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Draft Health Data Management Policy

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Why in News

The **National Health Authority (NHA)** has released the **Draft Health Data Management Policy** of the **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)** in the public domain for comments and feedback.

NHA is the apex agency of the Government of India responsible for the design, roll-out, implementation and management of **Ayushman Bharat** and the **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)** across the country.

Key Points

- The draft health data management policy acts as a **guidance document** to set out the **minimum standard for health data privacy protection**.
- **Purpose:** To create a **National Digital Health Ecosystem** that supports **Universal Health Coverage** in an **efficient, accessible, inclusive, affordable, timely** and **safe** manner, through provision of a wide-range of **data, information and infrastructure services** ensuring the **security, confidentiality** and **privacy** of health-related personal information.

- **Objectives:**
 - Provide **adequate guidance** and to **set out a framework for the secure processing** of personal and sensitive personal data of individuals.
 - b digital personal health data like medical conditions, reproductive outcomes, prescriptions and diagnosis etc.
 - Create a system of **digital personal and medical health records** which is easily **accessible** to individuals and health service providers and is purely voluntary in nature, based on the **consent** of individuals, and in compliance with **international standards**.
 - Increase **awareness** of the importance of data privacy.
 - Ensure **national portability** in the provision of health services.
 - Establish appropriate institutional mechanisms for **auditing** of the National Digital Health Ecosystem.
 - Leverage the **information systems existing** in the Indian health sector.
- **Background:**
 - The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** released the **National Health Policy, 2017** which envisaged creation of a digital health technology eco-system aiming at developing an integrated health information system.
 - A committee headed by former **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** chairman released the **National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB)** in **July 2019**.
 - NDHB recognised the need to establish a specialised organisation, called the **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)**, to facilitate the evolution of the National Digital Health Ecosystem.
 - The Prime Minister announced the launch of NDH on **74th Independence Day i.e. 15th August, 2020**.

Way Forward

With the emergence of **Big Data** and increase in online data management, concerns around the protection of different kinds of sensitive personal information of individuals are being raised globally. Although India has realized the **right to privacy**, it is yet to roll out laws for **protection of different kinds of datasets** being used by the government, like **Aadhar, DNA profiling, Aarogya Setu** etc. The Draft Health Data Management Policy is a **proactive initiative** for protecting the health data of citizens before the creation of its repository.

Source: TH