Rythu Bandhu Scheme - Telangana Model

Why in news?

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Telangana’s Rythu Bandhu scheme supports its farmers with Rs 4,000 for every acre they own.

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What is the Rythu Bandhu Scheme about?

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- Rythu Bandhu is a support scheme for farmers in Telangana, which provides cheque payments to farmers based on their landholdings.
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- Under this scheme Telangana government gives every beneficiary farmer Rs 4,000 per acre as “investment support” before every crop season.
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- The objective is to help the farmer meet a major part of his expenses on seed, fertiliser, pesticide, and field preparation.
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- The scheme covers 1.42 crore acres in the 31 districts of the state, and every farmer owning land is eligible.
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- The government will issue cheques rather than make direct benefit transfer (DBT) because banks might use the DBT money to adjust against farmers’ previous dues.
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How this scheme is implemented?

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- The revenue department overhauled the entire land holding records and issued new Pattadar passbooks for land ownership.
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- Over 5,000 village revenue officers and agriculture extension officers will

keep a tab on whether a farmer who received the subsidy has sowed the crop or not.
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- The cheques have been distributed along with free Pattadar Dharani passbooks with updated information including ownership and land purchase and sale.
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- The government had initially drawn up a list of 72 lakh beneficiaries based on a revenue department survey last year.
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- The records are still under rectification and more farmers will be added to the list later.
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- The government plans to extend the flat Rs 4,000-per-acre subsidy to the Rabi season as well, with distribution of cheques.
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What is the significance of this scheme?

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- The Scheme has earned various appreciations and it is considered to be the template for social and agricultural policy.
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- Indebtedness among Telangana farmers is very high and they fall into the vicious debt trap of moneylenders.
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- Over a period of four or five years, Telangana farmers will be rid of all debts due to Rythu Bandhu scheme.
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- Farmers also apply for loans from banks which get delayed as they don’t approve quickly in time for the crop season.
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- Rythu Bandhu money provides that cushion to the farmer because with that money the farmer can purchase seeds and fertiliser and start sowing.
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- If a bank approves his loan later then it is of additional help to hire farm labour etc but at least he is not going to moneylenders.
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What are few limitations of the scheme?

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- The Rythu Bandhu scheme does not exclude rich farmers and wealthy landlords.
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- The scheme does however, have a provision under which cheques can be returned to the local authorities.
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- The scheme leaves out tenant cultivators an estimated 40% of Telangana's farming population and mostly coming from the poorest and most disadvantaged backgrounds.
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- Tenant farmers cannot be included in the scheme as they cannot submit any proof of cultivation of land, which is done mostly based on informal and oral lease arrangements.
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Source: Indian Express

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