Re-oriented Approach to Address Farmer Distress

What is the issue?

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Union government is working on re-oriented approach to address farmer distress apart from loan-waivers.

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What were the issues with India’s agriculture policy?

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- India’s agriculture development policies earlier revolved largely around the “economic” aspect of agriculture and the “people” aspect got less attention.
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- Earlier strategy for development of the agriculture sector in India has focused primarily on raising agricultural output and improving food security.
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- The loan waivers, while consuming substantial fiscal resources, end up benefiting less than 10 per cent of the deserving farmers.
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- Various experience shows that in some cases, growth in output brings similar increase in farmers’ income but in many cases farmer’s income did not grow much with increase in output.
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- By this the sectoral outputs and crop production grew considerably, the condition of farmers did not show proportionate improvement.
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What is government’s re-oriented approach on agriculture?

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- **Increased Investments -** Capital investments in agriculture have been stepped up by around 75 per cent from around Rs. 1.21 lakh crore during 2009-14 to around Rs. 2.11 lakh crore during 2014-19.
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- Most of these investments are targeted to improve critical infrastructure deficits such as storage, irrigation and logistics and modernize agriculture technology.
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- **Increased Incomes -** Doubling the income of farmers in a time-bound manner has been adopted as a stated objective.
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- A judicious multi-pronged strategy has been put in place for realising this goal.
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- **PM-AASHA -** Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan initiative comprises three different options to help farmers realise benefits of the increased MSP even where government agencies fail to procure their produce.
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- These strategies are being complemented by measures to enhance farmers' access to markets and protect them from inherent risks that agriculture faces.
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- **Increasing Market Access -** To assure market access to farmer government as introduced an agri e-marketplace (e-National Agriculture Market or e-NAM).
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- This marketplace integrates 585 agricultural mandis spread across 16 states and two union territories into one platform.
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- **Crop Security -** Low cost insurance plan called Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) was launched to protect farmers against various risks.
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What is the way forward?

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- By bringing farmers and their families onto the policy Centre stage, the government is not only trying to assure incomes, but it is also trying to create a safety net for them.
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- Increase in the MSP, and implementation of PM-AASHA, PMFBY and e-NAM are integral components of this strategy.
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- In addition to these, efforts are also being made to provide basic essentials

such as house, electricity, toilets and clean cooking gas to the needy households in rural areas.
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- Include these, and one can visualize the various contours of the larger development program being rolled out for farmers.
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Source: Indian Express

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