



The Gati Shakti National Master Plan

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(Mains GS 3 : Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment; Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.)

Context:

- Prime minister recently launched the **Gati Shakti National Master Plan** to expand India's slowing economic growth.
- Gati Shakti National Master Plan will renew momentum through major infrastructure upgrades that will cut logistics costs for industry and raise all round efficiency.

The holistic planning:

- The National Master Plan aims at bringing in holistic planning and development across the country.
- All economic zones and infrastructure developments depicted in a single integrated platform will provide spatial visibility of physical linkages to promote a comprehensive and integrated multi-modal national network of transportation and logistics.
- The aim of the plan is to enhance ease of living, ease of doing business, minimize disruptions and expedite cost efficient completion of works.
- NMP will boost economic growth, attract foreign investments and enhance the country's global competitiveness there by enabling smooth transportation of goods, people and services and creating employment opportunities.

Integrated approach:

- The plan integrates several Ministries including railways, roads and ports through information technology, satellite mapping and data tools.
- The National Master Plan will also aid concerned Ministries/Departments to prioritize connectivity enhancements for ensuring last mile connectivity to economic zones in a defined time frame.
- The programme further seeks to appeal to the national imagination as an umbrella integrator of ₹111-lakh crore worth of projects under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for 2020-25.

Multiple benefits:

- The plan will help the people of India, Indian industry, Indian business, Indian manufacturers, Indian farmers through creating next generation infrastructure by fostering 'will for progress, work for progress, wealth for progress, plan for progress and preference for progress.
- The importance given in the plan to rail-road multimodal connectivity and higher share of freight for the railways has evident multiple benefits.
- This includes reducing the cost of logistics to GDP that has prevailed at about 14% even at the time the NDA government took office, to an aspirational 8%.

Deal Climate change:

- The plan reduces vehicular emissions from road freight growth in order to meet climate change commitments and contain input costs due to extraordinarily high taxes on diesel.
- A similar fillip to efficiency in port operations can increase cargo handling capacity and cut vessel turnaround time.
- States have a crucial role in all this, considering that key pieces of the plan such as port linkages and land availability for highways, railways, industrial clusters and corridors depend on political consensus and active partnership.

Active participation:

- The effects of **COVID-19** continue to be felt in terms of lost jobs, depressed wages and consumption.
- The planners are pinning their hopes on infrastructure projects for a new deal outcome that will boost jobs and demand for goods and commodities, besides attracting major investments.
- Thus a structured and well-coordinated engagement process is required to address needs of stakeholders.
- To avoid missing out key stakeholders on the ground, a careful mapping needs to be conducted for every project going forward.

Implementation is the key:

The wide gap between macro planning and micro implementation, problems of lack of coordination, lack of advance information, thinking and working in silos were leading to hampered construction and wastage of budget.

- Significant delays to projects can often be traced to incompatible and hostile land acquisition decisions that alienate communities or threaten to violate environmental integrity.
- Given the Centre's preference for Geographic Information Systems and remote sensing to identify potential industrial areas, policymakers would do well to reclaim lands already subjected to degradation and pollution, rather than alienate controversial new parcels.
- Convincing citizens that they stand to benefit from such grand plans through better social welfare, lower service costs and higher efficiencies, and respecting federal boundaries while dealing with the States are other imperatives.

Conclusion:

The Gati Shakti National Master Plan will not only ensure a widespread reach of basic amenities to the remotest areas of our country but will also significantly enhance business opportunities for inclusive growth.