Revitalising PM-KUSUM

What is the issue?

The pandemic-induced disruptions, limited buy-in from States and implementation challenges have affected the roll-out of Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM).

What is KUSUM about?

- KUSUM was launched by **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** in 2019 to provide energy sufficiency and sustainable irrigation access to farmers.
- **Objective** - Providing financial and water security to farmers.
- The components of the proposed scheme are

1. **Component-A:** 10,000 MW of Decentralized Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants.
2. **Component-B:** Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.
3. **Component-C:** Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.

To know more about KUSUM scheme, click here

What are the barriers in effective implementation of the scheme?

- Limited awareness about solar pumps among farmers.
- Farmers' inability to pay their upfront contribution.
- Regulatory, financial, operational and technical challenges.
- Non-initiation of tenders or commissioned projects for solar feeders or grid-connected pumps by some states.
- Covid induced disruptions.

How can the challenges be tackled?

- Extending the scheme's timeline beyond 2022 would allow discoms to align the scheme with their power purchase planning.
- Create a level playing field for distributed solar plants in par with utility-

scale solar which is cheaper and most preferred by discoms.

- Grid-unavailability risks needs to be addressed and tariff determination should be standardised with the removal of waiver of ISTS charges for solar plants.
- Land regulations must be streamlined through inter-departmental coordination reduce delays in converting agricultural lands for solar power generation.
- Innovative solutions like Karnataka's pilot of a farmer-developer special-purpose vehicle are needed for financing farmers' contributions.
- Piloting grid-connected solar pumps along with smart meters and smart transformers will be useful for scaling up the scheme.
- The scheme, if implemented successfully, can generate thousands of jobs, reduce the carbon footprint of agriculture, and result in oil import savings.

Source: The Hindu

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