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An overview of the AMRUT scheme

Around 36% of India's population is living in cities and by 2047 it will be more than 50%. The World Bank estimates that around $840 billion is required to fund the bare minimum urban infrastructure over the next 15 years.

What is the AMRUT scheme?

o Launched in 2015, AMRUT stands for Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation.

o Centrally Sponsored Scheme (cost-sharing between Centre & States) that targets 500 cities with a population of over one lakh.

o It aims to

  o **Improve water supply and sanitation:** Every household to have access to a functional tap with assured supply of water and a sewerage connection. Nearly 31% of urban Indian households do not have piped water; 67.3% are not connected to a piped sewerage discharge system

  o **Greenery**: Developing greenery and well-maintained open spaces such as parks

  o **Public transport**: Reduce pollution by switching to public transport or constructing facilities for non-motorised transport.

o Financial Outlay

  o AMRUT 1.0 (2015-20) - ₹50,000 crore

  o AMRUT 2.0 (2021-26) - ₹2,99,000 crore (with Central outlay being ₹76,760 crore & the rest by States)

What has been the progress of AMRUT funds?

o ₹83,357 crore disbursed as of May 19, 2024.

o Provided tap connections (58.6 lakhs), sewerage connections (37.5 lakhs).

o Developed parks (2,411) and replaced streetlights with LEDs (62.8 lakhs)

What went wrong or what were the criticisms of the scheme?

o Adopted Project-oriented approach instead of holistic urban planning.

o Limited city government (Urban Local Bodies) and public participation.

o Focus on private interests and technology-driven solutions.

o Poor Water management with disrupted storm water flows, and absence of storm water drainage.

o Prioritization of real estate development over environmental concerns.

o Lack of consideration for local climate and infrastructure.

What is the way forward?

o Aligning AMRUT with other government programs like Smart Cities Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission for a more holistic approach to urban development.

- Climate resilient solutions that involves rainwater harvesting, water-efficient technologies, and green infrastructure to manage storm water and mitigate flooding.
- Utilizing PPPs effectively while ensuring transparency and accountability
- Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress towards goals, identify issues, and ensure efficient resource allocation
- Focus on equity & inclusivity through subsidized connections, slum upgrading programs, and public toilets in underserved areas
- People-centric approach empowering local bodies through capacity building of personnel.

Can you answer the following question?

The AMRUT scheme has been touted as a flagship program for urban infrastructure development in India. However, concerns persist regarding its effectiveness. Examine the challenges faced by the AMRUT scheme and suggest a multi-pronged approach for its improvement.

Cyclone Remal aftermath shows necessity of disaster-resilient infrastructure

The damage caused by landslides in the Northeast in the aftermath of cyclone Remal that hit the West Bengal coastline on Sunday night is the latest reminder of the urgent need to upgrade and overhaul the disaster management system.

What role has NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority) played over the years?

- The NDMA was established in 2005 in response to devastating disasters like the 1999 Odisha super cyclone and the 2004 tsunami.
- It aims to manage disasters in India through mitigation, preparedness, response, and relief efforts.
- It has developed competencies in disaster risk assessment, reduction, and response and has been able to address emerging threats like extreme heatwaves.
- It has promoted capacity building of state-level disaster management agencies (though effectiveness varies

What are the challenges for NDMA?

- **Climate Change Reality**: Disasters, especially those linked to extreme weather, have become more frequent and intense due to climate change.
- **Rise of multi-hazard disasters:** Cascading events where one triggers another, causing greater devastation. (e.g., cyclone leading to landslides and floods)
- **Requirement for proactive measures:** Focus on mitigation strategies and building disaster resilience into infrastructure.
- **Limited Public Awareness and Participation:** While the NDMA focuses on preparedness, there's a need for stronger public outreach programs to educate communities about disaster risks, mitigation strategies, and evacuation procedures.

- o **Coordination Issues:** Effective disaster management requires seamless coordination between the NDMA, state disaster management agencies, and local authorities. Communication gaps and bureaucratic hurdles can hinder this collaboration.

- o **Urban Disaster Preparedness:** Rapid urbanization presents unique challenges. Slums and densely populated areas are particularly vulnerable to disasters. The NDMA needs to develop specific strategies for urban disaster preparedness and risk reduction

- o **Financial Sustainability:** Disaster management requires consistent funding for preparedness, mitigation projects, and capacity building. Finding sustainable funding sources beyond government allocations is a challenge.

What are some improvements needed for disaster management?

- o **Mitigating man-made vulnerabilities:** Regulating construction practices to minimize disaster risks. New and existing infrastructure should be designed to withstand disasters.

- o **Developing mobile applications:** Create user-friendly mobile apps to disseminate disaster preparedness information, evacuation instructions, and emergency contact details to the public

- o **Local knowledge integration:** Incorporate traditional knowledge and practices of local communities for disaster risk reduction strategies in vulnerable areas

- o **International Collaboration:** India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) can inform domestic efforts.

Can you answer the following question?

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has played a crucial role in mitigating the impact of disasters in India. However, the evolving nature of disasters necessitates a more comprehensive approach. Critically examine the challenges faced by the NDMA and suggest a multi-pronged strategy for strengthening disaster resilience in India.

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