, access to clean water and sanitation facilities, information and knowledge for health programmes etc.
- As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)- 4 data, infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 29 for urban areas and 46 for rural areas. Under five Mortality shows that in urban areas it is 34 but in rural areas it is 56.
- The production of health workers has greatly expanded over the years at the cost of increased privatization of medical education in India.
- However, mere increase in production capacity is unlikely to resolve the issues related to health-worker availability or distribution.

### **The Way Forward:**

- In the case of Health and Wellness Centre, the greater responsibility would be on middle level health professionals because they will be the first contact person. So, the challenge is to create this health care workforce in the time bound manner. These professionals should have minimum skills and relevant experience in health service sector who can understand medical complications from the medical and social perspectives.
- Independent and transparent system should be in place to keep check on these insurance providers.

**SANITATION ROADMAP FOR CLEAN INDIA**

- It is a well known fact that inadequate sanitation pollutes environments, causes diseases, kills people and diminishes welfare in the society.
- As per baseline survey conducted by Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, 55 crore people were defecating in open in October 2014, which declined to 25 crore in January 2018.
- The aim of the mission is to attain countrywide open defecation-free (ODF) status in five year by facilitating the installation of more than 200,000 subsidized toilets.
- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation organises Education and Communication (IEC) activities for triggering behaviour changes.
- The goal of Swachh Bharat Mission(Gramin) is to achieve universal sanitation coverage in the entire rural India by the year 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019. This includes provision of toilets for the entire rural population. Provisioning of sanitation facilities for Schedule Castes/ Schedule Tribes is an important priority under SBM (G).
- The rural sanitation coverage has more than that doubled since the launched of the mission from 39% to nearly 84%.
- UNICEF estimates that the lack of sanitation is responsible for the deaths of over 100,000 children in Indian annually.
- The United Nations-World Health Organization Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation defines 'improved' sanitation as the means that hygienically separate human excreta from human contact and hence reduces health risks to humans.
- Open defecation poses a serious threat to the health of children in India. The practice is the main reason India reports the highest number of Diarrhoea deaths among children under-five in the world. Open defecation also puts at risk the dignity of women in India.
- On the economic front, the lack of Sanitation facilities costs India over 6 per cent of GDP, as per the world Bank estimates.
- Open defecation in urban areas is driven by a number of reasons including, lack of space to build toilets in high-density settlements and tenants unwilling to invest in toilets where landlords do not provide them.
- An integrated Ganga Conservation Mission called "Namami Gange" has been proposed.
- Funding have been allocated for development of Ghats and beautification of River Fronts at Kedarnath, Haridwar, Kanpur, Varanasi, Allahabad, Patna and Delhi in the current financial year.
- India's sanitation issue is just not about open defecation and there are larger issues like poorly maintained drains in the country and lack of proper sewage disposal that creates the environment unhealthy and polluters rivers.