

4. Govt Launches New Framework to sustain India's '100% ODF status'

Prelims: Governance- Policies, Schemes

Mains: GS-II- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health.

Why in News?

- ▶ The Union Jal Shakti Ministry's Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), launched a 10-year national rural sanitation strategy **to sustain India's 100 per cent Open Defecation Free (ODF) status.**

About the Framework:

- Sustaining the Success:** The framework, to be in place from 2019 to 2029, will ensure that people sustain their usage of toilets.
- A District-level training management unit (TMU)** will be set up to provide oversight and support to gram panchayats (GPs) so that they ensure the operation and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure. The GPs are also supposed to conduct rapid assessment of water and sanitation gaps.
- Filling the Existing Gaps:** While there are still houses that have been left behind under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and gaps which need to be addressed, the Centre has said India will be declared ODF on October 2, 2019, the target it had set itself five years ago.
 - ▶ The government acknowledges there might be some gaps but those are miniscule in number and the ministry will fix them under its ODF plus mission.
- Solid Waste and Sludge management:** It will also focus on proper implementation of solid and liquid waste management (SLWM) — plastic waste, organic waste, grey water, and faecal sludge in rural areas.
- Updation of existing Toilets:** A report was released on the occasion and outlined the steps that the government intends to take under the framework.
 - ▶ They include the retrofitting of single pit toilets to twin pits or making provisions to empty pits every five years, repair of defunct ones, and construction of soak pits for septic tanks wherever not already present.
- Funding Strategy:** While government funding is the primary source of financing in the sanitation sector, the strategy mentioned in the framework also suggests alternative

self-financing by gradual leveraging of community resources in the form of tariffs for ODF plus activities.

- ▶▶ It will follow the same 60:40 financing model as being followed till now in Swachh Bharat. It will be finalised after the cabinet's approval.
- 7. **Focus on Menstrual Hygiene Management:** The framework also talks about state-specific strategies on menstrual hygiene management, including menstrual waste management, which may be supported under the ODF plus strategy.
- 8. **Coercive Action:** Any coercive action taken by anybody, including government or elected officials, or private individuals with respect to sanitation behaviour of any kind is 'totally unacceptable', the advisory said. This statement was issued in the wake of the murder of two children in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district over Open Defecation.

What is ODF PLUS Status:

- ▶▶ The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan's guidelines, prepared by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) defines ODF plus as an area where along with regular availability and usage of toilets, management of solid and liquid waste, cleanliness of water resources, maintenance of public and household toilets and awareness on personal hygiene are at their highest.
- ▶▶ The Ministry, on several occasions has said that ODF plus is not just a label, but a sustained campaign to achieve all-round cleanliness in an area.

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