



India's Cherished Goal of Building Economic Development By Handholding Social Justice Remains a Distant Dream Even After Several Years of Decentralisation Reforms. Examine.(150 words / 10 M) (GS-2 Poverty)

Approach:

1. Introduction
2. Briefly mention about the objects of Mission Antyodaya.
3. Mention the findings on India's rural deprivations.
4. Conclusion & way forward.

The **Constitution mandates local governments to prepare & implement plans for 'economic development and social justice' (Art. 243 G and 243 W)**. Several complementary institutions and measures like **Gram Sabha** to facilitate people's participation, **District Planning Committee** to prepare bottom up & spatial development plans, **State Finance Commission** to ensure vertical-horizontal equity, etc...had been created, but **India's decentralisation reforms have failed in delivering social justice & progress in rural India**.

The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Rural Development**, launched the **'Mission Antyodaya' project** in 2017-18 to **eradicate rural poverty in its multiple dimensions**. Its main objective was to **ensure optimum resource utilization through convergence of various schemes to address multiple deprivations**, making **gram panchayat the hub of development plans**. The **annual survey** in this **identifies the gaps in the basic needs at local level** and integrates resources to address them.

State of rural deprivations:

- The **Socio-Economic Caste Census Data 2011** reveals – 90% rural households have no salaried jobs, 53.7 million households are landless, 6.89 female based households have no support, 49% suffer multiple deprivations, 51.4% derive sustenance from casual labour and 23.73 million are will no room or only one room to live.
- The **'Mission Antyodaya' survey (2019-20)** for the first time reflected on the **infrastructural gaps** from 2.67 lakh gram panchayats. This data enables **development planning sectorally & spatially**. The **maximum score value is 100**, presented in **class intervals of 10**. Its findings are –
- No state falls in the top score bracket of 90 – 100. 1,484 gram panchayats falls in the bottom score bracket. Even in the score range 80 – 90, 10 states & all UTs do not appear.
- Considering the score range 70 – 80, Kerala tops but accounts for only 34.69% of gram panchayats, the corresponding all-India average being as low as 1.09%. Even Gujarat, which comes second, only 11.28% gram panchayats fall in this bracket.
- In the country, while only 7.37% have a composite index in the 70 – 100 bracket, Gujarat, topping the list, has 20.5%, followed by Kerala (19.77%) and Karnataka (17.68%).



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- Although only 15 gram panchayats fall in the bottom range of below 10 scores, more than 1/5th of gram panchayats are below 40 score.
 - **No serious efforts to converge the resources** along with the **failure to deploy India's fiscal federalism**, particularly to improve the transfer system and horizontal equity in delivering public goods.

The ***Mission Antyodaya*** sought to make **50,000 gram panchayats poverty free by 2019**, which has now been **shifted to 2022**. Yet, this will remain unattended. There lies **immense scope to reduce the growing rural-urban disparities**, given the saturation in approach, which requires **strong policy interventions**. 'Mission Antyodaya' is a **recent case of big projects failing to achieve the desired outcomes**. After identifying the gaps, **integrating resources at various levels of schemes, self-help groups, voluntary organisations**, etc. are needed. If pursued genuinely, this can **foster economic development and inter-generational equity**.

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