Syllabus subtopic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the National Broadband Mission and its significance in bridging the digital divide in India

News: The government on Tuesday announced a new ‘mission’ aimed at providing broadband access to all villages by 2022, entailing an investment of around Rs. 7 lakh crore from various stakeholders.

About the mission

- The National Broadband Mission will facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services across the country, especially in rural and remote areas.
- It would also aim at significantly improving quality of services for mobile and Internet.
- Under the mission, the government plans to lay incremental 30lakh route km of optical fibre cable, while also increasing tower density from 0.42 to 1 tower per thousand of population by 2024.
- The mission envisages stakeholder investment of $100 billion (Rs.7 lakh crore) including Rs.70,000 crore from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) in the coming years and “address policy and regulatory changes required to accelerate the expansion and creation of digital infrastructure and services.”

Vision of the mission

The vision of the national broadband mission is to fastrack growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion, and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all.