Arogya Setu App: An Open Source

Why in News

Recently, the source code of Aarogya Setu Mobile App has been made open source for software developers.

> It has been uploaded on GitHub which will help in identifying any vulnerabilities or code improvement in order to make Aarogya Setu more robust and secure.

Background

- India launched **Aarogya Setu mobile App** to augment the efforts of limiting the spread of **Covid-19.**
- It has an objective of **enabling bluetooth based contact tracing** and mapping of likely hotspots and dissemination of relevant information about Covid-19.
- Although the app has been resourceful by its users, there were **privacy concerns** regarding the lack of transparency in the app's code.
- To address these concerns, the government has decided to launch the code-set of the **app on GitHub to make it more transparent.**

Key Points

- **Arogya setu as an open source: Open Source** refers to a source which people can modify and share because its design is publicly accessible.
  - **Source code** is the part of software that computer programmers can manipulate its working and function. Programmers who have access to a computer program's source code can improve that program by adding features.
- **Significance:** Expanding collaboration amongst the talented youth and citizens through open source would help in building a robust and secure technology solution which will further support the work of frontline health workers in fighting this pandemic together.

- Towards this objective, the **National Informatics Centre** has also launched a **Bug Bounty Programme**
- **Challenges:** Releasing the source code of a rapidly evolving product that is being used by million users would require regular maintenance of the source code.

     Regular updates in the app with the new technology would also be a concern.

Bug Bounty Programme

- It has a goal to partner with security researchers and Indian developer community to test the security effectiveness of Aarogya Setu and also to enhance its security and build user's trust.
- It is aimed at encouraging the Indian developer community to find security flaws in the app and get rewarded Rs 1 lakh.

Way Forward

The availability of the App as an open code would help in the development of a transparent mechanism of availing data from the public regarding the Covid-19. It would address the privacy issue by enabling a robust system in the App by adding new features to it.

Source: PIB