

AIR Spotlight: Clean India 2.0

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in IAS exam preparation. This article is about the discussion on Clean India 2.0.

Participants:

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Context: The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports recently announced a month-long nationwide Clean India 2.0 from 1st October, 2022.

Introduction:

- As per the vision of the Prime Minister, Clean India 2.0 programme is being organised in 6 Lakh villages of 744 districts across the country through the network of Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) affiliated Youth Clubs & National Service Scheme Affiliated Institutions.
- The programme will be launched with an aim to raise awareness, mobilise people and ensure their participation in making India clean.
- In this initiative, people from different regions, languages and backgrounds will work together and the waste will be disposed of by these people on a completely voluntary basis.

Objectives of the Programme:

- The Department of Youth Affairs has set a target of collecting and disposing of 1 crore kg of plastic waste in the 2022 campaign.
- The objectives of the Clean India programme are to organise cleaning of public spaces and households across all the districts of the country from 1st October to 31st October 2022, involve all segments of society, Government organisations including PRIs and Non-Government Organisations, to instil awareness and feeling of pride among citizens to keep their surroundings clean and waste-free.
- The campaign will give the mantra of “Swachh Kaal: Amrit Kaal” and make this program a People’s Movement through people’s participation.

Significant impact of the previous campaign:

- Swachh Bharat Mission was launched throughout the country as a national movement from 2014 which aims to achieve the vision of a 'Clean India'.
- The Swachhta Abhiyan has turned into a National Movement which evoked a sense of responsibility among the people and made them active participants in cleanliness activities.
- There's been remarkable progress starting from behaviour change to initiatives on the ground specifically in regard to awareness raising and social engineering.

Read more on the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in the linked article.

Focus of Clean India 2.0:

- The major focus of Clean India 2.0 is on single-use plastic which is harmful to environmental health and human health.
 - India generates 3.5 million tonnes of plastic waste a year. The government data reveals that India's per capita plastic waste generation is 3-4 kg per year.
 - A 2021 report by the Minderoo Foundation found that India features in the top 100 countries of single-use plastic waste generation – at rank 94.
 - Of 25000 tons of SUPs generated per day in India, only about 60 percent gets collected.
- This year, the programme also focuses on hotspots such as Tourist Places, Educational Institutes, Bus Stand/Railway Stations and the vicinity, National Highways, Historical and heritage buildings, religious places & surroundings, hospitals and water resources, etc. for waste collection.
- Clean India 2.0 also emphasises awareness raising around the basics of Swachh Bharat mission, such as waste segregation at source, scientific processing/disposal reuse/recycle of Municipal Solid Waste.
 - To bring about a behavioural change in people with regard to healthy sanitation practices.
 - Strengthening of urban local bodies to design, execute and operate systems.
 - To create an enabling environment for private sector participation in Capital Expenditure and Operation & Maintenance (O&M) costs.

Behavioural Changes witnessed regarding the cleanliness Drive since Swachh Bharath Abhiyan:

- Among the focus of the mission, source segregation of solid waste utilising the principles of 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), scientific processing of all types of municipal solid waste, and remediation of legacy dumpsites for effective solid waste management were successful in their objective to an extent.

- The program has ingrained the idea of Swachhata in the minds of citizens with diverse citizen groups coming together to take ownership of their city's cleanliness status and visibly improve it.
- At the core of the Mission lies the central belief that 'swachhata is everyone's business' and stakeholders across the country were sensitised on the importance of solid waste management – through programmes, cleanliness drives, workshops, competitions, rallies, etc.
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is providing help in the form of infrastructure and finance for efficient waste management in the states.

Steps taken to mitigate the negative impacts of Single Use Plastics:

- Single Use Plastics (SUPs) pollute the land and water, polluting water bodies and killing marine life. With climate and environment becoming a rising global concern, plastic pollution and plastic waste management have become the point of worry.
- Toxic chemicals from plastic bags can damage the blood and tissues. Frequent exposures can lead to cancers, birth defects, impaired immunity, hormone changes, endocrine disruption and other serious ailments.
- The manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of notified single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene commodities were prohibited by the government of India with effect from the 1st July 2022.
- The government of India has notified the Guidelines on Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) on plastic packaging under Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.
 - The Guidelines will provide a framework to strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste, promote the development of new alternatives to plastic packaging and provide the next steps for moving towards sustainable plastic packaging by businesses.
- Capacity building workshops are being organised for MSME units to provide them with technical assistance for manufacturing alternatives to banned single-use plastic items.
- Provisions have also been made to support such enterprises in transitioning away from banned single-use plastics.
- The Government of India has also taken steps to promote innovation and provide an ecosystem for accelerated penetration and availability of alternatives all across the country.

Conclusion: No campaign can be successful unless and until it becomes a People's Movement.

There's been significant progress since the previous edition of Clean India. Each and every person has to ensure that they are mindful of their consumption especially when it comes to Single Use Plastics and be minimalistic about their consumption and footprint by ensuring proper waste collection and segregation.

