

1. Draft National Resource Efficiency Policy

Prelims: Environment- Conservation & Mitigation

Mains: GS-III- Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Context:

- ▶▶ Driven by serious sustainability concern, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has proposed a draft National Resource Efficiency Policy 2019 which aims to streamline the efficient use of these resources with minimum negative impact on environment.

Background:

- ▶▶ The draft policy comes in the backdrop of India's growth story as one of the fastest growing economies of the world with an estimated \$2.6 trillion GDP, which has increased its material consumption to six times from 1.8 billion ton in 1970 to 7 billion ton in 2015.
- ▶▶ The policy was aiming to double the recycling rate of key materials to 50% in the next five years and enable upcycling of waste.

Key Features of the Policy:

- ▶▶ **National Resource Efficiency Authority (NREA):** The policy aims to set up a National Resource Efficiency Authority (NREA) with a core working group and a members group with representations from different ministries, state/union territory, and other stakeholders.
- ▶▶ **Inter-Ministerial National Resource Efficiency Board:** The authority would be supported by an Inter-Ministerial National Resource Efficiency Board to guide on the aspects critical to its implementation.
- ▶▶ **Monetary Incentives:** It also plans to offer tax benefits on recycled materials, green loans to small and medium Enterprises (SMEs) and soft loans to construct waste disposal facilities, apart from setting up Material Recovery Facilities (MRF).
- ▶▶ **Shared responsibility of Stakeholders:** Manufacturers and service providers would also be required to use more recycled or renewable materials and awareness would be created among consumers to indicate the shift.
- ▶▶ **National Policy on Circular Economy:** Idea of the national policy is to drive the country towards circular economy through efficient use of available material resources, based on principle of 6R and 'green public procurement'.

- ▶▶ **‘Zero landfill’ Approach:** It also pitches for moving towards ‘zero landfill’ approach in the country, hinting at possibility of imposing ‘landfill taxes’ and ‘high tipping fees’ for bulk generators of waste so that they can move towards optimal use of materials and better waste management.
- ▶▶ **The 6R stands** for reduce, reuse, recycle, redesign, re-manufacture and refurbish while the very premise of **‘green public procurement’** is to procure products with lower environmental footprints such as secondary raw materials and locally sourced materials.

What do you mean by “Resource Efficiency”?

- ▶▶ In the above context, Resource efficiency means using the Earth's limited resources in a sustainable manner while minimising impacts on the environment. It allows us to create more with less and to deliver greater value with less input.
- ▶▶ To put it more simply, Resource efficiency is making more with fewer materials.

Fore coming Challenges before India:

- ▶▶ India’s recycling rate is just 20-25% compared with 70% in developing countries in Europe. The situation will only aggravate as India is likely to double its material consumption by 2030.
- ▶▶ India’s resource extraction of 1580 tonnes/acre is much higher than the world average of 450 tonnes/acre, while material productivity remains low.
- ▶▶ Increased import dependency on majority of the key resources like-cobalt, copper and lithium that find extensive application in high-end technology industry is almost 100%.
- ▶▶ India imports almost 80% of crude oil along with 85% of its coking coal demand. Extraction of non-metallic minerals is not without embattling challenges.
- ▶▶ To add to the misery there has been massive soil degradation, with 147 million hectares (Mha) of a total of 329 Mha land area have been widely hit.
- ▶▶ Water is fast becoming scarce while deteriorating air quality has emerged as a major threat to human life. With nearly 50 per cent of India grappling with drought-like conditions, the situation has been becoming grim with unpredictable rainfall.