



General Studies-2; Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Revamp Employment Policy

Introduction

- The Government of India has recently announced its plan to **create 10 lakh government jobs in the next 18 months.**
- Though the announcement has been called a "historic step in the interest of the youth", there are some serious concerns.

Present Status

- The first question is: how is the Government managing now in the absence of more than a fifth of the required number of staff?
- There are as many as 8.72 lakh positions that were vacant in various departments of the Central government.
- The total labour force in the country stands at 437.2 million.
- At a labour force participation rate of 42.13% the **unemployment rate of the youth is about 20% at present.**
- Given the backlog of about 30 million unemployed people and an annual addition of 50 lakh-70 lakh workers every year, the dimensions of India's unemployment problem today are formidable.
- **Urban economy has been badly hurt by the pandemic.**

Generating Quality Jobs

- Another major concern is about the quality of employment that will be generated through this plan.
- The **share of contract workers** in total government employment has been increasing rapidly in recent years.

- In addition, there are “honorary workers” such as Anganvadi workers, their helpers, accredited social health activist (ASHA) workers, etc.
- These employees of the government earn a lower salary, and are not entitled to “decent work” conditions including a minimum package of social security.
- The Government must ensure that the employment generated under its plan will be of a standard quality.
- The performance of the **private sector** in creating employment opportunities has remained dismal.
- Private firms are being seen to be managing their profit margin by cutting costs.
- In this situation it is important for the Government to ensure as many jobs as possible.

Way Forward

- The Government will have to create more employment within the Government.
- Recent reports show that India is lagging behind most other countries in terms of health and nutrition, particularly women and children, in education, literacy and skills etc.
- The Government will have to take responsibility for **meeting these basic needs**.
- **Reorient the industrialisation policy** to focus on labour-intensive sectors of the economy.
- Promote **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** and informal production by ensuring better technology and higher productivity.
- Carefully designed **urban employment guarantee programme** would be most desirable to create ample urban employment avenues for urban youth.
- **The urban programme should include:**
 - basic urban services, where the youth would get special training so that they can be absorbed in the mainstream economy;
 - day-care centres set up for childcare to enable women to reduce their unpaid services and to ensure quality care for children; and
 - infrastructural gaps filled in under construction work to facilitate quality urban life.