

4. Climate Change: Mission Adaptation A Comprehensive Measure

Prelims Syllabus: Environment

Mains Syllabus: GS-III Environment - Climatic Change



Why in News?

- The budget for 2023-24 in India includes some measures towards climate change mitigation, but adaptation has not been given adequate attention. The government needs to adopt a Mission Adaptation to create a supportive ecosystem for all entities to come together and work towards developing locally-sound adaptation solutions.

Climate Change Mitigation Measures:

- **Allocation for green transition:** The budget for 2023-24 in India has allocated funds towards climate change mitigation, with a focus on green growth initiatives targeted at reducing the carbon intensity of the economy such as green mobility, energy efficiency, and the green hydrogen mission announcement.
- **Promoting nature based initiatives:** Nature-based solutions such as the mangrove plantation initiative and the community-based wetland conservation scheme also promise to have potentially positive impacts in mitigating climate change.

Lack of Attention to Climate Change Adaptation

- **Climate change is addressed indirectly:** While climate change mitigation has received attention in the budget, climate change adaptation has been addressed only indirectly.
- **No measures towards enhancing resilience:** The budget does not include measures towards enhancing the resilience of communities and habitations to climate change's impact, despite India's high vulnerability to climate change.

- **For instance:** Measures to account for climate change-induced risks, such as the recent example of Joshimath, do not find explicit mention in the budget.

Funding for Adaptation:

- Adaptation has traditionally received far less attention than mitigation in the global climate discourse, resulting in lower funding for adaptation.
- In India, the ratio of funding for climate adaptation to mitigation stands at 1:10. While funding for mitigation is also underfunded, with only 25% of the requirement met, the gap for adaptation stands much higher, at only 7.9% of the needed funds.

Challenges in Funding Adaptation

- Adapting to climate change often requires highly local and nature-based solutions that do not have a classically-measured ROI. Consequently, mainstream, interest-seeking capital flowing into adaptation is scant.
- Climate adaptation has largely remained a publicly-funded endeavor in India, with nearly 100% of the funding for adaptation coming from public sources. International funding has also remained scarce due to the skewed discourse on climate change.

The Need for a Strategic Investment:

- Climate shocks are anticipated to get more frequent and severe, and in the absence of resilience-building for communities and habitations, the impact could be devastating.
- The public sector must view resilience building as a strategic priority and actively address this matter.
- Climate adaptation must come to be seen as a strategic investment by the public sector, which it must make in order to climate-proof lives, livelihoods, the environment, and the economy.

Mission Adaptation:

- Mission Adaptation is a term used in the context of climate change and refers to the need for a strategic, proactive approach to building adaptive capacity in order to climate-proof lives, livelihoods, the environment and the economy.
- It is a proposed initiative for creating a supportive ecosystem for all entities, including the private sector, non-profits, and civil society, to come together and work towards developing and scaling up locally-sound adaptation solutions in India.

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- The idea is to view climate adaptation as a strategic investment by the public sector and to bridge complex challenges faced by society today using the idea of public purpose to guide policy and business activity.

Conclusion:

- Given the increasing frequency at which climate-related stress is occurring and is expected to occur, the public sector will remain a crucial contributor to funding for climate adaptation. The government must work towards developing a more systemic understanding of resilience and support efforts aimed at building such an understanding across the ecosystem to make Mission Adaptation a reality.

