A review on Agri Welfare

Why in news?

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The following are the review of the measures taken by the government in improving the agriculture sector and welfare of farmers.

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What is the growth rate of Agri sector?

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- In the first three years of the Modi government, agri-GDP grew by just 1.7 % per annum, which is less than half of what was achieved during the last three years of the UPA government (3.6 %).
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- It was caused primarily by droughts in 2014 and 2015.
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What welfare measures were taken?

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- In order to tackle droughts more effectively, the Modi government tweaked and improvised existing schemes and launched the **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).**
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- Also, a new scheme, the **e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM),** was launched to link 585 regulated agri-markets across the country.
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Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana(PMKSY):

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- PMKSY was launched on July 1, 2015, to give “har khet ko paani” (water to every field) and improving water use efficiency through “more crop per drop”.
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- But the implementation of various components of this scheme depends on three different departments — **Agriculture, Water Resources, and Rural Development.**
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- However, a new mission directorate for PMKSY is set up under the Ministry of Water Resources.
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- The government identified 99 projects for early completion under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), which together will irrigate 76 lakh hectares (ha) upon completion.
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- The component of micro irrigation (MI) in PMKSY has done better and 8.13 lakh ha of additional area is said to have been brought under MI.
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- The total area under MI is about 9 million ha while the potential for MI is almost 10 times more.
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- The government would do better **if MI is treated at par with AIBP in terms of funding.** MI can move faster with much better results in terms of water-use efficiency.
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Fazal Bhima Yojana:

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- For the first time, farmers’ share of the premium was pegged at 2 % for kharif crops and 1.5 % for rabi crops.
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- As a result, the area covered under insurance increased from 27.2 million ha in kharif 2015 to 37.5 million ha in kharif 2016, and the sum insured increased from Rs 60,773 crore to Rs 1,08,055 crore over the same period.
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- However, **the system of crop damage assessment has not changed** much and most of the states could not even procure smartphones that were supposed to facilitate the faster compilation of crop cutting experiments.
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- Many state governments did not pay the premium on time, as a result of

which the farmers' claims could not be settled expeditiously.
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- In sum, there is still much work to be done on the implementation side.
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e-NAM:

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- The idea was to enable buyers located in distant places to purchase agri-commodities from any mandi.
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- The GoI also decided that state governments can apply for a grant of Rs 30 lakh per mandi (enhanced to Rs 75 lakh from this year) for related infrastructure and hardware, provided they undertake some reforms in their APMC rules.
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- So far, 417 mandis located in 13 states are claimed to have been connected to the e-NAM portal. In most mandis the sales through traditional auctions are being shown as turnover through e-NAM.
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- But, enquiry into this revealed that **very few auctions are being conducted by using the software.**
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- So far, there are no inter-mandi auctions and there is no evidence that farmers have gained from this system either in terms of cutting down commissions of arhtiyas or better price realisation.
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- The ambition of creating an all-India agri-market, therefore, still **remains a distant dream.** The e-NAM can be a game changer only if it is steered as diligently as the GST.
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Source: Indian Express

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