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Door No 18, New Plot No 259 /109,
AL Block, 4th Avenue, Shanthi Colony,
Annanagar, Chennai - 600040.



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KURUKSHETRA – MARCH 2019

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1. AGRICULTURE - A KEY COMPONENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

What are the takeaways in the interim budget for the Agriculture sector?

- The budget (2019-20) presentation has reinforced the fact that agriculture continues to be the main driver of the rural economy.
- It adds that declining prices of agricultural commodities in the international market and fall in food inflation in India since 2017-18, relative to non-food sector have however, reduced the returns from farming.
- The budget presentation further states that small and fragmented land holding on account of repeated divisions has also contributed in decline in the income of the farmer family.
- Hence, there is a need for providing structured income support to the poor land-holder farmer families in the country for procuring inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, equipment, labour etc. and to meet other needs which will help them in avoiding indebtedness as

well and falling into clutches of money lenders.

What are the other programs for the Agriculture sector?

- **PM-AASHA** : The umbrella scheme - 'Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)' provides for a holistic arrangement for assurance of a remunerative and stable price environment for growers/farmers to increase agriculture production and productivity.
- This umbrella scheme comprises the Price Support Scheme for pulses & oilseeds, Price Deficiency Payment Scheme & Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme for oilseeds to ensure MSP to the farmers.
- **Hike in MSP** : The Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) has been increased for all notified Kharif & Rabi Crops and other commercial crops for the season 2018-19 with a return of at least 50 per cent over cost of production.
- This has redeemed the promise of fixing the MSPs at least at a level of 50 per cent return over cost of production



as announced in the Union Budget 2018-19.

- Launch of **PM - KISAN** : To provide an assured income support to the small and marginal farmers, 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)' programme has been launched.
- Under this programme, vulnerable landholding farmer families, having cultivable land upto two hectares, will be provided direct income support at the rate of Rs 6,000 per year. Around 1.2 crore small and marginal farmer families are expected to benefit from PM KISAN.
- **Kisan Credit Card to Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Farmers** : In the last year's Union Budget (2018-19), the facility of extension of Kisan Credit Card scheme (KCC) has been provided to Animal Husbandry and Fisheries farmers.
- This was a significant measure towards expanding the credit outreach amongst those farmers who are engaged in agri-allied activities.
- **e-NAM** : In order to provide an alternative to farmers for marketing avenues, the electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) was launched in April, 2016.
- The scheme envisages initiation of marketing platform at national level and support creation of infrastructure to enable e-marketing in 585 regulated markets across the country by March 2018.
- All the regulated markets have been linked electronically.
- This innovative market process is revolutionizing agrimarkets by ensuring better price discovery, bringing in transparency and competition to enable farmers to get improved remuneration for their produce moving towards 'One Nation One Market'.
- As per Union Budget announcement(2018-19), decision has been taken to develop and upgrade existing rural haats into Gramin Agricultural Markets (GRAMs).
- These GRAMs, electronically linked to e-NAM portal and exempted from regulations of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs), will provide farmers facility to make direct sale to consumers and bulk purchasers.
- **PMFBY** : In April, 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) was launched after rolling back the earlier insurance schemes - National



Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS), Weather-based Crop Insurance scheme and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme.

- Under the PMFBY farmers pay a uniform premium of just 2 per cent for the more rain-dependent kharif crops and 1.5 per cent for all rabi crops.
- The remaining share of the premium is borne equally by the Centre and the respective State Governments.
- In the schemes that existed earlier, the premiums paid by farmers was in the range of 4-8 per cent of the insured value.
- The number of farmers who received claims due to crop loss under PMFBY has increased from 1.44 crore in 2015-17 to 1.62 crore in 2017-18.

2. HEALTHCARE INTERVENTIONS FOR RURAL INDIA

What are the key initiatives and interventions?

- **Ayushman Bharat:** Under this program two key initiatives were taken. They are
- **Health and Wellness Centre:** Under this 1.5 lakh centres will bring health care system closer to the homes of people.

- These centres will provide comprehensive health care, including for non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services.
- These centres will also provide free essential drugs and diagnostic services. The Budget has allocated Rs.1200 crore for this flagship programme.
- Contribution of private sector through CSR and philanthropic institutions in adopting these centres is also envisaged.
- **National Health Protection Scheme:** The second flagship programme under Ayushman Bharat is National Health Protection Scheme, which will cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage upto 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.

- This will be the world's largest government funded health care programme. Adequate funds will be provided for smooth implementation of this programme.
- **The National Nutrition Mission:** The National Nutrition Mission (NNM) has been set up with a three year budget of Rs.9046.17 crore commencing from 2017-18.



- The NNM is a comprehensive approach towards raising nutrition level in the country on a war footing.
- It is comprising mapping of various Schemes contributing towards addressing malnutrition, including a very robust convergence mechanism, ICT based Real Time Monitoring system, incentivizing States/UTs for meeting the targets, incentivizing Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) for using IT based tools, eliminating registers used by AWWs, introducing measurement of height of children at the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), Social Audits, setting-up Nutrition Resource Centres, involving masses through Jan Andolan for their participation on nutrition through various activities, among others.
- **Poshan Abhiyan:** This is based on convergence and collaboration of all important sectors considered to be important for healthy growth of the child for first 1,000 days.
- Thus, it covers all schemes, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Swachh Bharat, Adolescent Care, Prenatal and Postnatal Care, Supplementary Nutrition, Breastfeeding Counseling, Immunization, Growth Monitoring.
- Under Poshan Abhiyan, the Government has fixed targets to reduce stunting, undernutrition, Anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2 per cent, 2 percent, 3 per cent and 2 per cent per annum respectively.
- **Scheme for Adolescent Girls:** The Government on 16.11.2017 approved continuation of the Scheme for Adolescent Girls for out of school adolescent girls of age 11-14 years for a period of one year i.e. up to 30.11.2018.
- The scheme aims at providing supplementary nutrition containing 600 calories, 18-20 grams of protein and micronutrients per beneficiary per day for 300 days in a year, motivating out of school girls to go back to formal schooling or skill training under non-nutrition component of the scheme.
- The cost norms for nutrition have also been revised from existing rates of Rs.5.00 per beneficiary per day to Rs.9.5 per beneficiary per day.
- Government has also approved phased expansion and universalisation of the Scheme for Adolescent Girls i.e. in additional 303 districts in 2017-18 and the remaining districts in 2018-19 with



the simultaneous phasing out of Kishori Shakti Yojana.

- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana** : The maternity benefits under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) are available to all Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) except those in regular employment with the Central Government or State Government or Public Sector Undertaking or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force, for first living child of the family as normally, the first pregnancy of a woman exposes her to new kind of challenges and stress factors.
- The objectives of the scheme are:
 - (i) providing partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentives so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first living child; and
 - (ii) the cash incentives provided would lead to improved health seeking behaviour amongst the Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM).

3. CONNECTIVITY : TRANSFORMING RURAL INDIA

What is meant by DigiGaon initiative?

- DigiGaon or Digital Village is conceptualised as a connected village where citizens can avail various e-Services of the Central and State Governments, and private players in a rural and remote villages in the country.
- These DigiGaons are projected to be change agents, promoting rural entrepreneurship and building rural capacities and livelihoods through community participation and collective action.
- The digitalvillages have been equipped with solar lighting facility in their community center, LED assembly unit, sanitary napkin unit (with active participation on ASHA and Anganwadiworkers) and Wi-fi choupal (rural Wi-Fi infrastructure and a slew of suitable applications).
- The post offices are also being made multi service delivery points and all the CSCs services can be delivered to citizen through the post offices.
- The Common Service Centres (CSCs) act as access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India.



- CSCs are poised to touch over 2.50 lakh Gram Panchayats and 700 Digital villages to be established.

What are the measures taken in education sector?

- One of the focus areas of Digital India program is to promote digital literacy.
- The Government envisages making at least one person e-literate in every household.
- CSCs across the county can play a critical role in taking digital literacy to the remotest corners of the country.
- Already more than two lakh persons have been trained and certified as digitally literate across the country.
- The youth trained under this scheme will further develop their digital skills to become successful change agents and effectively participate in nation building.

What are the measures taken in Health sector?

- Quality and affordable healthcare is one of the emerging needs for citizens in rural areas.
- CSC has been delivering tele-consultation services with support from a few private hospitals in some areas and now with this initiative, the

tele-consultation services are being extended to 60,000 CSCs across the country.

- CSCs will also provide diagnostic services and promote sale of generic drugs through collaboration with Ministry of Health - by setting up of the Jan Aushadhi Stores.
- With the availability of teleconsultation, diagnostic facilities and generic drugs stores - it can redefine the extension of affordable and quality healthcare to the citizen especially in rural India.
- National Health Agency (NHA), which is the apex body for the implementation of Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM), and Common Service Centres (CSC) scheme under the Digital India Programme, have signed an MoU to provide information and eligibility validation services to beneficiaries, especially in remote areas.
- As the benefits under AB-NHPM are based on entitlement and not on enrolment, over 3 lakh CSCs spread across the rural India can become the key point of information for potential beneficiaries and help in validating their entitlement.



What intervention taken for providing electricity?

- Under 'Saubhagya Yojana', free electricity connection is provided to households.
- At the same time, 143 crore LED bulbs have been provided by the private sector.
- This has resulted into a savings of approximately Rs. 50,000 crore per year in electricity bills of poor and middle class families.
- Under Saubhagya, free electricity connections to all households (both APL and poor families) in rural areas and poor families in urban areas are being provided.
- Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has been designated as its nodal agency for the Saubhagya scheme.
- DISCOMs or the state electricity distribution utilities organize camps in villages or cluster of villages to facilitate on-the-spot filling up of application forms including release of electricity connections to households.

4. INITIATIVES TO EMPOWER RURAL YOUTH

What are the various initiatives taken by GOI to empower youth?

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)** is a scheme to extend collateral free loans by Banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) to Small/Micro business enterprises and individuals in the non-agricultural sector to enable them to setup or expand their business activities and to generate self employment.
 - Under PMMY, the number of accounts/ number of loans sanctioned during 2015-16 to 2017-18 were 12.27 crore, out of which 3.49 crore were new entrepreneurs.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** :This will be the flagship scheme for skill training of youth to be implemented by the new Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship through the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
 - The scheme will cover 24 lakh persons.
 - Skill training would be done based on the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) and industry led standards.



- Under the scheme, a monetary reward is given to trainees on assessment and certification by third party assessment bodies.
- The average monetary reward would be around Rs.8000 per trainee.
- Skill Development Management System (SDMS) would be put in place to verify and record details of all training centres a certain quality of training locations and courses.
- Biometric system and video recording of the training process would be put in place where feasible.
- All persons undergoing training would be required to give feed back at the time of assessment and this would become the key element of the evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the PMKVY scheme.
- A robust grievance redressal system would be put in place to address grievances relating to implementation of the scheme.
- **Startup India** is a flagship initiative launched by the Government of India on 16th January, 2016 to build a strong eco-system for nurturing innovation and startups in the country which will drive economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities.
- The Government through this initiative aims to empower startups to grow through innovation and design.
- The **Standup India** scheme was launched on 5th April, 2016 to facilitate bank loans from Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) between Rs.10 lakh to Rs.1 Crore to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) and one woman per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise in trading, services or manufacturing sector.
- The scheme is expected to benefit at least 2.5 lakh borrowers.
- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):** The Act came into force initially in 200 districts, and was extended gradually to other areas notified by the Central Government.
- This is one of the continuing flagship programs of the Government to provide minimum number of days of employment to rural people including youth.
- **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY):** It caters to rural youth employment opportunities. One positive attitude towards this initiative is that the funds are disbursed through a digital voucher



directly into the qualified applicant's bank account.

- It seeks to reposition rural India as a resource that can support the needs of the global manufacturing industry.
- **Self-Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU)** : It is a techno-financial, incubation and facilitation programme to support all the aspects of start-up business and other self-employment activities, particularly in technology-driven areas.
- **Self-employment in Horticulture**: It provides funds up to 10 lakhs for starting-up a horticulture farms.
- The scheme has enhanced horticulture production, improved nutritional security and income support to farm households and others; has established convergence and synergy among multiple on-going and planned programmes for horticulture development.
- The scheme has also helped in generating employment for skilled and unskilled persons, especially unemployed youth.
- The **Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana**: This scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development provides

additional wage employment in the rural areas and thereby provides food security and improve nutritional levels.

- **Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)**: It was introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development to assist the poor families living below the poverty line in rural areas for taking up self-employment.
- This Central Government funded scheme helps users in providing information and guidelines for setting up the Haats, credit related issues, etc.

5. FARM TECHNOLOGIES TO COUNTER CLIMATE CHANGE

What are the mitigation and adaptation strategies?

- **Soil Conservation**: With the rise of the environmentalist movement in the 1960s and afterwards, it has become common to speak of conserving natural resources such as trees or fossil fuels.
- Yet, long before humans recognized the need to make responsible use of things taken from the ground, they learned to conserve the ground itself—that is, the soil.
- This was a hard-won lesson: failure to conserve soil has turned many a fertile



farmland into temporary dust bowl or even permanent desert.

- Techniques such as crop rotation aid in conservation efforts, but communities continue to face hazards associated with the soil.
- There is, for instance, the matter of leaching, the movement of dissolved substances through the soil, which, on the one hand, can benefit it but, on the other hand, can rob it of valuable nutrients, issues of soil contamination also raise concerns that affect not just farmers but the population as a whole.
- Soil erosion is a major problem in hilly areas and in areas with undulated topography. Erosion transports not only rock sediment but organic material as well.
- Farmers should use contour ridges as a strategy to minimize soil erosion to encourage better root penetration and enhance moisture conservation.
- Local farmers should improve their adaptive capacity by using traditional pruning and fertilizing techniques to double the tree densities in semi-arid areas.
- **Carbon Sequestration:** Carbon sequestration is the process involved in carbon capture and the long-term

storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide or other forms of carbon to mitigate or defer global warming.

- It has been proposed as a way to slow the atmospheric and marine accumulation of greenhouse gases, which are released by burning fossil fuels.
- Carbon sequestration describes long-term storage of carbon dioxide or other forms of carbon to either mitigate or defer global warming and avoid dangerous climate change.
- It has been proposed as a way to slow the atmospheric and marine accumulation of greenhouse gases, which are released by burning fossil fuels.
- **Crop Residue Management:** A considerable area under rice and wheat is now harvested by combine.
- Rice and wheat straws left in the field after combine harvesting are generally burnt by the farmers to facilitate seed bed preparation and seeding.
- These crop residues contain large quantities of nutrients accumulated by rice and wheat crops.
- Burning of crop residues in the states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan has significantly



contributed to deterioration of air quality.

- The Government is encouraging the farmers to go in for mechanized options of residue management by way of providing subsidies on purchase of machines and equipments such as happy seeder, straw baler, rotavator, paddy straw chopper/mulcher, gyro rake, straw reaper, shredder, etc. as custom hiring centers or village level farm machinery banks.
- **Conservation Agriculture (CA):** Conservation agriculture is a green solution to achieve food and nutritional security.
- The CA - based system substantially reduces the production cost (up to 23 per cent) but produces equal or even higher than conventional system; thereby increasing economic profitability of production system.
- CA - based production systems also moderates the effect of high temperature (reduced canopy temperature by 1-4°C) and increases irrigation water productivity by 66-100 per cent compared to traditional production systems.
- **Integrated Nutrient Management:** Use of fertilizers along with organic manures, green manures, vermicompost, biofertilizers, neem, karanj, pongamia cakes etc.
- Neem coated urea has an edge over uncoated urea.
- To reduce the dependence of nitrogen fertilizers, use of Rhizobium cultures in pulses and Azotobacter in rice, wheat, coarse cereals, millet, smaller millets, cotton, sugarcane, potato etc. help cutting cost on fertilizers through benefits of symbiotic and asymbiotic nitrogen fixation.