

Governance and Agricultural Welfare: Central Policies in India

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Introduction

A particular the most important developments in human history was the emergence of agriculture, and changes in this field have shown to be among the most important drivers of social change. Agriculture and agricultural transformation continue to have significant effects on human communities even in the post-industrial era. Essentially, agriculture continues to be the primary source of food and many other everyday necessities for humanity. Human societies have undergone at least three significant changes as a result of the advent of agriculture and its subsequent advancements. First, compared to hunting and gathering, agriculture significantly increased the amount of food that could be produced and made food production much more reliable and consistent. The number of people that the planet can sustain has significantly expanded due to an ever-growing and more reliable food supply.

Public Policies or Schemes to Support for the welfare of agricultural farmers in India

The central Government of India's public policies or schemes implemented through its Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare's Department of Agriculture and Farmers to support for the welfare of agriculture farmers in order to increasing incomes of farmers in India are divided in to two categories of schemes such as A) Central Sector Schemes and B) Centrally Sponsored Schemes. This is based on an information was given by the BJP central government's then Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Mr. Arjun Munda in a written reply in upper house of the Rajya Sabha in Indian parliament on 2nd February 2024.

Central Sector Schemes

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi(PM-KISAN)

The PM-KISAN is a central sector scheme launched on 24th February 2019 by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government to supplement financial needs of land holding farmers, subject to exclusions. Under the scheme, financial benefit of rs. 6000/- per year is transferred in three equal four monthly instalments into the bank accounts of farmers families across the country through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode. Till now, rs.2.81 lakh crores have been transferred through DBT to more than 11 crores beneficiaries farmers through various installments.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana (PMKMY)

The PM-KMY is a central sector scheme launched on 12th September 2019 by the BJP government to provide security to the most vulnerable farmer families. It is contributory scheme, Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) subject to exclusion criteria can opt to become member of the scheme by paying monthly subscription to the Pension Fund. Similar, amount will be contributed by the Central Government. The applicants between the age group of 18 to 40 years will have to contribute between rs. 55 to rs. 200 per month till they attain the age of 60. The PMKMY is taking care of the farmers during their old age and provides rs. 3,000/ monthly pension to the enrolled farmers once they attain 60 years of age, subject to exclusion criteria. The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) is pension fund manager and registration of beneficiaries is done through Digital Seva portal of CSC and State Governments. So far 23.38/ lakh farmers have enrolled under the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana(PMFBY)

The PMFBY was launched in 2016 by the BJP government in order to provide a simple and affordable crop insurance product to ensure comprehensive risk cover for crops to farmers against all non-preventable natural risks from presowing to post-harvest and to provide adequate claim amount. The scheme is demand driven and available for all farmers a total of 5549.40/ lakh farmer applications were insured under the scheme since 2016-17 and rs. 150589.10/ crore has been paid as claim.

Modified Interest Subvention Scheme(MISS)

This scheme provides concessional short term agri-loans to the farmers practicing crop husbandry and other allied activities like animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries. It is available to farmers availing short term crop loans up to rs.3.00/ lakh at an interest rate of 7% per annum for one year. Additional 3% subvention is also given to the farmers for prompt and timely repayment of loans thus reducing the effective rate of interest to 4% per annum. The benefit of MISS is also available for post-harvest loans against Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (NWRs) on crop loans for a further period of six months post-harvest to small and marginal farmers having Kisan Credit Cards (KCCs), on occurrence of natural calamities and severe natural calamities. As on 05th January, 2024, 465.42/ lakh new KCC applications have been sanctioned with a sanctioned credit limit of Rs. 5,69,974/ crore as part of the drive.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)

In order to address the existing infrastructure gaps and mobilize investment in agriculture infrastructure, Agri Infra Fund was launched under Aatmanirbhar Bharat Package by the BJP government. AIF was introduced with a vision to transform the agriculture infrastructure landscape of the country. The AIF is a medium long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and credit guarantee support. The Fund of rs. 1 lakh crore under the scheme will be disbursed from Financial Year (FY) 2020-21 to FY2025-26 and the support under the scheme will be provided for the duration of FY2020-21 to FY2032-33.

Formation & Promotion of new 10,000 FPOs

The Government of India had launched the Central Sector Scheme (CSS) for "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)" in the year 2020. The scheme has a total budgetary outlay of rs.6865 crores. Formation & promotion of FPOs are to be done through Implementing Agencies (IAs), which further engage Cluster Based Business Organizations (CBBOs) to form & provide professional handholding support to FPOs for a period of 5 years. The FPOs get a financial assistance up to rs.18.00 lakh per FPO for a period of 03 years. In addition to this, provision has been made for matching equity grant up to rs. 2,000 per farmer member of FPO with a limit of rs. 15.00 lakh per FPO and a credit guarantee facility up to rs. 2 crore of project loan per FPO from eligible lending institution to ensure institutional credit accessibility to FPOs. Suitable provisions have been made for training and skill development of FPOs. Further, FPOs are on boarded on National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) platform which facilitate online trading of their agricultural commodities through transparent price discovery method to enable FPOs to realize better remunerative prices for their produce. As on 31st December, 2023, total 7,774 FPOs were registered under the scheme in the country.

National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM)

The purpose of this scheme is keeping in view the importance of beekeeping, a new BJP Central Sector Scheme entitled as NBHM was launched in the year 2020 under Atma Nirbhar

Bharat Abhiyan for its implementation in the field for overall promotion and development of scientific beekeeping and to achieve the goal of "Sweet Revolution". Some of the achievements include such as 1)Honeybees/ beekeeping have been approved as 5th input for Agriculture, 2)4 World Class State of the Art Honey Testing Labs and 35 Mini Honey Testing Labs have been sanctioned under NBHM for testing of honey,3) Madhukranti portal has been launched for online registration of Beekeepers/ Honey Societies/ Firms/ Companies,4)Till date 23 lakhs bee colonies registered on Portal,5)100 Honey FPOs targeted under 10,000 FPOs scheme in the country. Moreover, 88 FPOs have been registered by NAFED, NDDB & TRIFED, 6)25 States/UTs have been covered under NBHM under MM-I, II & III and 7) 160 Projects sanctioned under MM-I, II & III of rs.202.00 crores.

Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme (MIS-PSS)

The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare implements the Price Support Scheme (PSS) for procurement of pulses, oilseeds and copra. Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities which are perishable in nature and are not covered under the Price Support Scheme (PSS). The objective of intervention is to protect the growers of these commodities from making distress sale in the event of a bumper crop during the peak arrival period when the prices tend to fall below economic levels and cost of production.

Namo Drone Didi

The BJP Government has recently approved a Central Sector Scheme for providing drones to the Women Self Help Group (SHGs) for the period from 2024-25 to 2025-26 with an outlay of rs. 1261/ crores. The scheme aims to provide drones to 15000 selected Women SHGs for providing rental services to farmers for agriculture purpose (application of fertilizers and pesticides). Under this Scheme, Central financial assistance @ 80% of the cost of drone and accessories/ancillary charges up to a maximum of rs. 8.0 Lakhs will be provided to the women SHGs for purchase of drones. The Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) of SHGs may raise the balance amount (total cost of procurement minus subsidy) as loan under National Agriculture Infra Financing Facility (AIF). Interest subvention @ 3% on the AIF loan will be provided to the CLFs. The scheme will also provide sustainable business and livelihood support to SHGs and they would be able to earn additional income of at least of rs. 1.0 lakh per annum.

Centrally Sponsored Schemes

Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- Detailed Project Report based schemes (RKVY- DPR)

The scheme focuses on creation of pre & post-harvest infrastructure in agriculture and allied sectors that help in supply of quality inputs, market facilities, etc to farmers. It provides flexibility and autonomy to states to implement projects as per the local farmers needs and priorities from a bouquet of activities in agriculture and allied sectors. The scheme aims to fill the resources gap of agriculture and allied sectors by providing financial support to states for undertaking various activities to increase in overall growth of agriculture and allied sectors and farmers income. Under RKVY Agri-start up Programme, since 2019-20, 1524 Startups have been selected and rs.106.25 crore released as grants-in-aid for funding the Start-ups.

Soil Health Card (SHC)

The purpose of SHC is to provide information to farmers on nutrient status of their soil along with recommendation on appropriate dosage of nutrients to be applied for improving soil health and its fertility. The indicators are typically based on farmers practical experience and knowledge of local natural resources. The card lists soil health indicators that can be assessed

without the aid of technical or laboratory equipment. The Scheme rolls out a decentralized system of soil testing which will help in developing a nationwide soil fertility map on a GIS platform that can easily be integrated with the real time decision support systems being developed. In order to develop the soil fertility map, Government of India has decided to conduct 5 Crore Soil Samples across the country during year 2023-24 to 2025-26.

Rain fed Area Development (RAD)

The RAD is being implemented since 2014-15. It adopts an area based approach in cluster mode for promoting Integrated Farming System (IFS) which focuses on multicropping, rotational cropping, inter-cropping, mixed cropping practices with allied activities like horticulture, livestock, fishery, apiculture etc to enable farmers not only in maximizing the farm returns for sustaining livelihood, but also to mitigate the impacts of drought, flood or other extremes weather events. An amount of rs. 1673.58/ crores has been released and an area of 7.13 lakh hectare has been covered under RAD programme from the year 2014-15 to till date.

Per Drop More Crop (PDMC)

In order to increase water use efficiency at the farm level through Micro Irrigation technologies i.e. drip and sprinkler irrigation systems, the PDMC scheme was launched during 2015-16 by the BJP government. The Micro Irrigation helps in water saving as well as reduced fertilizer usage through fertigation, labour expenses, other input costs and overall income enhancement of farmers. It also supports micro level water harvesting, storage, management etc activities as Other Interventions (OI) to supplement source creation for Micro Irrigation. OI activities allowed on need basis up to 40% of the total allocation for North East States, Himalayan States, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh and up to 20% for other States. An area of 78 lakh hectare has been covered under Micro irrigation through the PDMC scheme from 2015-16 to 2022-23.

Micro Irrigation Fund (MIF)

A Micro Irrigation Fund (MIF) of initial corpus rs.5000/ crore has been created with NABARD with major objective to facilitate the States in mobilizing the resources for expanding coverage of Micro Irrigation. Under the funding arrangement, NABARD lends to the States/UTs at 3% lower interest rate than the corresponding cost of fund mobilized by NABARD from the market. The interest subvention on the loan under MIF is borne by Centre under PDMC. Projects with loans under MIF worth rs.4710.96 crore have been approved so far. Loans amounting rs.2812.24 crore has been disbursed to the States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. The Ministry provides interest subvention on the loan availed by the States which is met from PDMC Scheme. As per the Budget 2021-22, the corpus of the fund is to be doubled to rs.10000/ crores. The MIF is now merged with PDMC.

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)

Its purpose is to increase soil fertility and thereby helps in production of healthy food through organic practices without the use of agro-chemicals. The scheme is implemented in a cluster mode with unit cluster size of 20 hectares. A group shall comprise minimum 20 farmers (may be more if individual holdings are less). Farmers in a group can avail benefit of maximum of 2 ha as per provision of PKVY. 25 such clusters are converted into one large cluster of about 500 ha area to facilitate marketing of organic produce. The scheme provides for an assistance of rs. 31,500 per ha to states, out of which i.e., rs. 15,000 is given as incentives to a farmer directly through DBT.

Sub-Mission on Agriculture Mechanization (SMAM)

The SMAM is being implemented w.e.f April, 2014 which aims at catalyzing an accelerated but inclusive growth of agricultural mechanization in India with the objectives of increasing the reach of farm mechanization to small and marginal farmers and to the regions where availability of farm power is low, promoting 'Custom Hiring Centres' to offset the adverse economies of scale arising due to small landholding and high cost of individual ownership, creating hubs for hi-tech & high value farm equipments, creating awareness among stakeholders through demonstration and capacity building activities and ensuring performance testing and certification at designated testing centers located all over the country. Till date rs. 6748.78 Crore have been released to State Governments, distributed more than 15,75,719 agricultural machinery & equipment's including Tractors, Power Tillers, Self-Propelled Machineries and Plant Protection Equipment and established 23472 nos of Custom Hiring Centres, 504 nos of Hi-Tech Hubs and 20597 nos of Farm Machinery Banks.

Crop Residue Management

It was implemented from 2018-19 in the states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and also UT of NCT of Delhi. Its objectives include protecting environment from air pollution and preventing loss of nutrients and soil microorganisms caused by burning of crop residue through promoting in-situ management of crop residue. In this regard, it proposes to set up Farm Machinery Banks for custom hiring of in-situ crop residue management machinery. It also aims to creating awareness among stakeholders through demonstration, capacity building activities and differentiated information, education and communication strategies for effective utilization and management of crop residue. Rs. 3333.17 crore has been released under the scheme since inception and distributed more than 2,95,845 CRM machinery. But the CRM is now merged with SMAM.

National Food Security Mission (NFSM)

The Mission aims at increasing production of rice, wheat, pulses, coarse cereals (Maize and Barley) and Nutri-Cereals through area expansion and productivity enhancement in a sustainable manner in the identified districts of 28 States and 2 UTs (i.e., J&K and Ladakh). Other objectives include restoring Soil fertility and productivity at the individual farm level, enhancing farm level economy to restore confidence amongst the farmers and post harvest value addition at farm gate. Since the declaration of the International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2021, Government has taken a proactive multi stakeholder engagement approach to achieve the aim of IYM 2023 and taking Indian millets globally. 25 seed-hubs have been established to ensure availability of quality seed of latest improved varieties of Nutri cereals in the country. Millet missions have been launched across 13 states including Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan. More than 500 start-ups and 350 FPOs have been established and are operational in the millet ecosystem as of now.

National Mission on Edible Oils (NMEO)-Oil Palm

The NMEO-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) was launched by Government of India in 2021 in order to promote oil palm cultivation for making the country Aatamnirbhar in edible oils with special focus on North-Eastern States and A&N Islands. The Mission will bring additional area of 6.5 lakh ha under Oil Palm plantation with 3.28 lakh ha in northeastern states and 3.22 in rest of India in next 5 years from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)

The MIDH) Scheme was launched during 2014-15 for holistic growth of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa and Bamboo. Major components include plantation infrastructure development, establishment of new orchards and gardens for fruits, vegetables, spices and flowers, rejuvenation of unproductive, old, and senile orchards, protected cultivation, promotion of organic farming, pollination support through bee keeping, horticulture mechanization, post-harvest management and marketing infrastructure etc. Under the MIDH since 2014-15 to 2023-24 as on 31st October, 2023 an additional area of 12.95 lakh hectare(ha) of identified horticulture crops has been covered, 872 nurseries established for production of quality planting material, 1.41 lakh ha of old and senile orchards has been rejuvenated, 52069 has been covered under organic practices and 3.07 lakh ha has been covered under protected cultivation.

Digital Agriculture

This centrally sponsored scheme aims to improve the existing National e- Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA) by developing a digital public infrastructure for agriculture that will be built as an open source, open standard and interoperable public good to enable inclusive, farmer-centric solutions through relevant information services for crop planning and health, improved access to farm inputs, credit and insurance, help for crop estimation, market intelligence, and support for the growth of Agri Techs industry and start-ups. Agri Stack architecture has the following foundational layers such as 1)Core registries,2) Base databases,3)Farmers Database: Farmers ID linked with land records,4)Geo-referencing of plots,5)Crop Survey and Crop planning,6) Soil Mapping and Soil Fertility, 7)Unified Farmers Service Interface for state, private players and 8) Data exchange.

Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana

The most recent central public policy merging the agricultural schemes is the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY), approved on July 16, 2025, which consolidates 36 schemes from 11 ministries into one program to boost productivity and sustainable agriculture. This initiative, with an annual outlay of ₹24,000 crore for six years, targets 100 low-performing agri districts. It aims to enhance productivity, promote crop diversification, improve irrigation and storage, and ensure credit access. The focus will be exclusively on agriculture and allied activities. The scheme ensures saturation-based convergence of 36 schemes from 11 ministries, benefiting 1.7 crore farmers directly. District-level plans will be prepared by district collectors with support from agricultural universities and NITI Aayog. A digital dashboard, farmer app, and district ranking system will ensure transparency, access, and accountability.

Conclusion

Central government policies play a pivotal role in shaping agricultural welfare in India by addressing farmers' income security, risk management, and sustainable growth. Governance reforms such as direct benefit transfers, digitisation, and institutional support have enhanced transparency and outreach of welfare schemes. However, challenges related to implementation gaps, regional disparities, and coordination between the Centre and States continue to limit their overall impact. Strengthening cooperative federalism, ensuring inclusivity for small and marginal farmers, and aligning policies with local needs are essential. Effective governance combined with farmer-centric central policies remains crucial for achieving inclusive and sustainable agricultural development in India. There is no doubt that India's agriculture sector is the backbone of its economy. There are numerous farm welfare public policies or schemes or

programmes, which includes Minimum Support Price (MSP) have been implementing by the government of India. The success of these schemes are enormous in Indian agriculture to support for the farmers. But some farm associations in India had been demanding the central government of India to make the MSP as a legal status through an act by the Parliament of India. Whether this legally assured MSP is really helpful to the farmers or not is a question mark. But the government of India's stand on this is against the legal MSP. The significant agriculture cultivation quality produce is very important, which will very much beneficial for the farmers by increasing their incomes, and also beneficial for providing the food security to the people of India.

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