Syllabus subtopic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

News: The latest National Statistical Office (NSO) survey on sanitation debunked the claims of an open defecation free or ODF India made by the Centre’s flagship Swachh Bharat scheme, although it did record great progress in toilet access and use in rural areas.

Prelims focus: about NSO, its findings on ODF status in India

Mains focus: about Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, challenges and achievements so far

What did the results show?

- The results, released on Saturday, showed that **about 71% of rural households had access to toilets at a time when the Centre was claiming 95% had access.** On October 2, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that the whole country was ODF with complete access to toilets.
- The survey was carried out between July and December 2018, with a reference date of October 1.
- Large States which had been declared ODF — that is, 100% access to toilets and 100% usage — even before the survey began included Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Others which were declared ODF during the survey included Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

State wise results:

- According to the NSO, almost 42% of the rural households in Jharkhand had no access to a toilet at that time. In Tamil Nadu, the gap was 37%, followed by 34% in Rajasthan.
- In Gujarat, which was one of the earliest States declared ODF, back in October 2017, almost a quarter of all rural households had no toilet access, the NSO data showed.
- The other major States listed also had significant gaps: Karnataka (30%), Madhya Pradesh (29%), Andhra Pradesh (22%) and Maharashtra (22%).

Background

- In the first week of October 2018, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Grameen) said 25 States and Union Territories had been declared ODF, while toilet access across the country touched 95%.
- In reality, the NSO said 28.7% of rural households had no toilet access at the time. With regard to this data, the NSO noted, “There may be respondent bias in the reporting of access to latrine as question on benefits received by the households from government schemes was asked prior to the question on access of households to latrine.”
Way forward

The 71% access to toilets was still a significant improvement over the situation during the last survey period in 2012, when only 40% of the rural households had access to toilets.

The NSO’s statistics on toilet usage were also encouraging. It said 95% of people with access to toilets in rural India used them regularly, indicating that the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’s efforts to change behaviour had borne fruit. Only 3.5% of those with toilet access in rural India said they never used them.

About Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

- It is a national level campaign by the Government of India officially launched on 2 October 2014 at Rajghat, New Delhi on 150 birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ is a massive mass movement that seeks to fulfill Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Clean India.
- It aims to cover 4,041 statutory towns to clean the streets, roads and infrastructure of the country. This campaign is India's biggest ever cleanliness drive/event wherein 3 million government employees and schools and colleges students of India participated. The mission was started by PM Modi nominating nine famous personalities for this campaign, and further, they take up the challenge and nominate nine more people and so on (like the branching of a tree). It has been carried forward since then with famous people from all walks of life joining it.

National Statistical Office (NSO) (under Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation)

- The National Statistical Office (NSO) headed by a Director General is responsible for conduct of large scale sample surveys in diverse fields on All India basis. Primarily data are collected through nation-wide household surveys on various socio-economic subjects, Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), etc. Besides these surveys, NSO collects data on rural and urban prices and plays a significant role in the improvement of crop statistics through supervision of the area enumeration and crop estimation surveys of the State agencies. It also maintains a frame of urban area units for use in sample surveys in urban areas.

The NSO has four Divisions:

- Survey Design and Research Division (SDR): This Division, located at Kolkata, is responsible for technical planning of surveys, formulation of concepts and definitions, sampling design, designing of inquiry schedules, drawing up of tabulation plan, analysis
and presentation of survey results.

- **Field Operations Division (FOD):** The Division, with its headquarters at Delhi/Faridabad and a network of six Zonal Offices, 52 Regional Offices and 117 Sub-Regional Offices spread throughout the country, is responsible for the collection of primary data for the surveys undertaken by NSO.

- **Data Processing Division (DPD):** The Division, with its headquarters at Kolkata and 5 other Data Processing Centers at various places, is responsible for sample selection, software development, processing, validation and tabulation of the data collected through surveys. Price and Wages in Rural India collected through schedule 3.01(R) is being processed at DPC Giridih. In addition, DPD is also processing the data of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). Industrial Statistics Wing (IS Wing), DPD, NSO, Kolkata is responsible for sample selection, data processing, validation and tabulation of the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) data collected through a dedicated web-portal.

- **Survey Coordination Division (SCD):** This Division, located at New Delhi, coordinates all the activities of different Divisions of NSO. It also brings out the bi-annual journal of NSO, titled “Sarvekshana”, and organizes National Seminars on the results of various Socio-economic surveys undertaken by NSO.