

1. Draft policy seeks to plug gaps in Implementation of waste laws

Context:

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

Why Waste Management is Important?

- ▶▶ Waste generation is **inextricably linked to urbanization and economic development**. From collection of waste to disposal, cities are struggling to implement an affordable and sustainable model.
- ▶▶ Currently, **India generates about 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW)**. It is evident that waste generation in cities is **increasing by 5% each year** because of growing population and consumption.
- ▶▶ With poor systems of segregation, recycling and reuse, wastes including hazardous wastes (includes biomedical, plastics, domestic hazardous wastes and e-wastes) are improperly disposed, endangering the environment and human health.
- ▶▶ It is clear that waste management is one of the key areas where significant work has not been done to push for objectives of the circular economy (CE) model that seeks to restore and regenerate, and also reduce waste by replacing the end-of-life concept.
- ▶▶ The country's **recycling rate** is just about **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.

Key Features of the Draft Policy:

- ▶▶ It is guided by few key principles namely, **reduction in primary resource consumption to 'sustainable' levels**, in keeping with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and staying within the planetary boundaries.
- ▶▶ Creation of higher value with less material through resource efficiency and circular approaches;
- ▶▶ Waste minimization; material security and creation of employment opportunities, and business models beneficial to the cause of environment protection and restoration.

- ▶▶ The draft has proposed significant policy instruments **like addressing regulatory gaps in implementation of waste laws, landfill taxes, high tipping fees especially for bulk generators of waste, etc.** It will enable moving towards ‘zero landfill approach’.
- ▶▶ It seeks to set up a **National Resource Efficiency Authority (NREA)** with a core working group housed in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and a members group with representations from different ministries, state/union territory, and other stakeholders.
- ▶▶ The National Resource Efficiency Authority (NREA) will be mandated to **drive the agenda of resource efficiency by designing database templates** for material use and waste generated and recycled and land filled, across various sectors and life cycle stages and across different regions (states/zones).
- ▶▶ It also plans to **offer tax benefits on recycled materials**, apart from setting up **Material Recovery Facilities (MRF)**.
- ▶▶ 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’.
- ▶▶ **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.
- ▶▶ In order to promote maximum plastic recycling, the draft has proposed 100% recycling and reuse of PET plastic by 2025 and 75% recycling and reuse rate of other plastic packaging materials by 2030.
- ▶▶ The draft policy also mentions a ban on disposal of recyclable waste to landfills by 2025. Concerning construction and demolition (C&D) waste, it mentions that municipalities in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities should start inventorizing C&D waste data by 2022. Recycling rate for C&D waste should reach 50% by 2025 and 75% by 2030.

NITI Aayog's Strategy on Resource Efficiency:

- ▶▶ NITI Aayog in collaboration with the European Union delegation to India have released the Strategy on Resource Efficiency. The strategy aims to promote resource efficiency in India.

- ▶▶ This strategy is the first policy document to emphasize resource productivity in the country.
- ▶▶ The Strategy emphasizes on **Sustainable Public Procurement (SSP)** as an action agenda which will be the market transformation tool to transform to a resource efficient economy.

Conclusion:

- ▶▶ India's large population, rapid urbanization and expanding industrial production have led to exploitation of available limited natural resources with concerns regarding resource depletion and future availability becoming more pronounced.
- ▶▶ Therefore, **Enhancing resource efficiency (RE)** and promoting the use of secondary raw materials (SRM) is a pertinent strategy to address these challenges and reduce dependence on primary resource.

